

## WY-FI Policy Update, May 2017

The latest policy developments, news, publications and resources related to people with multiple and complex needs.

### NEWS AND POLICY ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Countdown to Election 2017**

The Institute for Government has provided [an overview](#) of the run-up to the general election and how it will affect government business and the Civil Service.

- **A new prison and probation service launched**

A [new frontline service](#) focused on reforming offenders and cutting crime was announced in April. It will have full responsibility for the operational management of offenders in custody and in the community.

- Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) to replace National Offender Management Service (NOMS)
- The service will be responsible for rolling out government's reform programme to reduce reoffending and protect the public
- It will launch a new leadership programme and new promotion opportunities for staff
- Changes backed by additional £100 million to boost frontline by an extra 2,500 staff
- For the first time, there will also be a Board Director with specific responsibility for women across the whole system, reporting into HMPPS Chief Executive, Michael Spurr.

This wholesale, organisational reform will be supported by measures within the [Prisons and Courts Bill](#), which will set out a new framework and clear system of accountability for prisons, building on the wide-ranging reforms set out in the [Prison Safety and Reform White Paper](#).

- **The Homelessness Reduction Act**

The Homelessness Reduction Bill formally became an Act of Parliament on 27 April. The Act places new duties on local authorities to help prevent the homelessness of all families and single people, regardless of priority need, who are eligible for assistance and threatened with homelessness. The duties represent a shift in focus to early intervention, and aim to encourage local housing authorities to act quickly and proactively. The Department for Communities and Local Government has produced [13 fact sheets](#) on measures within the Homeless Reduction Act.

- **Housing White Paper: Fixing our Broken Housing Market**

The government has launched its housing White Paper, "[Fixing our Broken Housing Market](#)". The paper outlines plans to increase the overall supply of housing and tackle some of the impacts of the current housing shortage.

[Homeless Link](#) considers that the measures outlined will only make a difference to homelessness if they provide people with truly affordable places to live, improve the quality

and security of tenure in the private rented sector, place stronger expectations on landlords and increase tenancy lengths that help achieve housing stability.

- **Homeless Link launches a Housing First England website**

Homeless Link has launched their [new website](#), Housing First England. Designed to support people who are homeless and may have multiple needs, housing first aims to provide housing as the starting point for other services. The website contains a map of Housing First services, useful resources and information and an opportunity to read several stories about the impact of Housing First. There is also a short film of Housing First residents, and their workers, talking about how the service has positively impacted on their lives.

- **Supported Housing Alliance launch**

Homeless Link has launched its '[Supported Housing Alliance](#)' initiative. It encompasses a dedicated policy resource; a refreshed training and consultancy offer; and a number of other benefits that aims to grow to meet the needs of their members across the spectrum of housing, care, health and support. It is designed to promote the interests, and meet the needs, of supported housing residents and providers in England.

- **New research centre to inform UK housing policy**

A [new national research centre](#) will be launched by ESRC, the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. The UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence (CaCHE), which will be independent from government and other interests, is a collaboration between nine UK Universities and four non-HEI organisations, and will have staff located at five hubs across the UK. CaCHE will advance knowledge of the housing market, provide robust evidence to inform housing policy and practice across the UK, and will join together a comprehensive range of stakeholders with the goal of tackling housing problems at a national, devolved, regional, and local level.

## **KEY PUBLICATIONS**

- **Improving Lives: Helping Workless Families**

The Department for Work and Pensions has published [Improving lives: Helping Workless Families](#), a paper setting out the current government's approach to social justice. It provides evidence on the degree of overlap between parental worklessness and disadvantages faced by families, makes several proposals for improving the support provided through JobCentres, and points at the future direction of the Troubled Families programme. MEAM have published a [blog](#) which explores the implications of this agenda for people with multiple needs ahead of the forthcoming general election.

- **Housing First: housing-led solutions to rough sleeping and homelessness**

The Centre for Social Justice has published [a report](#) looking at the extent of homelessness in 2017, which makes recommendation on how government can address the issue. The report identifies the key drivers of rough sleeping and homelessness as lack of access to affordable housing, an increase in loss of private tenancies and a lack of support for people with multiple and complex needs. Its recommendations include that the Government should create a new funding pot of at least £110 million per year to deliver a National Housing First Programme, as well as boosting investment in low cost rental accommodation.

- **The government's response to the NHS five year forward view for mental health**

This [report](#) sets out the government's response to the work of the Mental Health Taskforce. The taskforce report to NHS England, the *NHS five year forward view for mental health*, is an independent and far-reaching overview of what modern mental health services should be. The government will accept the taskforce report's recommendations in full. This report provides full responses to each of the 58 recommendations made to government.

- **Support for ex-offenders**

A [report from the Work and Pensions Select Committee](#) marks the conclusion of the committee's inquiry into the housing and employment support available for people on their release from prison. It outlines the barriers that people in or leaving prison face when looking for employment, and notes that people leaving prison face a 'cliff-edge' in support once they reach the community. The report's recommendations include that all prisons should be required to make links with employers, that prisoners should be able to claim Employment Support Allowance and Universal Credit while in prison in order to be paid on release and that the Department for Work and Pensions should develop guidance to help employers recruit those with convictions.

- **Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women in the criminal justice system**

Agenda and Women in Prison have released [a report](#) on black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) women in the criminal justice system called 'Double disadvantage'. BAME women interviewed for the report said that they felt they were discriminated against and experienced racism in prison from both staff and other prisoners. The report is based on focus group interviews with women in prison and in the community. It was undertaken to help inform the Lammy Review into racial bias in the criminal justice system.

## **RESOURCES**

- **Universal Credit briefing**

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation has published a [briefing](#) providing information and evidence on the latest developments as Universal Credit rolls out across the UK. It provides recommendations on how the system could be improved.

- **Tips on managing mental health at work**

Employment relations organisation Acas have published [research on managing mental health at work](#), including a summary of six key recommendations that employers can adopt. The report makes the human case that employers should prioritise mental health in the workplace to include careful management of those with mental health conditions, making reasonable adjustments to working practices where appropriate, and educating their whole organisation to challenge stigma.

- **New advice on reducing health inequalities in the criminal justice system**

Public Health England has worked with Revolving Doors, the Home Office and NHS England to publish ['Rebalancing Act'](#). It is a resource to support collaborative work to improve health,

reduce offending and health inequalities among people in contact with the criminal justice system. It makes a case for investment, as well as making better use of existing resources, whether through joint co-commissioning, pooled budgets, or more effective collaboration.

- **Universal Credit inquiry re-launched**

MEAM has [responded to the Work and Pensions Select Committee's Universal Credit inquiry](#), sharing evidence from their local partners on the impact of Universal Credit. Three key issues raised in their submission related to long waiting times (leading to some people spending rent money on their most immediate needs, such as food and fuel), claimants receiving large sums of money leading to situations where it is used for substances, and the barriers presented by the digital by default process.

- **'Safe and Secure Homes' briefing**

Clinks has published a [briefing](#) on the results of research into accommodation needs of people in contact with the criminal justice system. Commissioned by Clinks and Homeless Link, the research aims to understand how these needs are being met since the implementation of Transforming Rehabilitation (TR). The results show that challenges remain in terms of securing appropriate and stable accommodation. Some of these are directly related to the implementation of TR, such as a lack of accommodation advice given by some Community Rehabilitation Companies. Others exist due to external factors such as pressures on housing supply leading to fewer housing options and reductions in local authority budgets.

- **NICE guidance on mental health of adults in contact with the criminal justice system**

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) [guidance](#) recommends that people who are diagnosed with a mental health problem within the criminal justice system should receive annual checks and staff should be trained to spot the warning signs. The guidance aims to address the gaps in how mental health is diagnosed and treated within the criminal justice system, and highlights the need for a collaborative approach to support better mental health of those in contact with the criminal justice system.

- **What is social prescribing?**

Social prescribing enables GPs, nurses and other primary care professionals to refer people to a range of local, non-clinical services. This [explainer](#) from the King's Fund looks at whether social prescribing works and how it fits in with wider health and care policy, while a related event will provide insight into the social prescribing movement.

- **Devolution of criminal justice**

['Breaking Barriers: Doing it Justice'](#) is an independent review that explores a devolved approach to criminal justice. Led by the Rt. Hon Hazel Blears, Professor Lord Patel of Bradford OBE and Dr Jon Bashford, the report looks at prevention and early intervention, custody and rehabilitation, and continuity of care. It looks at the case for devolving criminal justice powers, funding and accountability and taking a place-based approach to remodel the criminal justice system around the dynamics of the community.

- **Effective care and support for people at risk of suicide and self-harm in prisons**

The Reducing Reoffending Third Sector Advisory Group (RR3) special interest group on effective care and support for people at risk of suicide and self-harm in prison has published its [recommendations for change](#). In recent years, the rates of both suicide and incidents of

self-harm in our prisons have risen significantly. Effective care and support for people at risk of suicide and self-harm in prison requires a whole-prison approach, developing a culture of compassion so that every relationship becomes an opportunity to support vulnerable prisoners.

- **Clinks report on voluntary sector collaboration in the criminal justice system**

Clinks and Centre for Justice Innovation have published ['Why we collaborate'](#), a report exploring voluntary sector collaboration in the criminal justice system. It looks at how voluntary organisations collaborate, what makes it work, and why it sometimes fails. The report showcases four case studies and seeks to draw conclusions about the motivation for collaboration, the impact which it can have and the factors which underpin successful collaboration.

- **The core components of a gender sensitive service for women experiencing multiple disadvantage**

The report ['Women and Girls at risk: evidence across the life course'](#) shines the spotlight on the vast range of harms faced by many women over the course of their lifetimes.