



**Evaluation of
Fulfilling Lives:**
Supporting
people with
multiple needs

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Under- standing multiple needs

This is the second in a series of briefings on multiple needs, drawing on data and insight from the National Lottery Community Fund's Fulfilling Lives: Supporting people with multiple needs programme. Multiple needs are defined as experiencing two or more of homelessness, substance misuse, reoffending and mental ill-health. The statistics are based on data from up to 3,000 people, collected during their first three months of getting help from the Fulfilling Lives programme. This information provides a unique and valuable addition to the evidence base on multiple needs. Further information, including data tables, can be found in the accompanying methods note.

Key messages

- People with multiple needs are diverse and should not be seen as a uniform group. It is vital that those designing services for people with multiple needs recognise this and take steps to understand their potential service users in detail. This briefing helps unpack what is meant by 'multiple needs' and explores the characteristics of those affected.
- People's needs are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Homelessness, substance misuse, reoffending and mental ill-health often affect the same people. Combined substance misuse and poor mental health are particularly prevalent among Fulfilling Lives beneficiaries. Individually, these are all challenging issues; together they create a level of complexity that can be difficult to address.
- So, it is crucial that these issues are tackled together, holistically, and not separately. Yet services are often set up to treat needs independently.
- People's needs and experiences change over their life course, so services need to take this into account. While the needs of some young people may be less severe, it's important they get the necessary support to avoid issues becoming more entrenched.
- Women's needs are different from men's, but just as complex. Their experience of multiple needs mean they may be under-represented in some statistics. Fulfilling Lives shows that there is a need for targeted and tailored services to engage and support women.
- People with Asian ethnicity are under-represented among Fulfilling Lives beneficiaries. More bespoke approaches may be needed to engage and support this group.

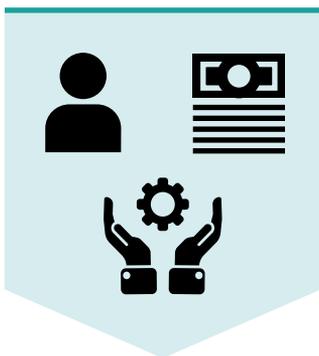
- Homelessness, substance misuse, reoffending and mental ill-health are further complicated by other factors. Many Fulfilling Lives beneficiaries also have other disabilities and/or long-term health problems. Services for people with multiple needs also need to encompass social and physical healthcare.
- Many Fulfilling Lives beneficiaries have no qualifications and problems with literacy. Services need to be simple to access, information easy to read and understand, and a choice of communication methods available.
- Many beneficiaries are a long way from entering the labour market when they join the programme. So ensuring secure sources of income is important to help people avoid resorting to unsafe alternatives.
- Accommodation patterns can be chaotic. Stable accommodation is a vital foundation for a fulfilling life. But addressing homelessness for people with multiple needs may not be as straightforward as just providing a home. Additional support to maintain tenancies is required.

Why does multiple needs matter?

The Fulfilling Lives programme defines multiple needs as experience of two or more of homelessness,¹ offending, substance misuse and mental ill-health. Over half of Fulfilling Lives beneficiaries experience all four of the defining needs. Nearly all have experienced at least three.²

It is estimated that there are at least 58,000 people in England annually who have contact with homelessness, criminal justice and substance misuse services.³ Many also have poor mental health. Lack of effective support results in substantial costs to the public purse, serious social and economic impacts and a tragic waste of human life. The early roots of multiple needs can be found in backgrounds combining poverty, very poor educational experiences, family stress and complex trauma associated with childhood abuse and neglect.⁴

For further information on why more needs to be done to support people with multiple needs, see briefing 1 in this series: [Why we need to invest in multiple needs](#).



Lack of effective support results in serious social and economic impacts and a tragic waste of human life

People's needs are interrelated and mutually reinforcing

Alone, issues such as homelessness, mental ill health and substance misuse are challenging. Together, they create a level of complexity of need that can be difficult to address. Issues are often mutually reinforcing.⁵ The effects of one impacts on the ability of individuals to cope with or manage another.

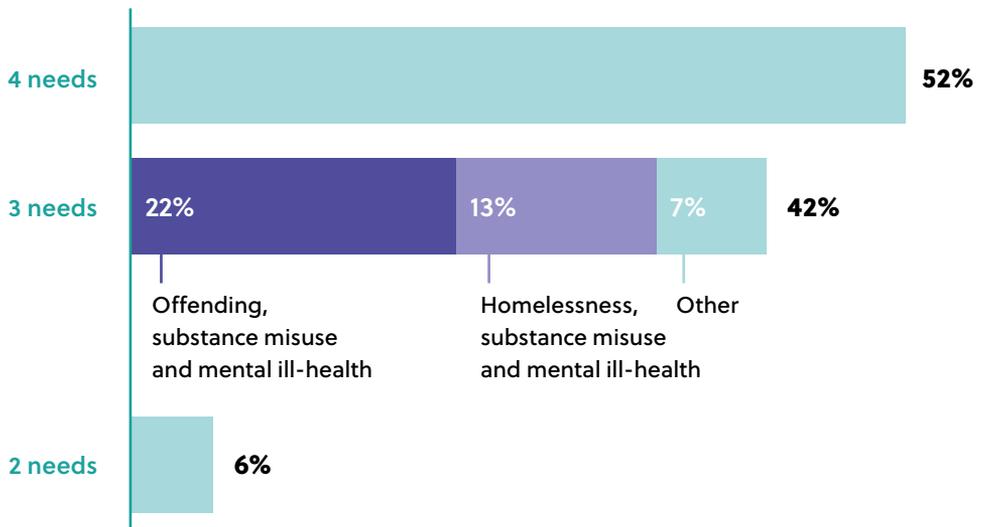
So, it is important that these issues are addressed together and holistically

Yet services are often set up to treat needs independently, with different organisations to help with housing, mental health, substance misuse and so on. As the Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) Coalition point out, public services engage with a single aspect of what are complex and interrelated problems and thus fail to meet people's needs.⁶ Narrowly focused remits and targets can contribute to a culture of 'silo' working. A particular need looked at in isolation may not be considered severe enough to meet thresholds for accessing support. Hence the importance of recognising the multiplicity of needs someone has and the combined effect of these.⁷

Combined substance misuse and mental ill-health are particularly prevalent

Substance misuse and mental ill-health are the most commonly experienced of the four needs and there is a high degree of overlap between the two – 90 per cent of Fulfilling Lives beneficiaries experience both.⁸ There is a clear link between substance misuse and mental health, but too often having one is a barrier to getting help with the other.⁹ People find themselves in a catch-22 dilemma, unable to get a mental health assessment while they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol but not able to get help with their substance misuse due to untreated mental health problems.¹⁰ Where treatment is offered, people with multiple needs are at high risk of being discharged due to lack of engagement and then required to begin the (often lengthy) referral process again.

Proportion of beneficiaries with different combinations of need

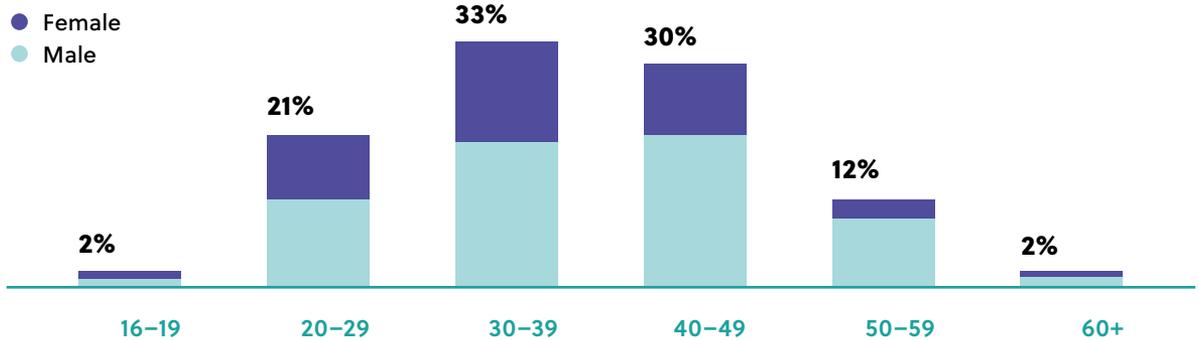


**Services for people
with multiple needs
also need to
encompass social
and physical care**

Services need to take account of people's life-stage to ensure appropriate support

Most beneficiaries are aged between 30 and 50 years old and the average age is 38.¹¹ This fits with other evidence which suggests severe and multiple disadvantage mainly affects those aged 25 to 44.¹² There are very few beneficiaries over 60 and these are predominantly men.

Age profile of beneficiaries



Younger people on the Fulfilling Lives programme are more likely to have problems with impulse control and re-offending, and be a risk to others. The older beneficiaries get, the worse their problems with substance abuse are. Related to this, they are also more likely to be at risk of unintentional self-harm. The usual concerns of ageing are amplified for people with multiple needs. Older beneficiaries also have worse physical health and lower levels of self-care.¹³ It is important that services take into account people's life stage as well as other needs when providing support.



**35 per cent
of beneficiaries
are women**

Specialist approaches are needed to effectively engage and support women

In the past, statistics have suggested that multiple needs is a predominantly male phenomenon.¹⁴ Women's particular experiences can mean they are under-represented in some statistics.¹⁵ For example, during their first three months with Fulfilling Lives women are more likely to be staying temporarily with friends and family and less likely to be rough sleeping than men,¹⁶ and therefore less likely to be included in rough-sleeping counts. This is problematic if service provision is planned on the basis of such statistics where women's experiences of homelessness are not always reflected.

In contrast, women make up over a third of all Fulfilling Lives beneficiaries.¹⁷ This demonstrates that with targeted and tailored support, women will engage and there is clearly a need for this. For example, the South East Partnership has specialist workers¹⁸ employed specifically to work with women with multiple needs, including those who have had children taken into care or are in abusive relationships.¹⁹ 62 per cent of South East Partnership beneficiaries are female.²⁰

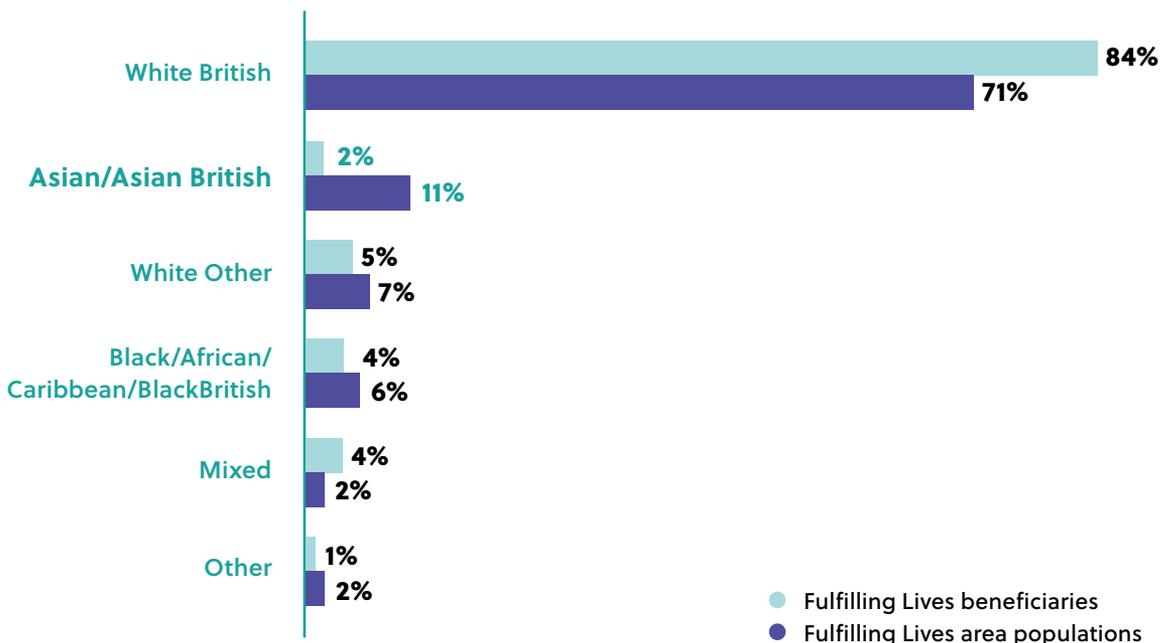
Women's needs are different from men's but just as complex and severe

In some cases more so. Women are more likely than men to have higher levels of overall need and risk on entering the Fulfilling Lives programme. In particular, they are more likely to be affected by poor mental health, have higher levels of risk of self-harm (both intentional and unintentional) and to be more at risk from others.²¹ Other evidence shows that experience of sexual assault and violence or abuse from a partner is prevalent among women with multiple needs.²² Abuse can have long-lasting consequences on women's wellbeing. Multiple disadvantage can also be the cause as well as consequence of abuse, for example, women being forced to accept or remain in abusive relationships because no other accommodation is available to them.²³ **It is important that the particular needs and concerns of women are taken into account when designing services.** Gender-neutral services may not adequately respond to women's different experiences and needs.²⁴

Specialist services may also be needed for Asian people

Overall, the ethnicity of beneficiaries is broadly in line with that of the wider adult population of the areas where Fulfilling Lives is working. However, **people of Asian ethnicity are under-represented among Fulfilling Lives beneficiaries** – just 2 per cent are Asian, compared to 11 per cent of the wider populations.²⁵ Other evidence also indicates Asian people are under-represented in terms of severe and multiple needs.²⁶ It is unclear whether this is due to lower levels of multiple needs among Asian people, or a lack of engagement with services. For example, The Mental Health Foundation states that while the statistics on the number of Asian people in the UK with mental health problems are inconsistent, it has been suggested that mental health problems are often unrecognised in this group.²⁷

Beneficiary ethnicity compared to adult population of Fulfilling Lives areas



Asian people with multiple needs may be a 'hidden population' that need more tailored and targeted approaches to enable them to engage

Asian women may be particularly difficult to reach.²⁸ Opportunity Nottingham have commissioned a local organisation with a positive reputation among Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities to provide a culturally specific outreach and specialist support service. This organisation has successfully increased beneficiaries from BAME groups, including a number of people from Asian communities that is more proportionate to the wider population.²⁹

BAME³⁰ beneficiaries are more likely to have lower levels of need and risk compared to white-British beneficiaries. In particular, they are more likely to be more ready to make changes, have better physical health and lower levels of substance misuse.³¹ These results should be treated with some caution. Particular taboos around mental health and substance misuse may mean that some BAME beneficiaries are less likely to seek help and may hide or downplay problems. Other barriers include a fear of not being understood and language – an unfamiliarity with the terminology of multiple needs as well as, in some cases, being less proficient in English.³²

**There is a need for
targeted and tailored
services to engage
and support women**



**41 per cent
have disabilities
or long-term
health conditions**

Fulfilling Lives beneficiaries have high levels of disability and long-term health problems

41 per cent of beneficiaries have other disabilities or long-term health conditions (in addition to or other than mental ill health).³³ This is over twice the level found in the wider population; according to the 2011 Census, 18 per cent of the population in England and Wales reported they were limited in daily activities because of a health problem or disability.³⁴

Disabled beneficiaries are less likely to be offenders, but more likely to experience mental ill health. They are also more likely to have literacy difficulties and be unable to work. They are less likely to stay with friends and family and more likely to have their own tenancy.³⁵

This serves as a reminder that the four defining needs are often further complicated by other issues, such as disability and ill-health. This underlines the **importance of services for people with multiple needs being well connected across traditionally separate fields of health, criminal justice, social care and other service areas.**



33 per cent of beneficiaries have problems with literacy

Services need to be designed to accommodate those with literacy difficulties

There is a clear link between multiple needs, poverty and poor educational experiences. Mapping the prevalence of multiple disadvantage across the country indicates it is associated with areas with high levels of poverty and unemployment.³⁶ 62 per cent of the Fulfilling Lives beneficiaries have no qualifications.³⁷ Furthermore, a third have problems with literacy – this is more likely to affect men, BAME groups and those who are disabled.³⁸ There is a social stigma associated with poor literacy, which can lead to people feeling ashamed or avoiding situations where this may be exposed.³⁹ Services that provide important information in written form only, use complex language or require people to complete paperwork (including online) are thus more difficult for some people to use. Fulfilling Lives keyworkers can help people to navigate some of these challenges, advocating on behalf of beneficiaries and negotiating flex in services.⁴⁰ But services need to be simple to access, information easy to read and a choice of communication methods available as standard.



70 per cent are unable to work

Many beneficiaries are a long way from entering the labour market

Low levels of qualifications and literacy also highlight how far beneficiaries are from the labour market when they join Fulfilling Lives. Very few beneficiaries are in employment – two per cent manage to hold down a job or are self-employed. 70 per cent are unable to work.⁴¹ Unsurprisingly, those who are disabled or have long-term health conditions are more likely to be in this category. 12 per cent of beneficiaries say they are actively seeking work – these are more likely to be people aged 16 to 19 and BAME beneficiaries.⁴²



**35 per cent
of beneficiaries
receive income
from illegal or
unsafe sources**

Ensuring beneficiaries have a secure source of income is important

35 per cent admit to receiving income from sources that are unsafe or illegal.⁴³ This is likely to be an underestimate. Women are more likely than men to say they get income from friends and family (15 per cent compared to 11 per cent) and from sex-work (16 per cent compared to less than 1).⁴⁴ For some, begging is a necessity and this is the most commonly reported type of insecure income (16 per cent of all beneficiaries). Begging is seen across all age groups of Fulfilling Lives beneficiaries.⁴⁵ Research from Fulfilling Lives Newcastle and Gateshead highlights how those who beg experience feelings of guilt, shame and degradation.⁴⁶

People in their 20s are more likely than people in their 50s to rely on friends and family.⁴⁷

So getting benefits sorted is an early priority when working with people with multiple needs

Most beneficiaries receive some kind of welfare benefit during the first three months with Fulfilling Lives,⁴⁸ and the proportion increases over time following help from the programme (see briefing 1). Women are more likely than men to be in receipt of at least one type of benefit during their first three months with the programme.⁴⁹



**37 per cent
of beneficiaries
stay in more
than one type of
accommodation**

Accommodation patterns can be chaotic

Where beneficiaries live can be varied and changeable

There are high levels of homelessness when people join Fulfilling Lives, with over half homeless at least some of the time.⁵⁰ People don't stay in the same type of accommodation but move between, for example, sofa surfing, rough-sleeping and hostels. 37 per cent spend time in more than one type of accommodation during their first three months on the programme.⁵¹ BAME beneficiaries are less likely to move between accommodation types than white-British beneficiaries.⁵² What our statistics do not show is the extent to which people move locations within a particular type of accommodation – such as moving between hostels or staying with different friends – which creates further instability.

For people with multiple needs, solutions are unlikely to be as straightforward as merely providing accommodation

Stable accommodation provides a vital foundation for building a fulfilling life. Just 19 per cent of beneficiaries spent at least some time in their own tenancy during the first three months on the programme.⁵³ But having a tenancy does not guarantee stability – of those who spent time in their own tenancy, over a quarter also spent time in other accommodation types, including rough sleeping and in temporary accommodation.⁵⁴ Additional support with maintaining tenancies is needed. People may need help to acquire furniture and other household items, with paying bills and claiming housing-related benefits, and sometimes in dealing with loneliness and social isolation if they have moved away from former peer networks.⁵⁵ Housing First, a person-centred approach that provides ongoing and flexible support, has resulted in high levels of tenancy sustainment where it has been used by Fulfilling Lives partnerships.⁵⁶

**Services need to
be simple to access
and a choice of
communication
methods available**

Bringing it all together – identifying different groups of Fulfilling Lives beneficiaries



It is important that people are assessed and treated as individuals

The analysis in the first part of this briefing provides an overview of those who have worked with the Fulfilling Lives programme. This is useful, but we can go further by bringing information on lots of different aspects of beneficiaries' lives together. We have identified six groups or broad types of beneficiary, based on an analysis of data on their behaviours and needs when they first join the programme. We have also looked at the different demographic characteristics of these groups.⁵⁷

The ethos of Fulfilling Lives is to provide personalised support, and it is important that people are assessed and treated as individuals, and their needs, aspirations, preferences and circumstances taken into account. But identifying groups of beneficiaries with similar experiences and behaviours on joining the programme can be useful in thinking about the range of different services that are likely to be needed and who are most likely to need them.

The descriptions that follow are based on the main defining features of each group and how each group compares to the others. This does not mean that everyone in the group has the same characteristics, behaviours or needs. The proportion of Fulfilling Lives beneficiaries in each group is also shown. However, partnerships work in different areas of the country and have different approaches to targeting beneficiaries and accepting referrals. So, not all these groups are equally prevalent across all areas.

The six groups we have identified are:

People in more settled accommodation, engaging with services

Group 1

7%

- Less severe needs than other groups, but still with multiple and complex needs
- Need help in particular with emotional and mental health, stress and anxiety
- Better engagement with frontline services
- Re-offending and substance misuse less of a problem
- More likely to have their own tenancy
- Unlikely to be rough-sleeping
- Many have problems with literacy
- Less likely to be disabled than other groups
- Slightly more females in this group than other groups
- Slightly more BAME people in this group than others

Rough sleepers with high needs and poor engagement

Group 2

14%

- High levels of need and risk across all issues – including substance misuse and offending
- More likely to be rough-sleeping than other groups
- Many get income from begging
- Poor engagement with frontline services
- Reflective of Fulfilling Lives beneficiaries as a whole in terms of age and gender
- Many have problems with literacy

High need and risk with poor engagement with services

Group 3

35%

- Similar to group 2
- High levels of need and risk across all issues – including substance misuse and offending
- Don't (or don't admit to) begging or getting income from illegal activity
- Variety of accommodation types
- But less likely to be rough-sleeping than group 2
- Reflective of Fulfilling Lives beneficiaries as a whole in terms of age, gender ethnicity and disability
- Less likely to have problems with literacy

Younger people with less entrenched needs

Group 4

10%

- Problems with substance misuse and mental health
- Re-offending less of an issue than other groups (except group 1)
- Better levels of self-reliance, living skills and physical health than other groups
- Variety of accommodation – slightly more likely to be sofa-surfing and less likely to be in supported accommodation than other groups
- Younger age profile than most other groups – over a third are under 30
- Less likely to have problems with literacy

Younger people in hostels with high levels of need and risk

Group 5

10%

- More likely to be in hostels and other temporary accommodation
- High levels of need and risk across most issues
- Get income from illegal sources
- More likely to get income from sex-work than other groups
- Younger age profile than other groups – over 40 per cent are under 30
- Relatively low levels of disability/long-term health conditions

Older people in supported accommodation

Group 6

27%

- High levels of need and risk in relation to drug and alcohol use
- Slightly higher levels of risk from others than other groups
- Offending less of an issue
- More likely to be in supported accommodation
- Older age profile than other groups – over 20 per cent are over 50
- More likely to be disabled or have long-term health conditions than other groups

People with multiple needs are a diverse group – although there are common threads, their experiences vary

Identifying these beneficiary groups helps to further underline the key point of this briefing. How, where and by whom people are engaged and supported needs to be nuanced according to factors such as life-stage, ethnicity and gender. Groups with the highest levels of need also have poor levels of engagement with frontline services⁵⁸ – it is not enough to simply build a service and hope people will come. Fulfilling Lives partnerships make use of persistent street outreach to reach those with the most severe needs. But some groups are less visible on the streets than others and services need to work differently to engage them.

The people in Group 4 have less entrenched needs but still have complex problems relating to substance misuse and housing. It is important that services effectively address these to prevent people's problems getting worse and affecting other areas of their lives. Fulfilling Lives is designed to target those who are least likely to engage with services. But it is important that those with less severe needs and who are engaging (Group 1) receive personalised and ongoing support to progress and avoid becoming discouraged and developing more complex issues. Fulfilling Lives partnerships frequently highlight examples of people seeking help, but not getting what they need.⁵⁹

The groups we have identified provide a useful basis for further exploring what works in supporting people with multiple needs. In briefing 3 in this series we explore the different outcomes and progression patterns for different groups and what needs to change to ensure positive outcomes for all.

Further information about Fulfilling Lives

The National Lottery Community Fund has invested £112 million over 8 years in local partnerships in 12 areas across England, helping people with multiple needs access more joined-up services tailored to their needs. The programme aims to change lives, change systems and involve beneficiaries. The programme is not a preventative programme, but instead aims to better support those with entrenched needs who are not otherwise engaging with services. The programme uses coproduction to put people with lived experience in the lead and builds on their assets to end the revolving door of disjointed care for adults. The programme also has a strong focus on systems change, so that these new ways of working can become sustainable.

For more information about the Fulfilling Lives programme visit <https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/strategic-investments/multiple-needs> or contact laura.furness@tnlcommunityfund.org.uk

For more information on the evaluation of Fulfilling Lives, including local partnership evaluations, visit www.mcnevaluation.co.uk or contact rachel.moreton@cfe.org.uk

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11. Age profile, n=2,645, see accompanying method notes, Table 1.
12. Bramley and Fitzpatrick, *Hard Edges*.
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21. See accompanying method notes, Table 23.
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25. Ethnicity, n=2,517, see accompanying method notes, Table 3. Fulfilling Lives area populations sourced from Census 2011 www.nomisweb.co.uk
26. Bramley and Fitzpatrick, *Hard Edges*.

27. Mental Health Foundation (2019) *Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities* [online] Available at <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/a-to-z/b/black-asian-and-minority-ethnic-bame-communities> [Accessed 5th April 2019].
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30. The number of BAME beneficiaries is too small to analyse levels of need by specific ethnic groups. Instead we have grouped together all those whose ethnicity is anything other than white British.
31. See accompanying method notes, Tables 23 and 24.
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33. Disability or long-term health problem, n=2,303.
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41. See accompanying method notes, Table 7.
42. See accompanying method notes, Tables 19, 20 and 22.
43. Getting income from unsafe or insecure income, n=1,491.
44. See accompanying method notes, Table 13.
45. See accompanying method notes, Table 21.
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47. See accompanying method notes, Table 21.
48. 86 per cent of beneficiaries received some form of welfare benefit during the first three months on the programme, n=2,101.
49. See accompanying method notes, Table 14.
50. We define homelessness as those who are sleeping rough, in temporary accommodation such as hostels and those temporarily sharing with family and friends.
51. Number of different types of accommodation, n=2,314.

52. See accompanying method notes, Table 11.
53. Accommodation during first three months, n=563.
54. 26 per cent of people who spent time in their own tenancy during the first three months on the programme also spent at least some time in other accommodation types, n=563.
55. Busch-Geertsema, V. (2013) *Housing First Europe Final Report* Housing First Europe: Bremen/Brussels.
56. Moreton et al *Promising practice*.
57. Based on data on 977 beneficiaries. See accompanying method notes for further information on how the groups were created.
58. As measured by the NDT assessment – see page 3 of the accompanying method notes for further information.
59. For example, see Birmingham Changing Futures Together (2016) *Year 2 Annual Report* BCFT.

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