

## Tackling Multiple Disadvantage – key lessons for commissioners

The Tackling Multiple Disadvantage (TMD) project was designed to support people facing homelessness who were also experiencing multiple disadvantage to pursue their employment goals. TMD was a Building Better Opportunities (BBO) project delivered between April 2017 and March 2020. TMD provided personalised coaching support and integrated training, volunteering, housing support, financial assistance and health-based interventions. The project supported 448 homeless people and achieved an employment outcome rate of 27 per cent, which is substantially higher than recent comparable projects. [Learning and Work Institute](#) conducted an evaluation of the service.

This document draws on lessons from TMD to set out considerations for commissioners of employment support for people with multiple and complex needs, including homelessness.

- **Invest in this proven model of employment support:** This support model is evidenced as being effective for homeless people with multiple, complex needs and should attract further funding. This approach could also be trialled with other groups with multiple and complex barriers to work, such as people with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) who are at heightened risk of homelessness if they are unable to access employment.
- **Integrate housing and employment support for homeless people:** Access to suitable and affordable housing was a key challenge to progression for TMD participants. The TMD approach would usefully integrate into a housing led approach (including Housing First) where stable, and affordable housing is secured first and employment and training needs can be addressed with an employment coach alongside this access to housing support.
- **Minimise monitoring and compliance requirements:** Onerous reporting and compliance requirements presented a barrier for some participants, diverted resources from delivery and contributed to staff turnover. Evidence requirements within a non-payment-by-results model should be reviewed to ensure they are as minimal as possible. To ensure service quality, lighter touch monitoring of participant progress could be coupled with tighter compliance procedures that are externally quality assured.
- **Review contractual performance targets to ‘measure what matters’:** A ‘distance travelled’ outcome structure should be used to account for intermediate outcomes. Projects supporting homeless people should include housing as well as employment outcomes, to ensure the project focus aligns with the aims and needs of participants.
- **Focus on employment quality and sustainment, not just job entry:** Providers should be encouraged to consider job quality in supporting participants into work, and to provide in work support to ensure participants sustain in work. Recording data on industry, pay and contract type would help to build an understanding of what works in supporting sustained employment.
- **Ensure long-term, large scale initiatives with robust and ongoing evaluation:** Large scale and long-term programmes should build in robust independent evaluation to enable continuous improvement and development from emerging evidence.