

Putting people at the heart of change



**Impact
Report
2025**

Foreword



by Hugh Evans,
Executive Director Adults & Communities,
Bristol City Council

Changing Futures Bristol has brought real momentum to the multiple disadvantage agenda, doing what we all agree is hugely important work.

Key to this is the unique partnership at the heart of the programme between the City Council and mental health organisation Second Step, who have been leading and collaborating in the multiple disadvantage space since 2012.

This impact report examines the progress of Changing Futures Bristol over the last three years and looks ahead to our goals for the current year where our core mission is to integrate our approach into existing systems to ensure it becomes standard practice.

As the report shows, individuals are at the heart of the work we do at Changing Futures Bristol.

We ensure clients are at the centre of their support, recognising that taking the time to listen to what they need creates the necessary conditions for change to happen. Do read Sarah's journey on page six to discover how she was able to build trust with her support workers and find ways to turn her life around.

In a system stretched beyond capacity, it's essential we consider what happens if national funding ends. Supporting multiple disadvantage costs money and we have established that our **My Team Around Me** support approach saves money over time. Implementing Changing Futures' ideas long-term

makes sense – from a human perspective, and an economic one.

The groundwork we do this year is vital. We must continue to support the system to change by implementing what we know works, such as our trauma-informed practice and our vision of better collaborative working, particularly with our colleagues with lived experience. We must continue to evaluate and adapt as we learn with equity, diversity and inclusion having an essential part to play.

We all agree this work cannot stop, and I believe we are well positioned to ensure that it does not.

Our vision:
People with multiple disadvantage are valued and empowered. They inspire and are inspired to have a life beyond services.

Introduction



from our Programme Director,
Kath Williams

Changing Futures Bristol is part of the national Changing Futures programme – a £91.8 million initiative funded jointly between the Government and The National Lottery Community Fund.

The Changing Futures national programme funds local organisations working together to support people who experience multiple disadvantage. Changing Futures Bristol has brought together partners with years of experience in working alongside people with lived experience of multiple disadvantage. Strong, long-term relationships with system leaders and a can-do attitude to achieve real change.

The Changing Futures team has built on the work of Golden Key Bristol – an eight-year programme which challenged the status quo and championed change in the way the system supported people facing multiple disadvantage.

A key difference is that accountability now sits within Bristol City Council's adult social care team, ensuring that multiple disadvantage has become everyone's business.

Changing Futures Bristol is in its fourth year, collaborating with professionals from many sectors including health, social care, voluntary and community services, criminal justice, local government, employment, and housing.

The programme has promised to do all it can to improve the outcomes for people experiencing multiple disadvantage. We have reviewed the programme's impact on individual clients,

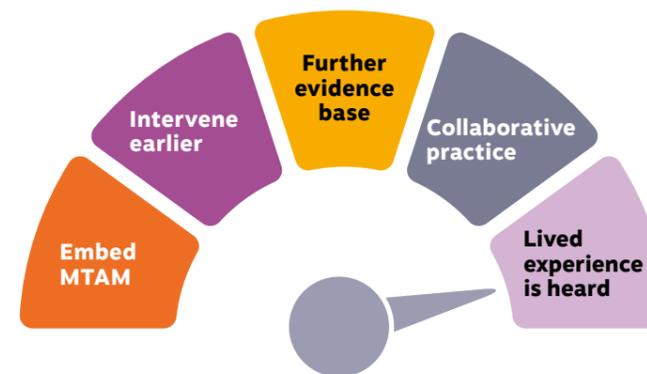
professionals, organisations that work in the system, and the system itself.

This impact report reveals an energy and sense of purpose to our work, which has created real and lasting change for those we support. I am very proud of what we are achieving together.

We have shown that making sure the individual is at the centre of their support enables them to make positive changes in their lives. What's more, this impact report reveals that for this change to have a lasting impact, collaboration among the professionals involved is crucial.

Our programme's strategic objectives

Changing Futures Bristol has focused on five key areas of work over the last three years – our five objectives. This report looks at our impact in each of these areas and then looks ahead to what's next. Our focus has been to:



One: Embed 'My Team Around Me'

Creating an innovative new approach to supporting people facing multiple disadvantage and rolling it out across the city. **My Team Around Me** has helped create real and lasting change in the system.

Two: Intervene earlier

Supporting organisations to prevent people reaching crisis. By promoting a culture of equity, diversity and inclusion, together with our trauma-informed approach, we have helped pioneer a prevention agenda, understanding that by working earlier, we're working smarter.

Three: Further the evidence base

Working with partners to collect data and insights around this group of people and their experiences of the system. In this way we can optimise our learning and make strategic changes to the system to improve it.

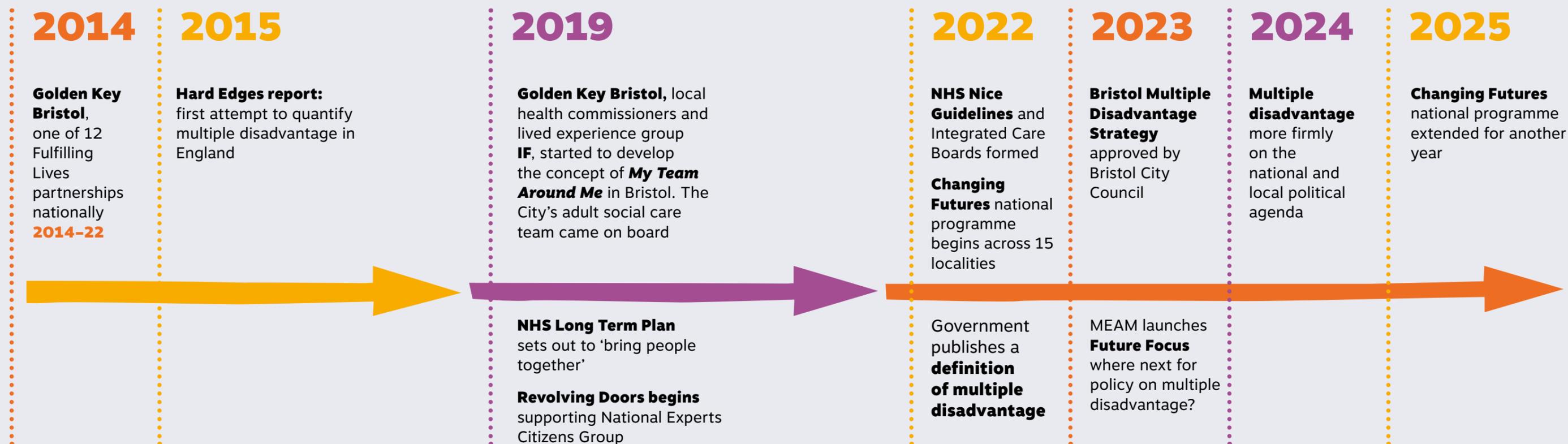
Four: Support collaborative working

Ensuring we embed the **My Team Around Me** approach across all organisations in the system to create consistency and facilitate change. By developing the MTAM Exchange we are bringing together practitioners, service managers, commissioners, those with lived experience and strategic leads to overcome system challenges together.

Five: Ensure the voice of lived experience is heard

An overarching aim has been to ensure the voices and views of people experiencing multiple disadvantage are heard throughout the system and the work we do. Coproduction has been at the heart of our programme and we will ensure the voice of lived experience continues to take centre stage.

Timeline of key events



Hearing what our clients have to say:

All too often we hear about person-centred services and person-centred organisations. All too often we hear from people, especially those with multiple needs, that they are not listened to, who say their voices aren't heard.

At Changing Futures, we recognised that we needed to start really hearing what our clients have to say.

We took the time to understand how our clients were feeling, what had happened to them and what they felt they needed and wanted to move forward.

Since 2022 we have worked with a group of 63 clients, each one was at the centre of their support with a Changing Futures service coordinator. In this way we were able to build change and support people to make the changes they wanted in their lives.

There are many journeys to share. Here we focus on one about Sarah (not her real name) and how she was able to finally make positive changes in her life.



Sarah's Journey

When we first met Sarah, she told us about being trapped in a relentless cycle of long-term homelessness, managing to survive repeated incidents of domestic violence and years of substance use and trauma.

Understandably, Sarah's feeling of abandonment and negative experiences had left her with a deep mistrust of services. We realised that like so many people dealing with multiple disadvantage, building a trusting relationship with her was going to take time, flexibility, and a different approach.

In all our work with Sarah, we stayed true to the principles of **My Team Around Me**, crucially making sure Sarah took the lead. Together we agreed a Collective Safety Plan built around her own goals, with Sarah in the room.

We encouraged her to focus on her strengths, not her setbacks — recognising her courage and building on her resilience. We adapted our communication to her needs, checking in with her to make sure the materials we used were ones that worked for her. We made sure she always felt informed and in control. At all times, we prioritised consistent, compassionate, flexible support to rebuild her trust.

Rebuilding slowly

Slowly, things began to change. Finally, Sarah secured stable housing and was able to leave sex work. She reduced her substance use, made huge strides in her mental health recovery, and began reconnecting with services which she was more able to trust.

Over time, Sarah rebuilt her own personal support network and, most importantly, achieved greater autonomy, empowerment, and stability. Sarah's journey shows that with the right support — led by her, not for her — lasting change is possible.

One: Embedding 'My Team Around Me' (MTAM)



MTAM is a multiagency approach for working with people experiencing multiple disadvantage.

Building on the city's existing good practice, it uses a strengths-based and trauma-informed approach providing the client with a collaborative team to support their needs. Importantly, the client is at the centre of their support, leading the process.

MTAM is based on four principles:

- **Client-led:** Enabling multi-agency teams to work in a person-centred, trauma-informed way.
- **Shared accountability:** Ensuring collective safety and support planning, sharing tasks, risks and resources.
- **Service continuity:** Supporting a one team approach particularly during transitions, and taking collaborative, preventative, and restorative approaches.
- **Innovative practice:** Empowering staff to challenge and change what they do through regular reflective spaces, supervision and support.

MTAM has improved systems and practices by enhancing relationships between organisations and increasing work flexibility. Practitioners feel more supported and connected. External evaluators have recognised MTAM as being trauma-informed and as demonstrating good practice with regard to its equity, diversity and inclusion policies, which were developed with Bristol race equity experts, SARI.

Developing MTAM from initial concept to citywide approach

MTAM was developed with the help of core partners, including Bristol City Council's Adult Social Care team, Second Step's mental health and homelessness service the Link Team, and Independent Futures (IF), a lived experience group.

Service coordinators tested and refined this approach, adapting to challenges faced.

The initial concept was operationally tested and refined. Over 200 people have been trained in MTAM, including Train the Trainer sessions, with a view to expanding the capacity of the approach.

MTAM is quickly becoming best practice for working with people facing multiple disadvantage.

"MTAM has felt the most genuine thing to actually 'put the people in the centre'."

Operational Practitioner

The impact of 'My Team Around Me'

This section highlights the impact Changing Futures has had on 63 clients who have been at the centre of the MTAM work.

Individualised solutions for individual priorities

Clients recognised that their service coordinator treated them as individuals, working flexibly to prioritise their needs and wishes – specifically, around personal care and promoting self-esteem.

Improved mental health and wellbeing

Individuals felt happier, more hopeful, and more able to enjoy life.

Clients rediscovered their passions and interests, including activities such as crafting, interior design, boxing, DJing and music production.

Safer and more stable lives

Improvements in housing, feeling safer from others, and fewer incidents of self-harm. Clients reported that their service coordinators were responsive and able to achieve things more quickly than other services.

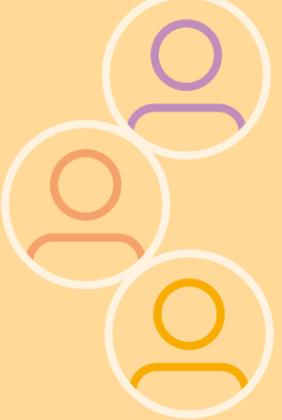
More stability and support

MTAM helped people move out of crisis and into more stable places.

Stronger relationships and improved confidence

Clients had increased trust in professionals and felt more involved in making choices about their lives. Changing Futures clients also noted that they had not experienced working with services where they felt the staff really understood them as an individual and cared.

Individuals told us building trust with their service coordinator meant they were able to build trust with other professionals involved in their support.



People felt heard and included

75%
of clients are now in 'outstanding' or 'accomplished' MTAMs, with better relationships and outcomes

"People have actually been brought into the room for discussions that concern them."
MTAM Practitioner

MTAM is becoming the go-to approach

Services are applying MTAM principles beyond formal MTAMs

'Train the Trainer' sessions embedding best practice

Over **200** people trained from **33** organisations




Staff feel supported, not alone

MTAM encourages shared responsibility and practical collaboration across services

"I'm glad we were able to respond together. I don't feel like I had to hold it on my own."
Probation Officer

Organisations have gained confidence in their practice

Using MTAM principles to strengthen their approach and adapt processes—even beyond formal MTAM settings, as noted by evaluators Pelumbra



Equity, Diversity and Inclusion is built into the heart of the model

MTAM flexes to meet cultural and intersectional needs, adapting with purpose and respect

"Pragmatic, inclusive, and collaborative."
SARI (EDI Partner)

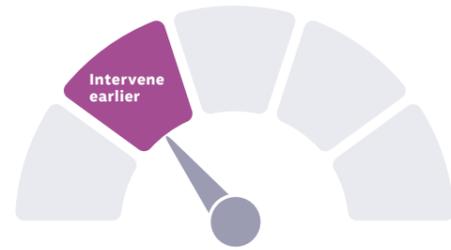


What's next?

Our ambition is for MTAM to be the go-to model for supporting people experiencing multiple disadvantage, from grass roots organisations to statutory bodies.



Two: Intervening earlier



Our second objective is to make sure the system does what it can to intervene earlier. There is consensus around the importance of early intervention and prevention across sectors from health to criminal justice.

The more we can do to support people before they reach crisis not only gives them more opportunity to keep safe and well, but it also makes economic sense for the system as a whole. Emergency support is expensive. Intervening earlier not only saves lives, it saves money too.

The theme of early intervention runs through all our work.

The following two initiatives have particularly benefited from our approach:

Child protection

55% of Changing Futures clients with children are recorded as having had at least one child removed from their care. Women who have experienced repeat removals are 14 times more likely to die prematurely.

Changing Futures Bristol and the University of Bristol worked together to understand and improve support for parents. Workshops with lived experience groups and professionals mapped and identified gaps in support for parents. Insights and considerations for future practice will be owned by the Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership Board.

Restorative approaches

Changing Futures Bristol piloted a restorative approach in partnership with homelessness charity St Mungo's and women's mental health organisation Missing Link. The aim was to reduce evictions by shifting away from punitive responses towards a more compassionate, person-centred way of working.

Restorative approaches focus on rebuilding relationships through conversation, encouraging accountability, empathy and a shared understanding of how individual actions affect others. Staff trained in the approach received monthly coaching to build confidence and embed the techniques. Six months in, staff reported feeling more empowered to have challenging conversations and better equipped to support residents in resolving conflict.

A manager from Missing Link said: "We would like to reduce warnings and punitive measures. Restorative approaches allow meaningful client involvement. By creating a respectful environment, we believe behaviour will improve as people understand the impact of their actions."

By the end of the pilot, Changing Futures Bristol worked with Bristol City Council to explore how restorative approaches could be more widely embedded in homelessness services across the city.



Our focus on building relationships with our clients and across the system has meant we have been able to keep the client at the centre of their support

This has meant change can take place. Nationally, we have seen some significant improvements for clients, as a result of our approach



Fewer A&E attendances

Reduction in rough sleeping

From **31%** to **16%**

Decrease in violent crime experiences

From **48%** to **33%**

44% of participants reported an improved quality of life



What's next?

We will be focusing our MTAM resources, including senior MTAM practitioners, at critical points throughout the system. This will support system partners to shift from taking a crisis response to establishing MTAM earlier.

"I've built trust with my [service coordinator] and that's helped me build trust with the council and the people that have come in after...my service coordinator is pre-empting certain things before they happen. Prevention is always better than cure."

Changing Futures client

Three: Furthering the evidence base



“We need to work with all threads of the system... we all know it’s the right thing to do. Now, we just need to do it.”

Senior Strategic Leader

Changing Futures has worked hard to get multiple disadvantage on the map. Over the last three years we have successfully changed the way the system thinks about policy, funding and commissioning in relation to people experiencing multiple disadvantage.

Bristol is now in a position to become a leader in this important work, embedding core principles of the Changing Futures approach across the City Council and ensuring work is aligned with our trauma-informed and coproduction objectives.

Key to our overall approach is our third objective to build the evidence base to prove that our work makes sense – on a human level, and on an economic level too. To do this we have built strong relationships with strategic partners across the city to support our work.

Our key achievements in this strategically important area are:

Bristol’s first Multiple Disadvantage Strategy 2023 – 2026

Bristol was one of the first cities in the UK to develop and adopt a Multiple Disadvantage Strategy. Aiming to achieve long-term improvements, the strategy is co-owned by the agencies involved and supports a sustained multiple disadvantage focus looking to make significant changes in people’s life chances and outcomes.

Multiple Disadvantage Transformation Board (MDTB)

In order to deliver the Multiple Disadvantage Strategy, it was recognised that the system needed a strategic board to ensure delivery. By applying a multiple disadvantage lens to operational and commissioning activity across sectors, the board takes a multi-agency relational approach to ensure it listens to the system and takes action. The Board is a key part of delivering Changing Futures MTAM agenda and as such it plays a pivotal role in delivering sustainable system change.

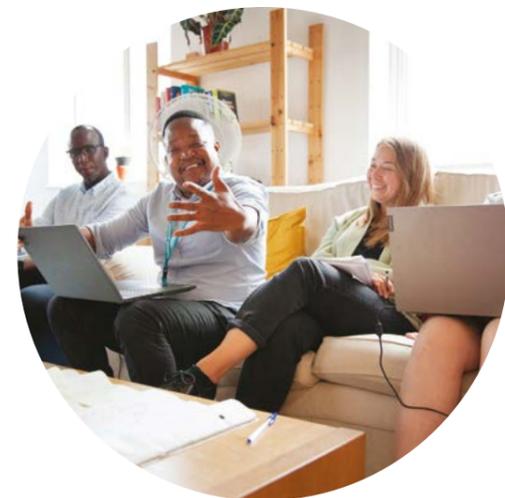
Health commissioners and System Wide Dataset work

The programme is working with health commissioners at the Integrated Care Board (ICB), Healthier Together, to better understand the impacts of multiple disadvantage and reduce health inequalities across the city. We are helping to develop a multiple disadvantage section in the ICB’s strategic plan for 2040. This will ensure longer-term consideration for people who find themselves excluded from support.

We are also working with Healthier Together and Bristol’s Public Health team to quantify the scale of multiple disadvantage in Bristol as previously a lack of data has prevented action. This will improve understanding and provide evidence to prioritise multiple disadvantage work and measure impact.

Embedding in service specifications

By establishing MTAM as a clearly defined model, we have been able to give a shared language to the best practice in the city, and ensure policy is aligned with the good work on the ground. So far MTAM has been specified as a key delivery model within Bristol City Council’s Housing First, Homelessness Pathway services and the Independent Domestic and Sexual Violence Advisory service and strategy. It is also recognised as best practice by the City Council’s Adult Social Care team and their recent Care Quality Commission Inspection.

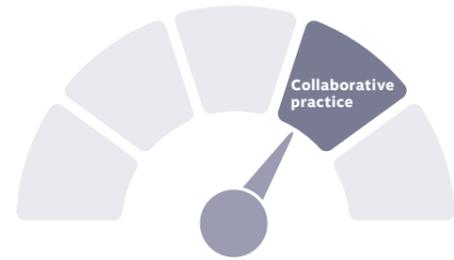


Photographs from various Changing Futures events.

What’s next?

We will continue to produce evidence to demonstrate the scale and prevalence of multiple disadvantage across Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire to inform commissioning and service development both locally and nationally.

Four: Supporting collaborative working



Changing Futures Bristol recognises the importance of collaboration to deliver good services and improve the system – which is why our fourth objective is supporting collaborative working within teams, between partners and across the system.

Having established, supported, and facilitated collaborative spaces involving 50 organisations, we have successfully connected and empowered people from across the system to achieve their individual and shared goals.

Learning Collectives

We established a series of cross-sector learning spaces designed to support the system. Sessions were held in partnership with teams from the Probation Service, Bristol Drugs Project, Second Step's Help When You Need It service, The Nelson Trust & the Integrated Care Board.

Sharing dilemmas, each organisation explored and addressed challenges together, helping to discover solutions and further strengthening their multi-agency approach.

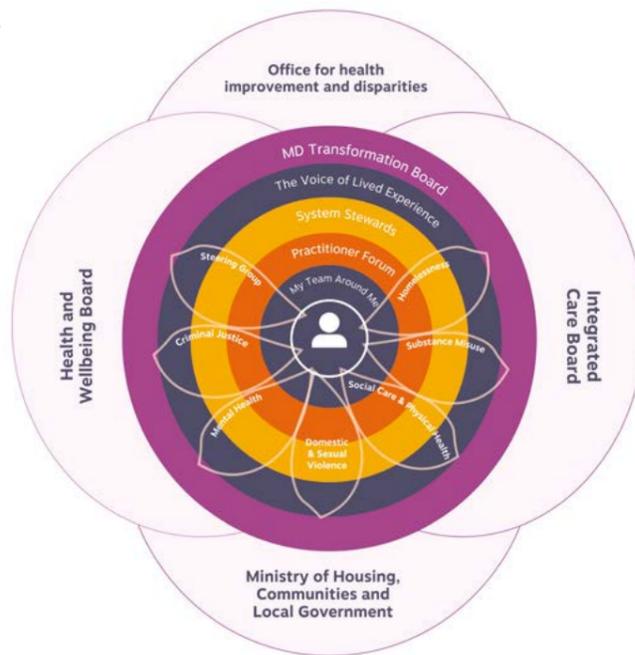
Exchange groups

As the appetite for cross-sector learning grew and **My Team Around Me** (MTAM) started to take root, the Exchange was created. It acts as both a learning forum, and a bridge between the operational work of MTAM and the wider system. This helps to ensure that the work can move beyond addressing individual issues and into changing the systemic drivers of these issues.

The Exchange consists of four groups: practitioners, system stewards, people with lived experience, and system transformation. The Exchange represents each layer of the system, and each domain of

multiple disadvantage. The groups meet regularly to explore and address system blocks, exchanging information as needed.

Our EDI partner, SARI, reviewed the Exchange and found consistent inclusive facilitation: **“When you're in an Exchange meeting... you really start to build, collaborate and create a network which helps deliver the outcomes of all the organisations involved.”** EDI Lead/ Exchange participant.



“I have much better connections with people in the system than I did 12 months ago.”

Senior Manager Statutory Service

Staff feel empowered

Staff feel confident to shape local systems and influence future policy, supported by the Learning Collective, the Exchange and training



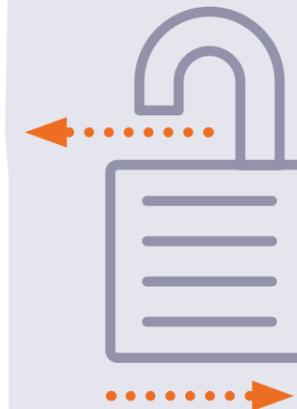
Problem-solving is shared

Teams are connecting the dots across services, working together to find creative solutions that work for people, not just systems



Learning Collectives have created action

This aspirational learning approach has inspired attendees to try new methods, showing a strong appetite for change and innovation across the system



System blocks are being addressed

Barriers such as inconsistent trauma-informed care, limited same-day prescribing access, early prison releases and uncertainty with information sharing have been cascaded through the system



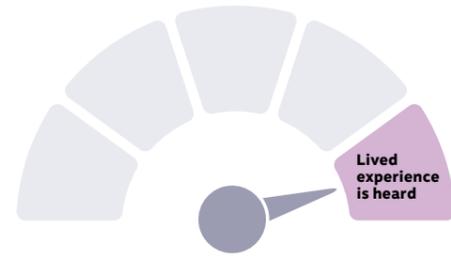
Stronger cross-agency relationships

Trust and understanding between organisations have grown, reducing tension and improving collaboration around client outcomes

What's next?

The MTAM Exchange will continue to create stronger connections, break down barriers, and firm up the foundations for culture and system change. We will bring people together to encourage relational working, collective problem-solving and shared accountability.

Five: Ensuring the voice of Lived Experience is heard



“I really enjoyed IF input...they were great. They bring a more digestible, real, honest (in touch) language that brings people back down a peg and brings focus back to client experience and client voice.”

Service Manager

Over the past 12 years the Independent Futures (IF) group of people with lived experience has successfully brought the voice of lived experience into the professional space. The group has been instrumental in shaping services for people experiencing multiple disadvantage.

IF has worked closely with the Changing Futures team over the last three years to become the vehicle through which we ensure the voice of lived experience is heard – the fifth objective of our strategic vision.

The IF group has worked with agencies across the city to shape and develop services together, using lived and learned experience, so that services work better for the people who use them.

The 15 members of IF have contributed to 87 areas of work with 31 organisations across the city.

Activities have included workshops, training, challenging, educating, and chairing. Their efforts have been recognised by researchers at Pelumbra, Bristol University and the University of the West of England, and other partners working across Bristol, for contributing towards a trauma-informed system. It has been praised by practitioners, managers and leaders for authentically bringing the voice of lived experience into the work.

The IF group has made a significant impact on service delivery and developing new approaches through coproduction.

This is illustrated by three key achievements:

1. IF members were crucial in the ICB's Trauma-Informed Systems Programme, collaborating with the University of Bristol on a trauma-informed evaluation, creating a practice framework, and delivering leadership events. Their efforts have helped embed trauma-informed practices across the city.
2. IF's involvement in the City Council's Multiple Disadvantage and Rough Sleeping strategies ensured these were shaped by lived experience, leading to more inclusive and responsive strategies.
3. IF's work with the LINK Team improved its service design, accessibility, and processes, fostering a client-centered approach and better outcomes.

“I've had many lightbulb moments through IF which have inspired my understanding of myself and my journey... it's empowering”

Independent Futures (IF) Member

What professionals think of lived experience involvement

The Professionals Lived Experience Survey was sent to individuals and organisations across Bristol and sectors involved in multiple disadvantage. Lead professionals from over 40 workstreams were contacted. Responders came from various sectors, including health, housing, local authority leads, probation, university researchers, and voluntary sector partners

100%

of people strongly agreed that lived experience involvement brought greater diversity of views, expertise and perspectives to their teamwork

71% + 29%

strongly agreed + agreed

that lived experience involvement helped them make their work more productive, accessible and flexible

43%

strongly agreed

+

57%

agreed

that lived experience involvement successfully kept the focus on the client's needs and represented them adequately

What's next?

We are establishing a Lived Experience Alliance - a collaborative network designed to strengthen coproduction and knowledge-sharing among system partners. As part of this work, we will launch Bristol Community Voice, a dynamic new model for system-wide coproduction, built on lived experience and with a clear pathway to long-term sustainability. This model will connect existing initiatives, align engagement with individuals' personal goals, and support the development of skills and capabilities.

Next steps: Beyond Changing Futures

Changing Futures Bristol has achieved a great deal, yet there is more to do.

Bristol is changing, with trauma-informed practice and MTAM being structurally embedded and the voice of lived experience louder than ever before.

The Changing Futures Bristol programme has built on past efforts, laying another foundation stone in a shared mission to create a better system for people facing multiple disadvantage in the city.

In this year 2025 to 2026, the programme will play its part in an ambitious, city-wide plan to **empower people facing multiple disadvantage to live a life beyond services** by working as system partners to embed sustainable, city-wide change.

Our priority will be to integrate the multiple disadvantage agenda into organisational and system policy and practice. Our ambitions form the strategic objectives of Bristol City Council's Multiple Disadvantage Delivery Plan.

Our plan for the year ahead is clear:

One: Embed My Team Around Me

Provide practical support to partners adopting this approach, share training, resources and seek feedback to further develop the model

Support more people experiencing multiple disadvantage by working through established teams

Capture the impact of coordinated relational work at the client, service and system level to inform the local and national longer-term approach to multiple disadvantage.

Two: Intervene earlier

Direct **My Team Around Me** (MTAM) resources to provide support at critical points of intervention including:

- Responding positively to multi-agency safeguarding concerns
- Supporting outreach and engagement
- Preventing homelessness and addressing challenges faced by women

Equity in capacity needs to be resolved so all organisations, including smaller grassroots organisations, can contribute to change the system.

Three: Further the evidence base

Working closely with strategic partners (including the ICB and Bristol's Public Health team) to bring a multiple disadvantage lens and the voice of lived experience to data and insights work that will influence system transformation projects and programmes

Use learning and experiences including working with people with lived experience and staff, to change the way in which services are delivered

Focus on monitoring impact and outcomes at service and system level and ensure we connect with other Changing Futures areas

Outcomes measures should be person-centred, moving from activity-based measures to quality-of-life or fidelity measurement.

Four: Support collaborative working

Embed the **My Team Around Me** Exchange so that practitioners, stewards and the Multiple Disadvantage Transformation Board (MDTB) can facilitate service and system level change and improve relational working across the system

The MDTB will consider services' intersecting goals and how ownership will be shared across multi agency forums

Ensure there are places for people to connect, share learning and collaboratively problem-solve.

Five: Ensure the voice of lived experience is heard

The voice of lived experience must be heard and supported throughout the city: in strategic spaces and forums

Work to establish a city-wide strategic approach to lived experience coproduction with a particular focus on multiple disadvantage, bringing diversity of lived experience voices across the **My Team Around Me** Exchange

Recognise and value the wealth of lived expertise in the workforce and promote an inclusive supportive culture.

“We are delighted to see the progress made by Bristol on tackling multiple disadvantage over recent years and look forward to seeing the ambitions being developed by the Multiple Disadvantage Transformation Board take shape in this next phase.”

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