Applying Situational Analysis to examine the impact of VOICES on people experiencing multiple disadvantage

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<th>Journal:</th>
<th>Housing, Care and Support</th>
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<tr>
<td>Manuscript ID</td>
<td>HCS-02-2022-0006.R1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manuscript Type:</td>
<td>Research Paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keywords:</td>
<td>multiple disadvantage, Situational Analysis, fair access, Housing First, systems thinking, failure demand</td>
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Introduction
Multiple disadvantage

Multiple disadvantage has been defined as ‘experience of two or more of homelessness, offending, substance misuse and mental ill health’ (Lamb et al., 2019, p5). Similar to terms such as ‘severe and multiple disadvantage’ (Bramley et al., 2015) or ‘multiple and complex needs’ (Harland et al., 2022), multiple disadvantage is used to describe a population at the extreme margins of social disadvantage (Bramley et al., 2015, p11). Under these circumstances, people tend to have much worse health and quality of life compared with other low income and vulnerable people, and can place disproportionate demands on certain public services (e.g., emergency health care, criminal justice system), with considerable societal costs.

A key focus of the national Fulfilling Lives programme was on changing systems that can enable sustainable improvements in the lives of people experiencing multiple disadvantage. These ‘systems’ can be considered a complex non-centrally controlled system of interdependent, autonomous parts that are expected to (but often do not) function as a coherent whole (Rutter et al., 2017). Through taking a systems focus, Fulfilling Lives recognised that multiple disadvantage is less a product an individual’s beliefs and attitudes, and more a function of the system that should support them, i.e., behaviour of institutions, policy decisions, public attitudes and cultural norms perpetuate social problems that keep people in a state of dire need (Abercrombie et al., 2015).

Systems change has been described as the ‘intentional process designed to alter the status quo by shifting and realigning the form and function of a targeted system’ (Foster-Fishman et al., 2007, p. 197). Social systems are often complex and comprise many components of different types (e.g., people, services, policies, practices). Therefore, to effect lasting change requires altering underlying structures and mechanisms that make the system operate in a certain way (e.g., policies, practices, relationships, resources, power structures, values) (Abercrombie et al., 2015). This demands action and support from different sectors and organisations within the local support system (Nichols & Doberstein, 2016), ultimately, to improve the circumstances and lives of those with multiple disadvantage (Flower et al., 2019).

Setting

This paper presents a Situational Analysis undertaken as part of a summative evaluation of Voices of Independence Change and Empowerment in Stoke-on-Trent (VOICES), an eight-year local implementation of Fulfilling Lives (2014-2022). VOICES targeted systems change efforts in three priority areas:

- Ensuring fair access to services – in addition to casework and service coordination to facilitate access to services for VOICES customers, a range of VOICES activities within this workstream aimed to address systemic barriers to customers receiving the support they needed. They included the Multi-agency Resolution Group (MaRG), embedding specialist welfare advisors in frontline services to help customers to access benefits to which they were entitled, and conducting research
to better understand common barriers such as difficulty registering with a GP as well as poor outcomes following prison release or hospital discharge.

- **Housing First** – following the trial of a housing-led intervention 2014 -2018 (similar to Housing First,), VOICES worked to embed a Housing First programme, which adhered to the programme principles (Homeless Link, 2016), through a pilot implementation (2018-2022). VOICES supported through various roles: Service Coordinator, Landlord Liaison Officer, and Tenancy Sustainment Officer, in addition to funding a 12-month extension (2021-2022) and an independent programme evaluation (Author name removed for anonymous review. 2021).

- **Making services users leaders in service design and commissioning** – VOICES worked with and supported Expert Citizens, putting coproduction with lived experience at the heart of its activities, and helping with Expert Citizens’ development to become an independent Community Interest Company (CIC).

**Situational Analysis**

Advanced methodologies are required to study this type of complex systems change, where traditional approaches grounded in linear models of cause and effect are inappropriate (Martin *et al*., 2016; Rutter *et al*., 2017). We needed a methodology that embraced fragmentation, instability, diversity, context, and positionalities, such as Situational Analysis (Clarke *et al*., 2018), which is designed to unpick knowledge from complex inquiries (Wulff, 2008).

Situational Analysis was well-suited to exploring how and to what extent VOICES had impacted the ‘situation’ of the wider system of support for people experiencing multiple disadvantage in Soke-on-Trent, for several reasons. First, it is an iterative and data driven methodology. This was appropriate as we did not have a predefined hypotheses and were guided by the data to understand the complexity of the situation (Clarke *et al*., 2018; Meadows, 2008). As detailed subsequently, discourses and issues identified, were further explored through revisiting materials, or seeking confirmation or clarification through alternative sources, thus allowing key discourses to develop. Second, Situational Analysis is a flexible methodology that can accommodate a range of secondary and primary data sources, such as reports, interviews, field notes and minutes, giving equal credence to written and verbal evidence (Clarke *et al*., 2018). This enabled use of the wealth of existing evaluations, reports and other existing data accumulated throughout VOICES, with follow-up workshops to verify emergent themes. Third, Situational Analysis is one of the few methodologies that puts context (‘situation’) at the heart of the investigation (Clarke, 2005). Here, the situation was the wider system of services and support for people experiencing multiple disadvantage in the city, which is distinct from other settings and population types, and needed to be fully understood.

Some researchers have suggested that these key properties align Situational Analysis with complexity inquiry and systems thinking (Martin *et al*., 2016). The present study takes this alignment a step further, using Situational Analysis as an evaluation tool to identify systemic barriers that prevent people with multiple disadvantage from accessing supportive services and how VOICES worked to address them.
Method
Design
A case study design was used, which defined the boundaries of the situation of inquiry: the wider system of support for people in Stoke-on-Trent who experience multiple disadvantage. The three-stage process of Situational Analysis’ conceptual mapping was applied, as outlined below. This aimed to provide a detailed picture of both the non-linear interlinkage and complexity of the local support system structures, as well as the processes that shaped the experiences of those who act within the situation (Martin et al., 2016).

Data
Data sources were primarily existing materials, including completed and on-going VOICES reports and projects, and associated evidence (including interviews and case studies), field notes, and minutes of meetings (Supplementary file 1), with additional contextual information from stakeholder workshops to explore specific discourses.

Three stages of Situational Analysis
The first stage involved the collation and detailed review of all materials, to develop situational maps that identified all important human and nonhuman elements of the situation (e.g., key individuals, technologies), including key discourses or issues. In the second stage, social worlds/arenas maps were developed to locate and analyse the collective action of organisations in their ‘social worlds’ and their role with respect to the key discourses in the situation (arena). In the third stage, positional maps unpacked all positions that emerged from data relating to key discourses or issues that were relevant to each of VOICES’ three priority areas. Positional maps were in the form of Cartesian maps, one for each major discourse/issue, where axes present the issues of concern or controversy (Clarke, 2005).

As Situational Analysis dictates nothing was taken for granted, especially on issues that seem “normal” within the situation and, therefore, have become invisible. Minor discourses or issues were given equal consideration to more prominent issues because relative prominence can be indicative of power imbalances. Deviations from the norm were not treated as exceptions but as boundaries of the situation. Finally, a thorough investigation was used to identify all relevant actors/actants, including those usually hidden, silenced, or only tangentially present, as they can help to improve our understanding of the situation (Clarke, 2005).

Findings
This section presents the findings from each stage of Situational Analysis. Positional maps from stage 3 represent the main discourses and issues in relation to each VOICES priority area for systems change.
Outcomes from stages 1 and 2 are presented to show the process, which is reported in more detail elsewhere (Author name removed for anonymous review, 2022).

**Stage 1: Situational maps**

Processes set out by Clarke *et al.* (2018) were followed. After thoroughly reading and memoing all written materials, ‘messy’ maps were produced, followed by a series of ordered maps, which set out all human and non-human elements of the situation. We also began to identify major issues and discourses such as the “stigma and marginalization” and “equity issues in healthcare provision”, which later on, were used to focus the Situational Analysis. The final outcome of this stage of analysis was the creation of three situational relational maps, one for each of the three VOICES’ priorities, to illustrate relationships between the elements of interest and other elements in the situation, in a systematic and coherent way.

**Stage 2: Social worlds/arenas maps**

The relational maps generated questions that were further explored through three workshops (one for each priority area) that eventually led to the next phase of Situational Analysis and the creation of the social worlds/arenas map (Figure 1). This map represents the key social active players (social worlds), and the field (arena) in which they interact. As Clarke *et al.* (2018, p.150) stressed, it maps the “relational ecological form of organizational analysis dealing with how meaning making, and commitments are organized and reorganized again and again over time”.

Five different social worlds comprised the VOICES partnership: third sector housing associations that support housing needs; voluntary sector champions who support those who require and use health care services; local public sector agencies, mostly local authority (e.g., Housing, MaRG) and the NHS; legal advisers’ social world, which was dominated by the third sector welfare advisers; Expert Citizens, who acted as ambassadors of local people with lived experience of multiple needs and disadvantage.

The remaining social worlds aligned closely with VOICES objectives (while not being part of the VOICES partnership) such as legislation, criminal justice system, healthcare sector and academia. This visual representation of the VOICES partnership shows the complexity of the situation, but also illustrates how VOICES provided the common ground for many organisations to tackle multiple disadvantage. This helped to overcome competitive attitudes and practices from partnerships of voluntary and public sectors.

Although the main findings are presented in positional maps (stage 3), some aspects that emerged from the social world/arenas map are worth noting here. Following the “like with like” approach (Clarke *et al*., 2018), agreeable relationships between organisations are represented by putting them besides one another, while conflicting organisations are opposing. Figure 1 depicts the power-seeking relationship of Expert Citizen’s CIC, a pinnacle achievement of VOICES legacy, relative to the other VOICES partnership organisations. By positioning Expert Citizens opposing other partnership organisations, indicates their move to independence in future decision-making processes regarding the local multiple disadvantage population.

More subtly, though important, is the role of academia. As a wider workforce that supported VOICES efforts, academia was placed as an adjunct of the partnership’s organisation. Specifically, through its consultancy and evaluator role, academia supported rigorous independent research and outcomes to
guide practice and policy (e.g., evidence of primary care gatekeeping; evidence of ineffective hospital discharge processes for people experiencing homelessness).

Finally, several human elements had an indirect role in the situation (referred to as implicated actors’), but critically did not appear to have done so before VOICES. For example, General Practitioners were relevant through their legal obligation, but apparent resistance to support people experiencing homelessness, and the implications for crisis healthcare services. Private landlords and letting agents were implicated actors through filling the gap in housing provision in Housing First, in some cases, creating issues in accommodation quality and maintenance.

Figure 1. Social worlds / arenas map

Stage 3: Positional maps

Drawing on the wealth of material considered, the final stage of analysis elucidated the various positions taken with respect to the emerging discourses/issues for the three priorities under investigation. Under each of these priority areas, the discourses reflect key systemic issues and/or how VOICES was trying to affect systems change.

Fair access to local support services of people with multiple needs and disadvantage

Three positional maps are presented to highlight the major discourses/issues that created barriers to fair access and how VOICES’ work attempted to address them [other maps illustrating less prominent discourse can be found elsewhere (Author name removed for anonymous review, 2022)].

Stigma and marginalisation

Stigma and marginalisation among some personnel in public sector support services emerged as a fundamental barrier to people with multiple disadvantage accessing services (Figure 2). Described by one stakeholder, as “the elephant in the room” (Author name removed for anonymous review, 2019), when discussing hospital discharge processes for people experiencing homelessness, it was recognised that stigma can vary with the needs/situation of the individual (e.g., substance misuse vs. homeless vs. offending history). This created problems for those seeking care or support, as well as staff who lack the knowledge and experience to deal effectively with potentially challenging behaviour or situations.

Position C in Figure 2 illustrates VOICES’ work to address this. This produced legally informed materials and recommendations to raise awareness of the topic and roles/responsibilities (e.g., to avoid gatekeeping in primary care; co-producing products, often with people with lived experience, that challenge stigma and marginalisation, such as VOICES and Expert Citizen’s methodologies (e.g., INSIGHT) and tool kits (e.g., Care Act tool kit) to empower frontline staff to understand people experiencing multiple disadvantage, and empowered them to challenge unjust decisions/processes; the Learning Programme trained public sector professionals to acknowledge the importance of lived experience as basic component of their own professional development.
Responsibility and accountability gaps

Gaps in responsibility and accountability can result from fragmented systems and silo working (Author name removed for anonymous review, 2022). As Figure 3 illustrates, for people with multiple disadvantage, this was evident in the context of people exiting crisis services (e.g., Accident and Emergency to local authority), situations that demand clear understanding of the legal responsibilities of each organisations (and associated staff) to ensure effective transitions between settings and continuity of care or support.

Figure 3. Positional map for responsibility and accountability gaps as a barrier to accessing services

VOICES have shown the large gaps in provision, particularly between health and other services. Figure 3 illustrates some conflicting positions on this issue, that: those leaving health care are the responsibility of social care (Position A); that the third sector work beyond their remit to cover this gap, which can mask the shortcomings of the system (Position C). However, sustainable solutions were less clear, aside from the addressing the misunderstanding among difference settings and sectors regarding the meaning of “multiple needs” which could avoid misperceptions that individual’s needs did not fall within their remit (e.g., that homelessness was a health issue, not only a housing issue; Position B).

Legal literacy

Data indicated that lack of legal literacy was a common failure of the system, which was largely unchallenged before VOICES. As represented in Figure 4, lack of knowledge of some important legislation (e.g., Homelessness Reduction Act 2017; Care Act 2014) in the public sector, creates serious barriers for people with multiple disadvantage in accessing the services they need and to which they are entitled. We observed the position that managers and frontline staff working with insufficient knowledge or misunderstandings around policies, pass on ‘myths’ and misunderstandings to colleagues, which, in turn, become enacted as policy (Position A). This is a ‘negative feedback loop’, in which organisations lack the incentive to address the problem as doing so could mean having to deal with more situations, and potentially complex cases.

VOICES helped to address this problem through developing toolkits (e.g., Care Act toolkit) and models (e.g., WBLL) and the Learning Programme to facilitate development of related knowledge and skill in frontline staff (Position B).

Figure 4. Positional map for legal literacy as a barrier to accessing services
Housing First

Availability of suitable housing

The major issue with Housing First in Stoke-on-Trent was the limited availability of suitable housing. As shown in Figure 5, there were several related positions in the data, two of which appeared to reflect an issue that pre-dated the introduction of Housing First (Positions A and B) and jeopardised its principles and effectiveness: housing demand exceeding supply, leading to delays in Housing First customers securing tenancies (Position B); inconsistent supply of social and council properties (Position A). This resulted in a reliance on private landlords and letting agents, which had created some issues around accommodation quality and maintenance (Position C).

Finally, some stakeholders suggested that unrealistic customer expectations could be barriers to Housing First, citing examples of customers refusing accommodation offers (Position D). This neither violates Housing First principles nor suggests a mainstream behaviour of Housing First customers. The solution does not necessarily lie in addressing those customer expectations. Rather, this position points to a need to address stakeholder perceptions of the Housing First model. Again, it relates to a limited supply of appropriate properties (primarily single occupancy) that leads to compromise (whereby customers have to choose between accommodation that is unsuitable (based on quality or location) or wait (perhaps in hostel or on the street).

Figure 5. Positional map for availability of suitable housing as a barrier to Housing First

Sustainability of Housing First in Stoke-on-Trent

Figure 6 illustrates positions regarding the future of Housing First as a sustainable local strategy to tackle chronic homelessness. Their argument presented Housing First as a costly intervention with a relatively small number of beneficiaries, advocating for a less intense, housing-led intervention, which deviates from Housing First principles (e.g., finite support, tenancy conditional on engagement with support services; Position A). Opposing this was the perceived need to maintain Housing First as the key local strategy, which was apparently endorsed through local approval to extend the programme for 12 months using VOICES funding (Position B). Here, the cost of Housing First was recognised but with a counter argument that numerous other support services that are even more expensive, and with a related argument (Position C) inaction costs more than doing something, especially as effective intervention has wider benefits through avoiding the costs of dealing with the consequences of inaction [e.g., incarceration, emergency hospital care, 24/7 social care services (Author name removed for anonymous review, 2021)].

Figure 6. Positional map for programme sustainability as a barrier to Housing First
Making service users leaders in service design and commissioning

The third VOICES priority area concerned the greater role for people with lived experience, who, through VOICES, had become established within the political agenda and can be considered a key requirement for a systems change approach. Two positional maps are presented to illustrate key discourses/issues for this theme.

Development of Expert Citizens CIC

Development of Expert Citizens CIC was recognised as a cornerstone achievement of VOICES (Position A), the pinnacle of co-production between VOICES partnership and local people with lived experience (Figure 7). Despite this co-production and substantial contribution Expert Citizens, there was a suggestion that not all their ideas/suggestions had been taken into serious consideration or actioned by VOICES (Position B).

Peer mentoring

Peer Mentors were individuals with lived experience of multiple needs and disadvantage, who had joined Expert Citizens, received training and were willing to be exemplars to support current customers. They were used primarily for Housing First. There was a position that peer mentoring was beneficial for Housing First customers, helping to build informal relationships with customers and support with activities of daily life, while acknowledging the complexities and that such support is not a requirement of Housing First principles (Position A). There was concurrent concern regarding the potential negative impact on peer mentors (Position B); e.g., peer mentors feeling obliged to act beyond the remit of their role, or feeling overburdened, with risks to peer mentors’ mental health and recovery processes (theirs and the customers’). Caution and regular monitoring were proposed as one feasible solution.

Discussion

We report evidence from Situational Analysis of the VOICES partnership programme’s impact on the wider system of support for people in Stoke-on-Trent who experience multiple disadvantage, acknowledging the postmodern conceptual alignment of Situational Analysis methodology to systems thinking approaches (Martin et al., 2016)

Through the conceptual cartographic mapping process for each of the three priority areas in which VOICES aimed to affect systems change, Situational Analysis made two important contributions. First, Situational Analysis maps, as other system thinking approaches (Egan et al., 2019), suggested a new type of language that shifts narration from its reliance on the linear and logic formation of words (Meadows, 2008) toward the display of the diverse positionalities of the phenomena under investigation (Mathar, 2008). Secondly, they provoke a system thinking explanation, which is necessary for complexity inquiry (Martin et al., 2016) and permit researchers to embrace the
heterogeneity of the situation, which is usually hidden by positivist methodologies of cause-and-effect (Williams et al., 2018) or even excluded by “what works” interventions (Abercrombie et al., 2015).

Thus, despite being a ‘thick analysis’ methodology, Situational Analysis, also embraces abduction thinking (Clarke et al., 2018) that permits the identification of a higher and abstract level of explanation (though grounded in the data) of the non-linear relationships of the situation of interest (Chapman, 2004).

This section provides exactly that, a reflection on the learning from the above findings, expanding on evidence of VOICES’ efforts to address the local system’s failure demand [“demand caused by a failure to do something or do something right for the customer” (Seddon, 2003, p.26)] in supporting those with multiple disadvantage and needs.

VOICES made considerable efforts to support local people with multiple disadvantage and make positive changes to a system that often shifts blame to the individual for non-engagement/non-compliance with typical processes. Through studying the work of VOICES within the ‘situation’ of the support systems for this group, it was possible to identify several differential positions between the partnership and the public sector. These underpinned many of the observed findings and can be explained in the context of their different targets relating equality or equity, and their role in system’s failure demand. Equality approaches fairness as the provision of the same treatment/support opportunities to all (Takeuchi et al., 2018), whereas equity acknowledges the potentially different needs and abilities to access services provided. Thus, treatment/support are allocated proportionally (Duclos, 2006). This conceptual difference can have substantial implications for the support that the people with multiple needs and disadvantage receive (Chang, 2002). Moreover, this provides an appropriate basis to consider differences in this system and resulting support before and during VOICES (i.e., the difference VOICES made).

According to the evidence considered in Situational Analysis, support services more aligned with equality were mostly those of the public sector. This is perhaps not surprising as the common delivery focus is citywide and based on population needs, rather than being targeted or tailored to those with the most extreme disadvantage and needs (Author name removed for anonymous review, 2019). However, in this situation, it appears to have led to failure demand, exacerbating social and health inequities between the local general population and those with multiple disadvantage (Wilson et al., 2016). A series of examples from VOICES work show how people with multiple disadvantage and needs have been excluded from services, despite being eligible and entitled to support. For example, the observed lack of legal literacy and misinterpretation of the legislation’s inclination toward equity affects many services, ultimately, excluding the VOICES customer group from social, health and financial services. In turn, the lack of responsibility-taking in the public sector for those with multiple needs and disadvantage, alongside reactive and untargeted nature of some provision (e.g., prison release plans, hospital discharge), illustrated the causes of the revolving door issue, whereby those with the greatest needs are continually in/out of the same local support services (often in crisis). Finally, the perpetuation of the traditional treatment first or temporary hostel accommodation policy
is another indication of failure demand regarding how chronic homelessness has been addressed locally.

Furthermore, the equality principle and policies favour those in better social, physical and mental health, rather than people with multiple needs and disadvantage resulting in the ‘competitive exclusion principle’; a ‘gravitational force’ that keeps people with multiple needs and disadvantage in the same vulnerable position (Chapman, 2004). Eventually, when the problematic situation becomes unmanageable and overburdens the system (in what is called a ‘feedback delay’), the need to turn to more systems thinking solutions is acknowledged (Meadows, 2008). In this case, such solutions were attempted through Fulfilling Lives and VOICES.

VOICES actions reflected a need to focus on equity as the main target for tackling the social gradient, in line with what Marmot called proportionate universalism, whereby the intensity of the support was proportionate to the extreme need of VOICES customers (Marmot, 2010). To this end, VOICES addressed social or health inequality issues (e.g., appeals for benefit claims or gatekeeping from primary care) identified in supportive services. Firstly, by intervening and initiating “vertical equity”; i.e., working specifically to accommodate or tailor the service to a VOICES customer’s needs, and, secondly by securing “horizontal equity”, by tailoring the service to VOICES customer base (Duclos, 2006).

Specifically, to approach equity via systemic thinking, VOICES implemented a series of changes on the situation under inquiry. Initially, the emergence of Expert Citizens as ambassadors for people with multiple needs and disadvantage redirected the focus of the local support system. According to system thinking, changing one element cannot drastically transform the whole system. However, it can cause a redirection of priorities if the change is accompanied by analogous changes in nested systemic relationships (Chapman, 2004). For example, this was achieved through supporting Expert Citizens not only to become an independent CIC, but by acknowledging the need for skilful personnel who are accredited and trained to participate equally as co-designers (i.e., Care Act toolkit), co-researchers (i.e., interviewing and collecting data at various VOICES reports) and co-evaluators (i.e., INSIGHT). This is expected to provide long-lasting change that will continue to help transform the face of the local support system.

In parallel, VOICES gradually turned in to a totally co-produced project, an innovative, diverse and autonomous partnership, and took an “evolutionary learning” approach, which acknowledged the complexity of the support system for people with multiple needs and disadvantage (i.e., the situation). For example, the Learning Programme aimed to promote workforce development for more effective working with this population; the Welfare Benefits Leading and Learning (WBLL) aimed to improve legal literacy; research and evaluation were commissioned to inform practice. These measures also aimed to overcome professionals’ assumptions of who knows best, acknowledging the importance of lived experience as basic component of their own learning process and being open to constructive criticism as opportunities to learn and adapt.

Finally, VOICES aimed to effect changes in local support system for people with multiple needs and disadvantage. This was attempted through the efforts to reinstate legislation’s inclination toward
equity, either by raising awareness through legally informed documentation (i.e., Gatekeeping report; Care Act toolkit) or by intervening in the internal structure of organisations via the model(s) of specialist welfare Adviser and WBLL model to the frontline teams or through the pilot Housing First programme for immediate, permanent, and unconditional tenancies for customers, regardless of compliance with services (Bretherton & Pleace, 2016).

Conclusion
This novel application of Situational Analysis highlighted a number of issues in the system of support for people with multiple needs and disadvantage, and ways in which VOICES had impacted that system. During the eight years of VOICES, there was evidence of progress against all three priority areas for systems change, primarily tackling the social and health inequities. Where shortcomings or failures to make lasting impact were observed, VOICES commitment to learning and evaluation has allowed the new programs to support people with multiple disadvantage, particularly Changing Futures (DLUHC and MHCLG, 2021), to include measures that can address the problems encountered.
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Trent.pdf


Author name removed for anonymous review (2019) Hospital Discharge and Homelessness: Local stakeholder perspectives. Stoke-on-Trent: Centre for Health and Development, Staffordshire University.


Supplementary file 1. Resources for Situational Analysis

Reports

- VOICES (2020) *CASE STUDY#1: VOICES’ Care Act Toolkit : Improving access to mental health support for people experiencing multiple disadvantage* [http://www.issuu.com/voicesofstoke](http://www.issuu.com/voicesofstoke)
- Author name removed for anonymous review (2021) *Hard Edges Stoke-on-Trent :Reducing the costs of multiple needs to people and services: Financial analysis of VOICES* [http://www.issuu.com/voicesofstoke](http://www.issuu.com/voicesofstoke)
- Author name removed for anonymous review (2021) *Investigation of Housing First in Stoke-on-Trent* [http://www.issuu.com/voicesofstoke](http://www.issuu.com/voicesofstoke)
- Stoke-on-Trent Safe City partnership (2021) *Multi-agency Resolution Group Stoke-on-Trent: Working Together for Your Community*
- Author name removed for anonymous review (2019) *Hospital Discharge and Homelessness: Local stakeholder perspectives* [http://www.issuu.com/voicesofstoke](http://www.issuu.com/voicesofstoke)
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• Meakin A. (2020) *VOICES: Legacy Projects: Initiation document and plan*

• **Author name removed for anonymous review** (2015) *Right Time Right Place: A Multiple Needs Charter for Stoke-on-Trent 2016-2022*

• Fulfilling Lives (2019) *Changing systems for people facing multiple disadvantage*

• Rice B. (2018) *A Model of Specialist Welfare Advice and Advocacy at VOICES: How VOICES and Citizens Advice Staffordshire North and Stoke-on-Trent have worked together to provide welfare rights support to people with multiple needs*


• **Author name removed for anonymous review** (2021) *Welfare Benefits: Leading and Learning (WBLL) model in Stoke-on-Trent Evaluation report: Embedding a specialist Citizens Advice adviser in partner organisations, to work with staff and customers on benefits advice for people with multiple needs*


• VOICES, Expert Citizens 92(2016) *The Care Act Multiple Needs Toolkit*

• Expert Citizens, Keele University (2018) Access to Primary Care Services for Patients with “No Fixed Abode”: A follow-up of The Gatekeeper’s Report
• NHS Midlands & Lancashire (CSU) (2019) Guidance for considering the needs of people experiencing homelessness in commissioning health services
• Expert Citizens (2019) Portfolio of Positive Practice Supporting People Experiencing Multiple Disadvantage A showcase of outstanding practice that provide insight to new ways of working and ideas for systems change
• Expert Citizens (2019) GP Registration Evaluation Toolkit Accessing Primary Health Care For People with “No Fixed Abode”
• CFE Research, University of Sheffield, Systems Change Action network (2020) Improving access to mental health support for people experiencing multiple disadvantage Evaluation of Fulfilling Lives: Supporting people with multiple needs
• Author name removed for anonymous review (2020) Insight through experience: How Expert Citizens are celebrating the nicest people. People, Place and Policy 14/1 pp. 24-34
• CFE Research (2020) The role of lived experience in creating systems change Evaluation of Fulfilling Lives: Supporting people with multiple needs

Websites

• https://www.voicesofstoke.org.uk/
• https://www.brighter-futures.org.uk/
• https://www.fulfillinglivesevaluation.org/about/the-partnerships/voices-stoke-on-trent/
• https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/sick-or-disabled-people-and-carers/pip/appeals/mandatory-reconsideration/
• https://www.healthwatchstokeontrent.co.uk/about-us/
• https://www.keele.ac.uk/socialinclusion/ourpartnerships/
• https://www.expertcitizens.org.uk/
• https://www.chadresearch.co.uk/

Minutes and papers from meetings of

• VOICES Legacy Steering Group
• Housing First Steering Group
Figure 1. Social worlds / arenas map
Barriers to Fair Access - Stigma

**POSITION A**
Stigma and Marginalisation toward people with multiple disadvantage from statutory sector is an ‘elephant in the room’. People with multiple disadvantage are usually marginalised and disempowered due to “eligibility criteria” they cannot meet and/or judgmental decision regarding complex needs rather than understanding.

**POSITION B**
Stigma in Statutory sector fluctuates depending on person’s situation and can be difficult to understand and address by those inexperienced in working with this group.

**POSITION C**
Creation of strong legally robust documentation for raising awareness; co-production of solution focus products that incorporate people’s with lived experience vies for challenging stigma and marginalisation in statutory settings; empowering VOICES worker to challenge any statutory decision that seems to be based on preconceptions; use of evolutionary learning to help those working in statutory sector to acknowledge the importance of lived experience as basic component of their own learning process.

Facilitators of Fair Access - challenging

*Figure 2. Positional map for stigma and marginalisation as a barrier to accessing services*
Figure 3. Positional map for responsibility and accountability gaps as a barrier to accessing services
Figure 4. Positional map for legal literacy as a barrier to accessing services

POSITION A
Statutory sector organisations seem to lack important legislation knowledge that eventually act as a barrier to people with multiple disadvantage accessing services they need and are entitled to.

POSITION B
VOICES fact checking process toolkits and WRLI model developed to address limitations in legal literacy by supporting frontline workers to navigate legal issues until they can do so independently.

Facilitators of Fair Access
There was a lack of properties "ready to". It generally took time to find and secure an appropriate tenancy for Housing First customers, reducing the rapidity with which Housing First-Stoke-on-Trent could put an end to someone’s homelessness. The lack of suitable properties available for customers had negative implications on customers outcomes.

Private landlords and council – hard to get buy in.

Private landlords have been found to be a risk choice, primarily due to issues with property maintenance.

Customer’s expectations who may turn down one, two or three offers of accommodation that are available sometimes is problem.

Figure 5. Positional map for availability of suitable housing as a barrier to Housing First
Figure 6. Positional map for programme sustainability as a barrier to Housing First

POSITION A
Housing First is an expensive programme to support a small number of people. Homelessness is a housing issue that could be delivered without badging it as Housing First.

POSITION C
The crucial consideration is weighing up the cost of doing something versus the costs of doing nothing, including the costs of services to deal with crises in those who are not accommodated/supported (e.g., prison, A&E, 24/7 social care services, long-term hospitalization).

POSITION B
Housing First has been acknowledged as the best possible option for people with multiple needs by showing that housing can act as an intervention in its own right, minimizing contact of beneficiaries with crisis services. Housing First is expensive so are other forms of supported housing.
Figure 7. Positional map for the development of Expert Citizens CIC

POSITION A
The pinnacle of co-production between VOICES and people with lived experience of multiple disadvantage was the development of the Expert Citizens CIC and the co-production and development of methodologies (e.g., INsIGHT) and tool kits (e.g., Care Act tool kits, & MEF safeguarding).

POSITION B
While people with lived experience, through VOICES, have improved the situation in Stoke-on-Trent for people experiencing multiple disadvantage, some ideas derived from Expert Citizens could have been more seriously considered/used by VOICES. This raised questions regarding the notion of co-production.

People with lived experience of multiple needs
Figure 8. Positional map for use of Peer Mentoring
Applying Situational Analysis to examine the impact of VOICES on people experiencing multiple disadvantage

Structured Abstract:

Purpose. This paper reports the use of Situational Analysis as a systems methodology to evaluate the VOICES partnership project.

Approach. Using Situational Analysis and drawing on a range of secondary data sources, a three-stage conceptual mapping process provided a detailed picture of both the non-linear interlinkage and complexity of the local system that VOICES was working to influence, as well as the processes that shaped the experiences of those who act within the situation.

NOTE: affiliations should appear as the following: Department (if applicable); Institution; City; State (US only); Country. No further information or detail should be included.

Acknowledgments (if applicable):

We would like to thank all VOICES customers and stakeholders whose data have contributed to this work, as well as all attendees of the stakeholder and Expert Citizens workshops.

Funding: This research was funded by The National Lottery Community Fund through VOICES.
Findings. Data highlighted the systemic challenges facing VOICES customers (e.g., stigma and marginalisation, lack of legal literacy), progress made by VOICES in each of their priority areas, and an overarching theme of VOICES promoting equity (rather than equality) to address failure demand in the system of support for people with multiple needs and disadvantage.

Originality. We present the novel application of Situational Analysis to demonstrate a substantial impact of VOICES, while demonstrating the value of this methodology for complex system’s thinking research and evaluation.

Keywords: multiple disadvantage, Situational Analysis, fair access, Housing First, systems thinking, failure demand