



# Multiple and Complex Needs Service

Our service is specifically targeted at those who need it most – people with a variety of complex needs (including a history of problem drug and alcohol use, mental health or emotional well-being issues, accommodation problems and offending). So we deliver practical, highly specialist housing-related interventions that prevent homelessness and improve health.

## Enquiries

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The Shelter logo consists of the word "Shelter" in a white, sans-serif font, centered within a solid red rectangular background.

## Lauren's story

Lauren\* has had significant substance and alcohol abuse issues for many years, just one of numerous challenges she faces. As well as being a childhood victim of sexual abuse, her long-term relationship was extremely abusive. Both her children from that relationship were subsequently adopted.

With her GP reporting that Lauren has an undiagnosed personality disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder, she suffers with acute anxiety and depression. In addition, her extensive offending history, primarily for shoplifting, means she has spent much of her adult life in prison.

When a detox programme failed to succeed, Lauren became a rough-sleeper. She was then introduced to Shelter's Inspiring Change Manchester (ICM) who arranged accommodation at a women's hostel. Although we supported her to the hostel, she didn't stay the night.

We made contact with her again when Lauren disclosed that she was pregnant. Then we informed her drug worker, made a completed referral to specialist midwifery, and supported her with accommodation at a B&B and then a one bedroom flat.

During this time, Lauren tried hard to abstain from drugs and alcohol but struggled to adapt to independent living. So we helped her develop budgeting skills and introduced her to our education, training and employment pathway, where she engaged in a parenting course and improved her basic literacy skills.

However, her mental health deteriorated as the pregnancy progressed and her substance use increased. After giving birth, Social Services recommended that the baby boy be placed in foster care.

We again supported Lauren throughout this time, including helping her navigate bus routes and develop the confidence to regularly visit her son.



*Today, Lauren continues to access drug treatment and has regular contact with her son. She's remained out of prison and living in safe accommodation for the first time since her teens.*

\*Real name changed to protect our client's identity

# Why our Multiple and Complex Needs Service **is so important**

According to the Department of Health, homeless people's use of healthcare is already estimated to cost at least £85m per year. In addition, homeless clients with multiple complex needs can often overwhelm a particular organisation with their variety of requirements<sup>1</sup>.

But our service makes sure that doesn't happen. Through a joined-up approach to commissioning, health, housing and community services all work together to deliver better outcomes for individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

To reach these clients requires greater intensity of service, more flexibility, and a different rapport. That's why we try all kinds of different delivery methods to engage with individuals who are often hard to reach – by calling on multi-agency, coordinated support alongside local partners.

Our approach is to break down barriers that can prevent clients from leading fulfilling lives by delivering the right range of services at the right time.

*That's why our Multiple and Complex Needs Service directly addresses the social determinants of health and prevents homelessness.*



# Our ethos

## Empowerment and involvement

Individuals need to make their own decisions. That's why we always aim to empower people with the knowledge to understand all their options. And, by listening to – and proactively involving – those with valuable life experience, we can shape our services to meet real needs.

## Personalised, flexible support

Once we understand individual needs, we adapt our support to offer a flexible, personalised and non-judgmental service – which maximises the chances of continued engagement.

## Psychologically informed environments

We meet the psychological and emotional needs of each individual through our expertise in understanding client behaviour and our ability to work in a trauma-informed manner.

## Tenacious and assertive while calm and measured

Our key-workers are tenacious and persistent – balanced with a calm, measured and empathetic approach. That means our service users trust us to get things done with their best interests at heart.

## Partnerships

Working with voluntary agencies and statutory services means that local assets are combined to their full potential. Whether an operational or strategic partnership, we believe in a collaborative, coordinated approach.

## Real, lasting change

Everything we learn is added to the growing UK evidence base about how to deliver services for people with multiple and complex needs. Together, we can make a genuine difference to lives.





## How we achieve **change**

We help clients in the most difficult circumstances to secure settled accommodation that delivers all the benefits of independent living, economic wellbeing and better health.

### **Key service aims:**

- Improved health and wellbeing
- More secure housing
- Greater employability
- Reduced reoffending
- Fewer hospital admissions

### **Benefits for commissioners**

- Cost savings from early interventions
- Homelessness prevention – 56% of clients facing eviction or repossession have been able to stay in their homes since coming to Shelter across all our services<sup>2</sup>
- Empowering individuals who are better placed and supported to find meaningful employment
- Availability of more accurate and up-to-date information using our flexible case management system to improve understanding of client needs and outcomes
- Access to our independently funded services such as specialist welfare benefits advice and advocacy services



Since July 2014, Inspiring Change Manchester (ICM) has enabled 130 multiple and complex needs clients to improve their self-care living skills, ability to manage money and accommodation, and their health; while reducing reoffending and substance misuse. Twenty-one service users have undertaken paid traineeships so far and, of the trainees who have finished their placements, all have secured onward employment.

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**I've had counsellors who counsel me on mental health issues. But none of those ever asked me about the roof above my head. I go to a housing officer, but they don't help me with my depression. But ICM is a joined-up approach, it covers every aspect.**

(Client testimonial)

“Shelter have proved to be an excellent partner. They have been clear about what they can deliver and have delivered consistently throughout our relationship. They communicate well and offer great insight.”

(Mark McPherson, Director of Strategy, Partnership and Innovation at Homeless Link – partnered Shelter on the London Plus project)

Shelter helps millions of people every year struggling with bad housing or homelessness through our advice, support and legal services. And we campaign to make sure that, one day, no one will have to turn to us for help.

We're here so no one has to fight bad housing or homelessness on their own.

**Please support us at [shelter.org.uk](https://shelter.org.uk)**

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**[shelter.org.uk](https://shelter.org.uk)**

<sup>1</sup> Department of Health, Healthcare for single homeless people (2010)

<sup>2</sup> Shelter, 2016, Outcomes survey, Unpublished dataset