

MEDIA RELEASE

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Charity launches national campaign to address multiple needs

As more than 300 policy makers, front-line staff and service users prepare to meet in London this week (Wednesday 22nd April) to discuss support for people with complex needs, a leading charity is raising the issue with every Parliamentary candidate in the country.

Framework, a specialist charity and housing association, has identified five simple and cost-effective policy changes to ensure effective help for people living with combinations of homelessness, mental ill-health, substance abuse and repeat offending.

Framework's campaign ***Simple Change for Troubled Lives: Five Actions for Effective Help***, led by its Chief Executive Andrew Redfern, draws on daily front line experience of supporting people with complex needs across the East Midlands.

The charity's proposal spells out five easily-adoptable measures which, as well as helping the most vulnerable and excluded people in society, would bring significant long-term savings to the health service, the criminal justice system and other statutory services.

By highlighting the significant financial costs associated with such a small number of people (around 60,000 in England) Mr Redfern hopes to attract support across the political spectrum.

The Five Actions⁽¹⁾ are:

- **Support people with multiple and complex needs using tried and tested solutions** – *a Troubled Lives Programme similar to the existing Trouble Families Programme*
- **Amend the rules on access to social and health care to stop excluding this group** – *the Guidance to the Care Act must make it clear that they are included*
- **Invest in specialist housing for those who need it** – *by designating part of the Homes and Communities Agency's existing capital programme*
- **Make welfare work for people living Troubled Lives** – *a Work Programme Plus for those facing many barriers to work*
- **Join up policy where it affects people living Troubled Lives** – *by thinking about the impact on this group before decisions are made*

Mr Redfern said: "The impressive National Multiple Needs Summit organised by the coalition Making Every Adult Matter and others is a sell-out. This shows the level of concern among agencies and individuals that new approaches are urgently needed to help the growing number of people with multiple and complex needs.

"Framework's five specific actions bring our front line experience to the lively debate that is now taking place. We wish to support the tide of opinion seeking to inform and influence the policies of the incoming government.

“We have written to all parliamentary candidates to point out the frequent difficulty which MPs and their staff face when a homeless constituent seeks help. This is confirmed in the recent survey by Crisis which reported that three quarters of MPs had been contacted by single homeless people having been refused help by their local council: two thirds of these MPs, representing all the main parties, thought that more should be done to assist these constituents.

“Our answer is to encourage MPs to support change at national and local level to the way government responds to the needs of some of the most vulnerable people in our communities.

“Recent research by LankellyChase Foundation⁽²⁾ and others indicates there more than 220,000 people in England who experience two or more of these conditions and around 60,000 people whose lives are troubled by three or four of these conditions. Apart from the appalling human cost of such lifestyles there is a substantial cost to society – to the NHS, the criminal justice system and other statutory agencies who are now picking up the pieces left by decades of policy failure.

“With the evidence in, now is the time for action. So the reference to a *Troubled Lives* programme in the 2014 Autumn Statement was encouraging. A more detailed statement in the 2015 Budget confirmed the government’s aspiration to improve the help offered to people with multiple and complex needs. The opposition’s endorsement of a report containing a similar proposal leads me to hope and believe there is now cross party agreement on this.

“However a *Troubled Lives* programme is not sufficient to tackle the various dimensions of this problem on its own. To reduce the need for a special programme in the future, a **Troubled Lives Strategy** is needed: Framework’s proposals for Five Actions are the key components around which to build that strategy.

“The impact of the Five Actions is complementary and cumulative; they are not a menu of options from which to choose. We describe them as simple because they build on existing policy and practice and would require little or no Parliamentary time.

“We urge all parliamentary candidates to consider these proposals and we seek their support. We ask voters to present the case for this approach to those who would be their elected representatives.

“Adoption and implementation of a **Troubled Lives Strategy** by the next government will be a major step in public service reform. A wealth of supporting evidence, expert knowledge and practical skills is available for it to draw upon. I hope that 2015 will be the year in which we begin acting decisively together to help people living troubled lives.”

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Case study

Vince, 48, is somebody who lived a Troubled Life for around 30 years. He has now completely changed his life and is working full time to help homeless people in Nottinghamshire. He explained why he is supporting the campaign:

“My problems have been around homelessness, persistent re-offending, substance misuse and mental illness. My offending started at a very young age and altogether I have served 17 or 18 prison sentences which have had a very detrimental impact on my life.

“These kinds of problems are linked almost like a domino effect in a person’s life and it’s just a downward spiral from there. The cost of my problems on society has also been massive. I have cost the court service, the mental health service, and society in general.”

Vince explained why he proved so hard to help: “It’s difficult to help people like me because we’ve not just got one problem – we’ve got a multitude of problems so breaking that cycle is very hard. Because there were no integrated services it just caused me to flip from one service to the next – never quite putting the pieces of the jigsaw together and keeping that cycle going.”

Notes to editors

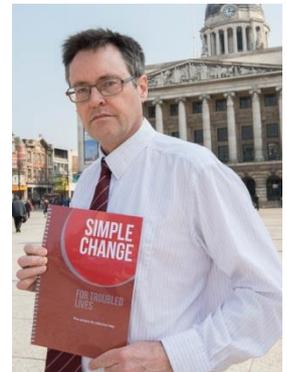
- (1) See below for a summary of the Five Actions. The dedicated website is www.fiveactions.org; the full *Simple Change for Troubled Lives* proposal is available [here](#). Follow the campaign [@FiveActions](#)
- (2) Recent major research studies include LankellyChase Foundation: *Hard Edges* Mapping severe and multiple disadvantage (2015). www.lankellychase.org.uk/

About Andrew Redfern

Andrew has been the Chief Executive of Framework since 2002. He studied Politics, Philosophy and Economics at Oxford University before entering the Third Sector. Andrew spent five years working for one of Europe's largest homeless men's hostels at Arlington House in Camden, and then he moved north to be director of the Nottingham Help the Homeless Association.

Andrew facilitated the merger between the Nottingham Help the Homeless Association and Macedon and the two charities became Framework in 2001. He took up the chief executive's job the following year and in February stepped aside from day-to-day responsibilities for nine months to lead the Five Actions campaign.

*Interviews are available with Andrew on request.



About Framework

Framework is a specialist charity and housing association now helping more than 11,000 people a year. It has three roles: to help homeless people; to prevent people from becoming homeless; and to provide new opportunities to vulnerable and excluded people. It currently operates across the East Midlands and in parts of South Yorkshire, providing accommodation and community based support. For more information, visit www.frameworkha.org

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The Five Actions for a Troubled Lives Strategy

1. Support people living troubled lives using tried and tested solutions

The Troubled Families Programme and the Big Lottery Fund's Fulfilling Lives are both good models of effective intervention. It is proposed that central Government should utilise these in a new Troubled Lives programme. It would target those individuals with the greatest number and complexity of needs – around 60,000 people identified by recent research.

2. Amend the rules on social and health care to stop excluding this group

In theory, people who need support or care are entitled to receive it from their local authority. In reality, homeless people and others with two or more interacting support needs find themselves excluded from the assessment process that should lead to an offer of help. This is unfair discrimination with no rational basis. It can be ended by simple amendment of the guidance to the Care Act, confirming that people with multiple and complex needs have the same right to a comprehensive assessment as everyone else. Its impact would reach more people than a Troubled Lives Programme alone.

3. Invest in specialist housing for those who need it

Specialist supported housing is chronically under-funded, but is essential in enabling people with support needs to live in the community. Not everyone in this group requires specialist housing but for the minority who do it is hard to find. The available stock is reducing; ongoing lack of investment affects the quality of what remains. The Department for Communities & Local Government (DCLG) is asked to designate at least 10% of the Affordable Homes Programme for supported and move-on housing. The Department of Health should extend the remit of the Care & Support Specialised Housing Fund to include people with multiple and complex needs.

4. Make Welfare Work for people living Troubled Lives

People living troubled lives due to multiple and complex needs are rarely in paid work. Some may sustain a part-time job, a volunteer placement or participation in training. The benefits system should encourage whatever contribution they can make to the community. The Skills Funding Agency is asked to resource capacity and confidence building as well as basic skills training for this group. The Work Programme and its successor (WP+) should incentivise realistic outcomes for those facing barriers to work.

5. Join up policy where it affects people living Troubled Lives

Some departmental decisions can have unforeseen and unintended consequences. A current example is the Review of Exempt Accommodation being undertaken by IPSOS Mori for the Department for Work and Pensions. The potential impact on those who live in supported housing has knock-on implications for other departments in particular DCLG, the Department of Health, Ministry of Justice and the Cabinet Office. All of these should participate in a transparent review with provider and service user input.