

New emphasis on supporting the system

What is Changing Futures?

Changing Futures Cambridgeshire & Peterborough is about improving outcomes for people with multiple disadvantage. Multiple disadvantage means someone experiencing three of five of homelessness, mental health issues, substance misuse, domestic abuse and offending behaviour, at any one time. Changing Futures does this by encouraging involvement of people with lived experience at all stages of our system and service design and looking at how our partnerships affect people.

This note sets out changes being made to the Counting Every Adult team from Summer 2025 onwards, and changes to how the team offers support to individuals and to system partners.

New emphasis on supporting the system

Since the Counting Every Adult (CEA) team began in 2011, and especially over the last 3 years it has become clearer and clearer that a crucial part of the Changing Futures systems change work is delivered at the front line. As a result, the Changing Futures programme agreed by Cambridgeshire & Peterborough's Public Services Board includes a goal to 'support practice in the system'.

This note outlines how that front-line support will be delivered by Changing Futures team from Summer 2025 onwards, making clear the inputs the team is likely to make.

To keep things simple, where the team has been known as Counting Every Adult (CEA) coordinators, they will now be called *Changing Futures* coordinators.

What is changing from Summer 2025 onwards?

- The team changes name.
- Whereas previously a Case Group of practitioners who work in multiple disadvantage would assess the needs of referrals every six weeks, now Changing Futures Coordinators will triage the need of the individual at Changing Futures team meetings every week. Coordinators will assess the level of input needed for each case and offer that input as soon as capacity allows.
- Case Groups will be re-named **Multiple Disadvantage Forums**. They will continue to meet to offer insight, input, support and analysis of the barriers faced by each individual being helped; and reflections and learning on the process. The Multiple Disadvantage Forum is a place practitioners can bring problems, issues and concerns about people facing multiple disadvantage. They will be open to all practitioners working in services who connect with people in multiple disadvantage. They will also be a place where decisions made by the Coordinators can be verified or challenged.
- Emphasis will move towards supporting the people, teams or services who have the existing relationship, ideally a "trusted relationship" with the individual, as much as possible. Individual casework will still be undertaken by Changing Futures coordinators where no other option is available, but the primary goal will be on developing trusted relationships, and on the system owning the issues, not just one team or person. You can find out more about the Trusted Person approach [here](#).
- Referrals can be made or support and advice sought in the same ways as before, namely by the Changing Futures referral form, e-mail, telephone or face to face conversations. Please see "Making a referral".
- In all cases, the individual will still be invited to participate in their support if they wish to.

What is offered by Changing Futures coordinators?

Changing Futures coordinators provide support to professionals or services who are working with individuals facing multiple disadvantage. The coordinators particularly try to identify those who have ineffective contact

with services, those who are vulnerable to others or themselves and those who face barriers to accessing support.

Our approach is flexible. We can provide interventions ranging from immediate advice and linking together of services; to longer term interventions where we will work with a trusted person or people to lead professional meetings, making sure the individual has the correct services in place to achieve their goals. In some instances, we will meet with the individual to understand their goals and build a trusted relationship with them if we can.

The kinds of support coordinators provide can be summarized as:

Advice / guidance

- Looking at barriers and systems issues that are impeding the individual's progress towards their goals. We may discuss cases at our weekly team meeting to gather advice from other coordinators and to discuss the most appropriate way forward. If a wider partnership discussion is needed, we may take the case to a Case Group (now Multiple Disadvantage Forum) to focus on the systemic issues.

Connection

- Linking services together: there may be a number of existing services working with an individual, but they are unaware of each other, not communicating effectively with each other or not understanding each other's roles. We will endeavour to support the connection between different parts of the system to provide more effective collaboration around an individual's needs

Mentoring / Coaching

- This applies where, in addition to advice and guidance we feel it's likely we will stay connected to the case for longer, to support existing trusted people or those leading a case, to support their partnerships; and to look at systemic issues and plan flexible responses.
- As there are only a few Changing Futures coordinators, we hope we would provide skills and connections for those 'leaders in the system' to manage future cases without need to refer to Changing Futures the next time they encounter a similar issue.

System Support

- Arranging and supporting connection between services, such as a professionals meeting, to bring those needing to be involved around the table and make sure people are accountable for the actions arising. There may be one or more meetings.
- It is important the system remains accountable for individuals rather than trying to pass the responsibility to another team. Ideally, we want to support those already working with an individual but in some cases, there is no one with such a relationship, so Changing Futures coordinators will step in and do that for the system, establishing contact and a link with the individual.
- In these cases, we are likely to remain involved in the case for a longer time. This support helps ensure the resilience and sustainability of our approach systemically. It also encourages its replication and nurtures practice towards that.

The individual should always be invited to participate in their support if they wish, and we are happy to talk to everyone involved about how to approach this.

Why we are changing to Changing Futures Coordinator triage

We are seeing this as a small change in emphasis, not a major change in approach. We believe the change will lead to:

- Faster decisions. Coordinators can respond immediately to referrals, identifying whether they are the best team and what level of input is needed.
- Free-ing up capacity. Coordinators can provide input to more people and services through by offering differing levels of involvement.

- Reduced delays. Instead of holding referrals in limbo until a Case Group meeting, Coordinators will be able to provide earlier support and guidance. Coordinators already do this where action is needed before the next Case Group meeting, quickly connecting people and services. Coordinators sometimes start attending existing case meetings if their input is needed urgently. This new approach formalises this way of working and makes it simpler to account for Changing Futures coordinator time, focussing on the inputs we make in reality; not only recording those cases who go through the Case Group process, as previously.

Decisions can still be verified, scrutinised or challenged at Multiple Disadvantage Forums if needed.

Supporting services, not holding cases.

Changing Futures coordinators will be able to

- Step in, do what is needed and step out. Coordinators will be helping services lead rather than depending on the continued involvement of a coordinator.
- Focus more on coaching, mentoring, connecting and supporting the wider system, empowering services to work in a flexible bespoke way with complex cases that don't fit the 'usual' pathways.
- Identify the barriers faced by people who are multiply disadvantaged and looking at how coordinators can break down those barriers by influencing wider systems and processes.

Refocusing Case Groups to become Multiple Disadvantage Forums (MDFs)

With triage now handled outside the Case Group process, previous case groups become a space for deeper more meaningful collaboration. The change of name to Multiple Disadvantage Forums reflects this, and will enable:

- Focus on complexity. Time and space to explore the most complex multiple disadvantage cases with a multi-agency team of professionals.
- County-wide learning. A place for professionals to bring their own challenging cases and get support and insight from across the system.
- Networking and connections. A place where colleagues across services can meet, share and strengthen cross-sector relationships.
- Escalation and strategy. An opportunity to raise cases that may need to be escalated beyond usual pathways.
- Whole system learning. A place to share and reflect on emerging barriers and identify opportunities for system wide change.
- A space to share good practice and flexible ways of working.
- Peer support. A space to reflect on emotionally challenging cases in a supportive environment where professionals can help each other process some of the more difficult aspects of working with people facing multiple disadvantage.
- Inclusive communication. Coordinators will still provide updates on who they are working with and reach out for advice on difficult cases.

In summary, the new approach enables Changing Futures coordinators to act faster, help more people and services, and make meetings more meaningful, collaborative and inclusive. It will enable focus on identifying barriers and influence system change, recognising the full scope of our work, especially at the early stages.

Learning together how the new approach works

The new approach will be tested and opportunities provided for people to feedback on how the process goes.

Changing Futures will gather feedback and learning about the change continually, with landmark reflection sessions in 6 and 12 months, giving opportunity for all involved to share their experiences and how they feel about the new approach including the re-shaped MDFs.

The learning will include reviewing the recording and monitoring data outlined above.

Making a referral

- A referral form to Changing Futures can be found [here](#)
- You can email changingfutures@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
- Or contact one of the coordinators direct

Case Group approach

- Case Groups meet every 6 weeks
- Wait for Case Groups before accepting someone for Coordinator support
- Wait till acceptance at Case Group before noting the work undertaken by CF at the earlier stages
- CF team monitoring focusses more on individual support than on support to partners and system-wide interventions. This overlooks a large part of the work, and the aspect which makes the teams efforts more sustainable in the long term.

MDF approach

- No delay due to Case Group needing to triage all referrals
- CF team takes on the triage process on the basis of (a) support to the system (b) level of involvement needed (c) team capacity
- Case Groups still meet as needed, but re-framed as Multiple Disadvantage Forums.
- Instead of triaging new cases the team take time to explore barriers faced by each individual and ways to overcome or break them down
- CF team's efforts are monitored more accurately, reflecting the early stage and system-wide actions

To find out more about Changing Futures

You can e-mail the team at changingfutures@cambridgeshire.gov.uk or visit our [web page](#)