

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITY WELLBEING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

16TH MARCH 2021

Title:

Mental Health in Waverley

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Michaela Martin, Portfolio Holder for Health, Wellbeing and Culture
Cllr Anne-Marie Rosoman, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Safety

Head of Service: Andrew Smith, Head of Housing Delivery & Communities

Key decision: No

Access: Public

1. Purpose and summary

- 1.1 To set out the current provision of mental health services in Waverley and initiatives being implemented for staff mental wellbeing and to consider the draft Suicide Prevention Plan.

2. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Committee:

- a. Note the report and the need to raise awareness through all sections of the community of the mental health support and advice networks that are available to Waverley staff and residents.
- b. commend the adoption of the Draft Suicide Prevention Plan for Waverley to the Executive.
- c. Work together with the Housing Overview and Scrutiny committee to share good practice for staff and residents.

3. Reason for the recommendation

To raise awareness of the various mental health support networks that exist in Waverley and to work in partnership with the public health team to prevent instances of suicide in the Borough.

4. Introduction

- 4.1 Mental health problems are widespread, at times disabling, yet often hidden. One in four adults experiences at least one diagnosable mental health problem in any given year. People in all walks of life can be affected and at any point in their lives, including new mothers, children, teenagers, adults and older people.

Mental health problems represent the largest single cause of disability in the UK and are currently the most common reason for staff absences at Waverley. The cost to the economy is estimated at £105 billion a year – roughly the cost of the entire NHS. In recent years there has been a growing realisation that mental health services have been very much a poor relation in the NHS and that increased funding was badly needed. The NHS Five Year Forward View set out a programme to redress this balance and the NHS website cites the following progress in the last three years:

- An upturn in investment - overall mental health funding up £1.4 billion in real terms compared to 3 years ago.
- 120,000 more people getting specialist mental health treatment this year than 3 years ago, including over 20,000 more children and young people.
- The dementia diagnosis rate increased from half of people to more than two thirds, enabling earlier care and support.

4.2 Locally however there is still evidence that services are hard to access, specialist help is in short supply and in particular acute hospital beds for young people are scarce. In addition there is also serious concern that the Covid pandemic will have a major mental health impact on our communities, particularly for young people.

4.3 Whilst in the past poor mental health has been stigmatized and was often hidden within families and from employers, in recent years public attitudes towards mental health have improved, in part due to the Time to Change campaign and many high profile people having the confidence to speak about their experiences.

4.4 As a district council we may feel that we have no role to play in improving the mental health of our residents. However, as a provider of services, as an employer and as a community leader there are a number of areas where we can play our part.

Mental health in Waverley

4.5 The available indicators suggest that mental illness is no higher in Waverley than in the rest of Surrey and England. However, the Covid pandemic as well as the recession may well have a detrimental impact on the mental health of both staff and residents. A 2020 Temperature Check Survey found that 36% of Waverley residents were concerned about their mental health in the next six months. A Surrey Health and Wellbeing Strategy Highlight Report from December 2020, stated that: “Local data shows that more people are entering the mental health crisis pathway with depression and suicidal thoughts than pre-Covid, including those not known to services before and people who have had a long period of symptom stability.”

4.6 Primary responsibility for mental health promotion and prevention in Waverley lies with Surrey County Council as the public health authority. Whilst services for treating mental health problems are commissioned by the County Council and Clinical Commissioning Groups from providers within the NHS, independent and voluntary sectors.

Access routes to Mental Health Support

- 4.7 Access to mental health support can be through the GP or by self referral to a variety of on-line and phone helplines which provide advice and self help such as the Healthy Surrey 24/7 confidential phone service and the Surrey and NE Hants mental health crisis helpline. There are also a number of voluntary sector organisations who provide support and advice such as Samaritans, Childline and the Shout support text helpline. The Public Health team have also developed an app called 'Staying Alive' which gives useful information and tools to help people stay safe in crisis. A directory of emergency contacts of local and national support services has been developed by Healthy Surrey to signpost people to appropriate support. This is available on the Healthy Surrey website and has been widely distributed as a booklet. A summary of these services is set out in Annexe 1 to this report. Whilst it is not possible within this report to identify all the support available for Waverley residents, the following paragraphs set out some of the agencies involved.
- 4.8 The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) assesses and treats young people with emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties. CAMHS support covers depression, problems with food, self-harm, abuse, violence or anger, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and anxiety, among other difficulties. The local NHS CAMHS teams are made up of nurses, therapists, psychologists, child and adolescent psychiatrists, support workers and social workers, as well as other professionals. Members will recall that at the annual review of the Safer Waverley Partnership Plan support from CAMHS is an important element in the multi agency approach to dealing with anti-social behaviour incidents and they are part of the Joint Action Group (JAG) and the Community Harm and Risk Management Meetings (CHaRMM). The service is under pressure however and there can often be long waits for initial assessments.
- 4.9 Surrey Community Connections are universal access services that support people with mental health needs to stay well in their communities. They are an integral part of the pathway for people who experience mental health problems (and the frequent social isolation), often bridging the gap between primary mental health care and secondary mental health care. Their services promote independence and work to enable people to achieve their desired outcomes. They also contribute to avoidance and management of crisis and a reduction in dependence on statutory services. There are three lead providers for different areas of Surrey and the Welcome Project / Catalyst provide services in Waverley.
- 4.10 'Safe Havens' are an evening and weekend drop-in service for anyone experiencing a mental health crisis or their carer. Although there are no Safe Havens in Waverley there are two close by in Guildford and Aldershot. The 'Safe Haven' café in Aldershot has been open all year round since 2014 and is staffed by NHS workers and third sector partners to provide mental health crisis support. They are currently running a pilot project to be available 24 hours, seven days a week until 31 March 2021. Anyone suffering from a mental health problem diagnosed or not, can drop in for a cup of tea and a chat and can request more formal help if needed. They provide an accessible alternative care

and support option and they focus on preventing crises before they happen. The Woking Safe Haven is the first in the county to provide a 24/7 service.

- 4.11 The 'First Steps' booklet produced by Healthy Surrey gives the following illustration to show the various pathways to care for adults with mental health problems.

It is notable that voluntary sector organisations are relied upon to provide a variety of services. This is illustrated in the following table from the Surrey Joint Strategic Needs Assessment which shows, for example, that the majority of Primary Community services are provided by the voluntary and charitable sector.

[The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Surrey](#)

Tier	Type	Need
1	Universal Population Services	Approximately 1.2 million.
The mental health promotion service – First Steps is currently provided by Virgin Care. The Time to Change Surrey programme is currently provided by local voluntary sector organisations and Virgin Care, and is overseen by a multi-agency steering group.		
2	Primary Community Services	Approximately 1 in 4 people
The majority of commissioned service is in the voluntary and charitable sector providing psychological therapy, community and supported employment services.		
3	Specialist Services	Approximately 1 in 100
The main local provider; Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and two small boundary trust contracts.		
4	Complex Specialist Services	Approximately 1 in 1 000
Limited services in the main local NHS trust, so services are commissioned via contracts or individual spot purchase basis with providers in the independent and NHS sectors”.		

4.12 Anecdotal evidence by many people trying to access support shows that thresholds to clinical support are high and even GPs struggle to refer patients to specialist help. Many people are taking the route of self-referral via crisis helplines.

Waverley as an Employer

4.13 Waverley Borough Council is a significant local employer and has a responsibility and duty of care for its employees. While there is no indication that Waverley staff have greater mental health problems than the general population, mental health issues are currently the leading cause of staff absence. Staff have access to counselling through the Employee Assistance Service and in recent years a number of initiatives have been undertaken to give additional support and guidance. During the pandemic these initiatives have been of particular importance to ensure employees who have been working from home can talk and engage with other colleagues on a regular basis.

- a. Wellbeing Officers have been introduced. These are employees who have volunteered to be identified as people who can provide emotional support and signpost appropriate services and resources when an employee feels that they would find this helpful. They have all received Mental Health First Aid training.
- b. Teams are encouraged to hold regular “Time to Talk” events to maintain social contact between colleagues despite social distancing and widespread working from home.
- c. A culture of “tasks not time” has been encouraged to ensure staff are empowered to use their working hours flexibly and productively.
- d. In November 2020 a Wellbeing Week was organised which involved 15 events such as exercise classes, workshops on resilience and wellbeing, a cooking class and a quiz.
- e. Time to talk events are organised which focus on issues which affect staff, such as the menopause, giving them an opportunity to discuss and share their experiences.
- f. Counsellors from the Employee Support Service have been running regular resilience events.
- g. Created the option for employees to take a 30 minutes “light break” during the working day, so that in winter months staff can spend time outdoors in daylight hours.

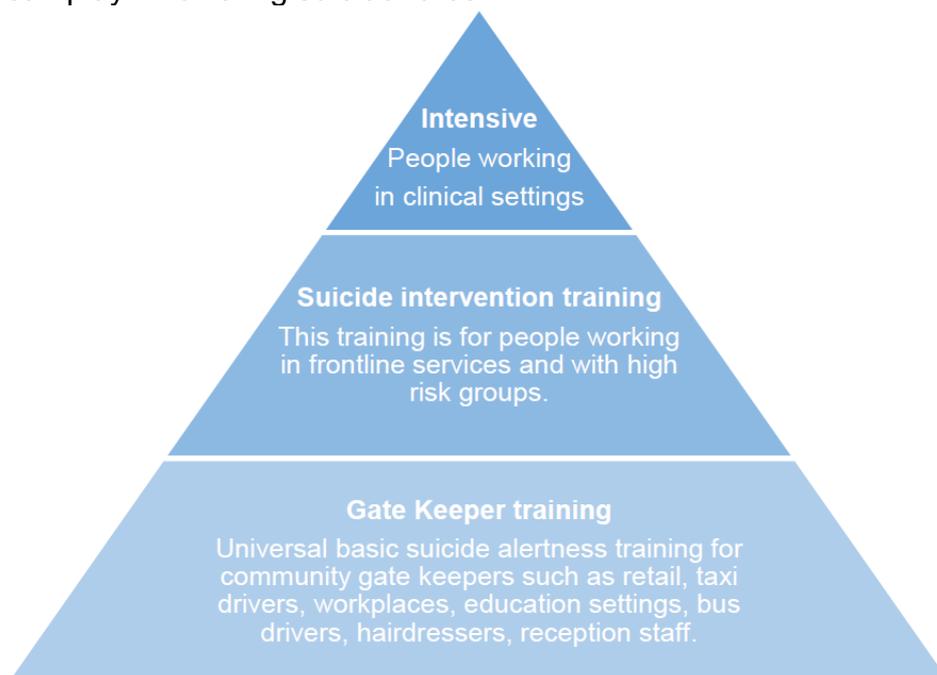
The culture of an organisation is vitally important in making people feel comfortable and thus able to give of their best. Recently the Corporate Equality Group at Waverley has been exploring ways to ensure all staff feel included and valued.

Suicide Prevention

4.14 Figures from the [Office for National Statistics](#) show that between 2010 and 2019, 94 Waverley residents took their own lives. Figures from Public Health (covering the period 2015-17) show that North East Hampshire and Farnham CCG have the highest suicide rates in the county whilst Guildford and Waverley have one of the lowest. Suicide remains the biggest killer in men under 50, they

are three times more likely to die by suicide than women. It is recognised that for men, a significant barrier to talking about mental health problems is the stigma they feel about seeking help. In 2006-13 a suicide audit also showed a spike in suicides in older males and females aged 69+. Key factors for this included isolation, poor health and recent loss of a spouse.

- 4.15 During her Mayoral year in 2019/20, Cllr Mary Foryszewski highlighted the need to raise awareness of suicide prevention and engaged with many organisations and people who provide support and have been affected by suicide. At the same time in 2019 the Public Health Team had been reviewing the Surrey Suicide Prevention Strategy and had produced an Action Plan which involved a multi-agency approach of 45 partners from all sectors, including district councils. The Mayor met with the Public Health Team's lead officer on Suicide Prevention and officers from Waverley to explore how the council could usefully contribute to this work and help support the residents of Waverley. Following these discussions a draft Suicide Prevention Plan was developed which translates the priorities of the County-wide plan to a Waverley context.
- 4.16 One of the ways Waverley can help in suicide prevention is to train staff in front line services to become more aware of the issue and to recognise signs. The draft Waverley Suicide Prevention Plan set out at Annexe 2, focuses predominantly on this aspect and training is provided by the public health team. As referred to above, Waverley has already identified the need to train a small number of volunteer staff in Mental Health First Aid to help support colleagues in the workplace. The actions in the draft Suicide Prevention Plan build on this initiative and widen it to encompass front line staff who regularly engage with the public. The following diagram illustrates the important role front line staff can play in lowering suicide rates.



- 4.17 The plan proposes that staff in Housing and Community services in particular are trained in suicide awareness. This could also be extended to Waverley

Training Services staff and Waverley's Customer Services Team. If areas of concern or learning are identified, these will be reported to the accountable organisation. In appropriate circumstances the existing Safeguarding procedure will be followed.

- 4.18 Members of the Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee have already indicated their interest in the issue of mental health and will be receiving a presentation on how the Council works with tenants, and those in housing need, who suffer with mental health issues at their June meeting.
- 4.19 It is recommended that the Committee endorse the draft Suicide Prevention Plan and recommend that the Executive adopt the plan.

5. Relationship to the Corporate Strategy and Service Plan

- 5.1 One of the Council's strategic priorities in the Corporate Strategy 2020-25 is to improve the health and wellbeing of our residents and communities and to support "the most vulnerable in our communities, particularly those experiencing social isolation, loneliness and poor mental health".

6. Implications of decision

6.1 Resource (Finance, procurement, staffing, IT)

The actions in this plan will be funded from the existing corporate training budget within the 2021/22 budget. Funding from Public Health will also be sought to contribute towards the funding of this plan.

6.2 Risk management

No risk management issues have been identified.

6.3 Legal

There are no direct legal implications associated with this report.

6.4 Equality, diversity and inclusion

There are implications in this report for a number of protected characteristic groups who are recognised as being high risk for mental ill health and suicide.

6.5 Climate emergency declaration

There are no immediate implications for sustainability or carbon neutral considerations.

7. Consultation and engagement

- 7.1 N/A

8. Other options considered

- 8.1 Whilst the majority of the information in this report is for noting, it does propose the Executive consider the adoption of a local Waverley Suicide Prevention Plan. In this respect, there is an option not to adopt the Plan. However, this would reduce the impact of the county wide partnership

approach to suicide prevention and the implications for Waverley residents and would mean the Council not making progress towards achieving its strategic priority.

9. Governance journey

9.1 This report will be considered by this O&S Committee and then by the Executive for a decision on the recommendations.

Annexes:

Annexe 1 – list of support organisations

Annexe 2 – the Draft Suicide Prevention Plan for Waverley

Background Papers

There are no background papers, as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972).

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Strategic Director:

Portfolio Holder: 4 March 2021