

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE

22 JUNE 2021

Title:

Report from Community Wellbeing O&S Committee on Mental Health in Waverley

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Kika Mirylees, 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

To bring to the attention of the Executive a report that was considered by the Community Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding the provision of mental health services in the Borough. The report considers the role of the Council as both a provider of services and an employer. It recommends widening the current general mental health awareness training being undertaken by Waverley staff to include awareness of suicide prevention and the adoption of a local suicide prevention plan. This approach reflects the Corporate Strategy objective “supporting the most vulnerable in our communities, particularly those experiencing social isolation, loneliness and poor mental health.”

2. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Executive:

- 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. adopt the Suicide Prevention Plan as set out at Annex 2 to the Community Wellbeing O&S Committee Mental Health report attached at Annex 1 to this report.

3. Reason for the recommendations

The recommendations reflect the community leadership role that the Council has in supporting the most vulnerable in our communities in a wider mental

health context as well as supporting the health and wellbeing of staff. Working in partnership with the Public Health team to adopt their recommendations on a local suicide prevention plan also supports another Corporate Strategy aim of working closely with Health and other partnerships “to achieve a more joined up approach for the whole borough to improve the health and wellbeing of all our residents.”

4. Background

- 4.1 In the last eighteen months the subject of mental health has been discussed by both Community Wellbeing and the Housing O&S Committees on a number of occasions in relation to such subjects as the Safer Waverley Partnership, anti-social behaviour, support for Housing tenants and loneliness and isolation particularly relating to older people. As a result of these discussions a report was requested to understand the level of mental health service provision in the Borough, which was anecdotally perceived to be poor, and this was presented and discussed at the Community Wellbeing O&S meeting on 16 March. The report is set out at Annex 1.
- 4.2 The report focuses on the role of the council as both an employer and a service provider, including the landlord function, and highlights the benefits of raising awareness of front-line staff and Waverley managers about mental health issues. In addition, the Community Wellbeing O&S Committee also heard that the Public Health team are currently working with district councils to encourage them to adopt local suicide prevention plans as part of a wider county strategy to reduce the number of suicides. This involves training staff to be aware of signs and knowing how to signpost people to the relevant support channel.
- 4.3 During the discussion, members raised the issue of increasing mental ill health particularly among young people. Drastic reductions in youth services and more recently the pressure of the pandemic and various lockdowns has exacerbated the situation. National reports are now emerging of the link between Covid 19 and the rise of mental ill health across the community. It is considered that a focus on mental wellbeing will be needed as services transition into recovery. At the O&S Committee it was suggested that a mental health policy for Waverley might be productive in this respect.
- 4.4 An area of concern for the Public Health Team is the increase in depression amongst older people. The current work being carried out on Service Level Agreements may present an opportunity to include mental health awareness training within these agreements in the future. It is also an area relevant to safeguarding responsibilities.
- 4.5 The Community Wellbeing O&S Committee endorsed the approach in the report to train staff to further raise awareness and to recommend to the Executive the adoption of the draft local Suicide Prevention 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 immediate actions relating to training and awareness-raising proposed in this report can be funded from a combination of the existing corporate training budget within the 2021/22 budget and Surrey County Council training courses made available at no cost to the council. However, further policy development work would need to be considered alongside other priorities within the Communities team.

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 Options to be considered would be to not adopt a local Suicide Prevention Plan and not to widen existing training. However, this would reduce the impact of the county wide partnership approach to suicide prevention and the implications for Waverley residents and staff.

9. Governance journey

9.1 This report originated from the O&S Committee and is now being considered by the Executive for a decision on the recommendations.

Annexes:

Annexe 1 – Mental Health in Waverley – report to Community Wellbeing O&S Committee on 16 March 2021

Background Papers

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

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Agreed and signed off by:
Legal Services: 5 March 2021
Head of Finance: 4 March 2021
Strategic Director:
Portfolio Holder: