

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - SERVICES

24 January 2023

UPDATE ON WAVERLEY'S SUICIDE PREVENTION ACTION PLAN

Head of Service: Sam Hutchison, Executive Head of Community Services

Key decision: No

Access: Public

1. Purpose and summary

1.1 To provide the Committee with an update on progress with the Waverley Suicide Prevention Plan which was adopted by the Executive in June 2021.

2. Recommendation

2.1 That the Committee note the progress made on the Suicide Prevention Plan and make any comments or recommendations as appropriate.

3. Reason for the recommendation

3.1 To monitor progress of the Action Plan.

4. Background

4.1 In March 2021, the Community Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report which set out the current provision of mental health services in Waverley, the initiatives being implemented for staff mental wellbeing and a draft Suicide Prevention Plan modelled on work done in collaboration between Woking Borough Council and Surrey County Council. The Community Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny resolved to:

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. "AGREED to work together with the Housing Overview and Scrutiny committee to share good practice for staff and residents."

4.2 On 22 June 2021, the Executive considered Community Wellbeing O&S's recommendations. They agreed to adopt the Suicide Prevention Action Plan. This is included as Annexe 1.

- 4.3 In structure, the Action Plan follows the six priorities of the County's Suicide Prevention Strategy and includes actions relevant to a district council. The success of the County's Strategy for our communities is dependent on a collaborative approach from all partners and other interested parties. One of the key recommendations in the Strategy is to "Implement a robust suicide prevention action plan at District and Borough level".
- 4.4 Following a refresh of the Strategy it will be necessary to review the Waverley Action Plan in the light of any new initiatives or insight and intelligence. For example, those working on front line services need to be aware of the association of certain conditions both mental and physical with a higher risk of suicide. Nationally, suicides are increasing in older adults. In Surrey work is needed to understand the suicide risk in older adults and to ensure that there is a clear prevention and intervention workstream targeting older adults.

Progress on Action Plan

- 4.5 The following actions have been taken since the introduction of the Waverley Action Plan:
- i. A Partnership Working Group has been set-up bringing together representatives from the Public Health Team at Surrey County Council and the Corporate Policy, Community Services, Human Resources and Communications teams at Waverley Borough Council.
 - ii. An extensive programme of internal communications has been maintained. Each weekly Cascade emails to all-staff include an item on wellbeing or mental health. An average of two or three articles a week on related topics appear on Backstage, the Council's internal network.
 - iii. A workplace Wellbeing Group has been established and they produce a monthly newsletter devoted to improving wellbeing and mental good health. They also run courses and other activities.
 - iv. The Waverley Borough Council website has been updated to include a new page signposting resources on mental health and loneliness available to Waverley residents. A page on mental health support services has also been included more recently in the area of the council's website providing information on the Cost of Living crisis. This signposts support from the NHS, Mind and Samaritans.
 - v. All Council staff in customer facing roles have been invited to suicide prevention training and there has been a good uptake in areas such as housing. As new courses become available throughout the year, details of Mental Health training and workshops are shared with all relevant teams at Waverley and through the Surrey Learn portal these are also available to all staff.
 - vi. Surrey Public Health is sharing a pro-forma template to enable Waverley to share intelligence on trends in suicides and suicide attempts.

- vii. Waverley's communications teams are meeting with Surrey Public Health to audit the Council's communications on suicide prevention.
- viii. A representative from the Council's Community Service Team has been invited to the Domestic Abuse and Suicide Prevention group chaired by Surrey Police.
- ix. Localised data on suicide rates is provided by the Surrey Public Health Team when relevant.

5. Relationship to the Corporate Strategy and Service Plan

- 5.1 The Action Plan contributes to the Council's objective that *"through the wide variety of services we provide we will seek to reduce health inequalities and support our communities by supporting 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)

There are no resource implications of this report.

6.2 Risk Management

No risks arising from the recommendations of this report have been identified.

6.3 Legal

There are no legal implications from this report.

6.4 Equality, diversity and inclusion

There are no direct equality and diversity implications from this report.

6.5 Climate emergency declaration

There are no direct climate change implications from this report.

7. Consultation and engagement

- 7.1 N/A

8. Other options considered

- 8.1 None

9. Governance Journey

- 9.1 None.

Annexes:

Annexe 1 – Waverley Suicide Prevention Plan

Background Papers

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

CONTACT OFFICER:

Name: Louise Norie
Position: Corporate Policy Manager
Telephone: 01483 523464
Email: louise.norie@waverley.gov.uk