

North East Derbyshire District Council

Council

11 January 2021

Mental Health Framework

Report of Councillor D Ruff, Elected Member Champion for Mental Health

Purpose of the Report

- To provide an update on work that has been taking place across both the Council and Rykneld Homes in relation to the promotion of positive mental health and tackling poor mental within the workplace.

1 Report Details

Background

- 1.1 Poor mental health problems are widespread and at times disabling, yet often hidden. People who would go to their GP with a given issue will often suffer depression, anxiety or other mental health issue in silence. It is said that one in four adults experiences at least one diagnosable mental health problem in any given year. People in all walks of life and age groups can be affected and at any point in their lives, including new mothers, children, teenagers, adults and older people.
- 1.2 With so many in our society experiencing mental health problems regularly and suicide being recognised as the biggest killer of young men in the UK, there is a clear need for an increased awareness and understanding of an issue which affects the lives of so many, directly or indirectly. By increasing awareness and improving access to support, we can help colleagues, friends and family and perhaps even save a life.
- 1.3 The Centre for Mental Health set up a Mental Health Challenge for Local Authorities in England around six years ago. It was established in partnership with; Association of Mental Health Providers; Mental Health Foundation; MIND; Rethink Mental Illness; the Royal College of Psychiatrists; and Young Minds, in order to support and encourage local authorities to take a proactive approach to the issues of mental health.
- 1.4 The challenge is twofold – both *inward facing* within its own workforce and *outward facing* into the community including how the Council provides its services and how these services are accessed. The Centre for Mental Health, through uptake of this challenge, recognise that the local authority is well placed to advocate for mental health in Council policies and strategies, through successful partnerships with

others and by working in communities to help tackle any stigma and to improve awareness.

- 1.5 At 9th September 2019 Council, a Motion was put forward by Cllr Alex Dale for the Council to take up this challenge which was unanimously accepted by Council – extract;

‘This Council resolves;

To sign the Local Authorities Mental Health Challenge;

To commit to appoint an elected Member as Mental Health Champion – Cllr Diana Ruff and also;

To identify a Lead Officer for Mental Health – Lee Hickin (NEDDC Director)’.

Progress to date

- 1.6 Following the Motion being approved at Council last year, progress has been made to meet the challenge set, progress which includes the following;

- A number of staff are now fully trained ‘Mental Health First Aiders’.
- A ‘Mental Health Group’ has been established which is chaired by Cllr Diana Ruff – elected Member Champion. The group also includes representation from across both the Council and Rykneld Homes at all levels, and from many departments.
- A series of Mental Health training sessions for staff have been and are being established.
- A Mental Health Framework has been created in both policy format and a more visually attractive / easier to read staff handout (**see appendix 1 and 2**) which includes;
 - An understanding of mental health
 - What you can do for yourself and others
 - What the Council already do and what you can access
 - Access to a host of external resources and organisations
- The Mental Health Group have also developed an action plan for the future. This represents a dynamic document that will continue to develop and grow over time. At present it includes the following;
 - A roll out of more Mental Health Awareness Briefing Sessions for managers and employees
 - The exploration of opportunities to use organised outdoor activity facilities and activities to promote positive mental health, also as part of recovery from poor mental health conditions
 - The use of ‘Work Well’ notice boards, extranet information and Health & Well-being newsletter to promote awareness of mental health
 - The integration of mental health concerns into Employee Support Plans where appropriate
 - The promotion of trained Mental Health First Aiders to increase awareness and improve accessibility to staff – similar to the Safeguarding arrangements that are in place across the Council

- The exploration and development of a 'mental health hub' – an informal platform for employees to discuss and support each other and share their stories / offer support

- 1.7 This work is seen only as the beginning by this group. Local Authorities have a great opportunity to promote better mental health and secure better life chances for people with mental health difficulties, not only within its own workforce, but also in the community as well, working with others to meet the challenge externally as well as internally, which is one of the ambitions for the group.

2 Conclusions and Reasons for Recommendation

- 2.1 With one in four people experiencing a mental health problem at some stage during the year, the likelihood is that this will be a person we know, maybe a person we work with or a family member where there is a strong possibility too that this will be without our knowledge.
- 2.2 Experiencing a mental health problem should not be seen any differently to other health matters, yet many in society still maintain a level of fear around the issue of mental health. This leads to stigma, fear and myths, all conspiring to distort our perceptions of mental health issues. Greater awareness of the issues, what can be done to promote good mental health, and how poor mental health and conditions can be identified and treated is extremely important, if we are to tackle this largely hidden issue.
- 2.3 In the workplace, mental health is included in the Governments Disability Discrimination Act. As an employer, it means that a best practice approach has to be taken to any employee experiencing a mental health problem. The Mental Health Framework adds great value to the Council's approach in terms of tackling mental health issues within the organisation, by improving general awareness in the workplace, training staff to recognise and support those affected, and by providing access to more specialist services if required.
- 2.4 The Mental Health Group recognise that Local Authorities have a great opportunity to promote better mental health and secure better life chances for people with mental health difficulties, not only in the workplace but more widely too. As part of its future work, the Mental Health Group intend to take an 'outward facing' perspective – exploring how the Council's services are accessed and provided by looking through a 'mental health lens'. In addition, the Group intend to maximise existing and perhaps build new partnerships with other community stakeholders to help combat 'stigma', and improve understanding in relation to mental health issues in the community.

3 Consultation and Equality Impact

- 3.1 There are no known negative equality impact issues at this stage.

4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 The Council approved the motion to take up the challenge – there are therefore no alternative options.

5 Implications

5.1 Finance and Risk Implications

5.1.1 None at this stage – all activity is currently met from existing budgets.

5.2 Legal Implications including Data Protection

5.2.1 None at this stage.

5.3 Human Resources Implications

5.3.1 None at this stage.

6 Recommendations

6.1 That Council note the progress of the Mental Health Group.

7 Decision Information

Is the decision a Key Decision? A Key Decision is an executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more District wards or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds: <i>BDC:</i> <i>Revenue - £75,000</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Capital - £150,000</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>NEDDC:</i> <i>Revenue - £100,000</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Capital - £250,000</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Please indicate which threshold applies</i>	No
Is the decision subject to Call-In? (Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)	No
Has the relevant Portfolio Holder been informed	Yes
District Wards Affected	All indirectly
Links to Corporate Plan priorities or Policy Framework	All indirectly

8 Document Information

Appendix No	Title
1	Mental Health Framework
2	Mental Health Framework Action Plan
Background Papers (These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Cabinet (NEDDC) or Executive (BDC) you must provide copies of the background papers)	
Report Author	Contact Number
Lee Hickin Director of Corporate Resources & Head of Paid Service	7218