

MENTAL HEALTH TASK GROUP

18 June 2019

Present: Councillor G Saffery (Chair)
Councillors D Allen-Williamson, A Grimston, R Martins and
B Mauthoor

Officers: Democratic Services Officer

1 Apologies for absence

There were none.

2 Disclosures of interest

There were none.

3 Background to the task group

The chair introduced the task group, giving a personal account of his interest in mental health policy. He outlined the Mayor's scrutiny proposal, which in summary sought:

- an assessment of current mental health provision in the borough
- consideration of what more the council could do to support residents living with mental health difficulties.

Councillor Jennifer Pattinson was invited to give a short presentation on the subject of mental health and the issues it poses, drawing on her expertise working for the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

Key messages:

- signs of mental ill-health are not always evident
- early intervention is vital
- Maslow's theory of human motivation is important to understanding good mental health – if providers of services fully understand this model they are better placed to support people with mental health issues

- parity of esteem is needed with other major illnesses such as cancer or heart disease
- a person-centred approach is required rather than a one-size-fits-all
- National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has produced important (and plentiful) guidance on mental health issues
- funding is managed through Hertfordshire County Council (Mark Harvey, Operations Director for Adult Disabilities and Mental Health Services is responsible)
- low level mental health service expenditure varies across the country, but is noticeably lower in East of England (where Watford is situated).

It was agreed to circulate copies of the presentation to the task group.

4 **Review task group's objectives and strategy**

The task group reviewed the key actions identified by the Mayor and it was agreed to:

1. Undertake a stocktake of the existing organisations dealing with mental health issues in the borough to understand the extent of current provision and identify any gaps.
2. Carry out a basic survey of these organisations to provide an overview of their roles and activities, identify any areas not covered and seek feedback on best practice that could be adopted from other authorities.
3. Understand the role of the council's mental health champion, currently Councillor Rabi Martins, and how he or she interacts with other mental health champions across Hertfordshire.

It was proposed that the outcome of this work, and any recommendations by the task group, should be passed to the newly established Health and Wellbeing Forum to inform and direct its activities.

5 **Survey of organisations**

The task group agreed:

- the organisations listed in appendix 1 with the possible addition (subject to further research to assess their appropriateness) of the YMCA, MenCap and a local secondary school

- the broad list of questions in appendix 2 should be made into an on-line survey (probably using survey monkey) with the addition of a question seeking to quantify the proportion of self-referred individuals seeking help from organisations vs GP referrals.

It was also agreed that task group members would:

- provide contact details for individuals in these organisations so that the survey could be more targeted
- champion the survey to organisations operating within their wards/where they had connections to encourage uptake.

6 **Date of next meetings**

- Monday 15 July – Councillor Martins will provide an overview of the role of the mental health champion
- Tuesday 17 September

Chair

The Meeting started at 6.30 pm
and finished at 7.30 pm