



Northumberland County Council

HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

10TH DECEMBER 2020

Update on Mental Health and Wellbeing In Northumberland

Report of: Cath McEvoy-Carr Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children's Services

Cabinet Member: Cllr Richard Dodd – Deputy Leader/Public Health

Purpose of report

1. To provide an update on mental health and wellbeing in Northumberland including (*potential*) impact of Covid 19 on mental health and wellbeing.

Recommendations

2. The Health and Wellbeing Board is invited to:

- Note progress made on Recommendations in Director of Public Health Annual Report 2018- Mental Wealth
- Note feedback from our Services/Providers in the attached Mental Health Scoping Paper including new ways of working during Covid 19
- Comment on our local response to provide extra capacity and the right response to support mental health and wellbeing

Link to Corporate Plan

3. This report is linked to the 'Living' priority included in the NCC Corporate Plan 2018-2021.

Key issues

4. We are likely to see an increase in at-risk individuals as well as an increase in prevalence of mental health conditions. Research indicates that large scale disasters and pandemics are almost always accompanied by short, medium and long-term mental health impacts on individuals, families and communities.

5. Longer term impacts on children and young people specifically include developmental and behavioural issues arising due to Covid 19 isolation/social distancing at key developmental milestones. The stress of this on children and young people is likely to result in the development of mental health disorders.

6. The impacts to mental health are also likely to be shaped by the environmental and societal changes as a result of Covid 19.

7. A prompt response is required to enhance mental health protective factors and to mitigate the impact of Covid 19 and prevent further harm. This would include increased provider capacity to address the anticipated increased prevalence, capacity for early intervention, community assets, self-help, collaboration, and the identification of high-risk groups.

8. Covid 19 is having a direct effect on the workforce available to support people at risk of developing mental health disorders and those whose mental health may worsen. This includes domiciliary care providers and those providers who support people in independent / supported living schemes.

Background

Mental Wealth - Director of Public Health Annual Report 2018

9. The DPH Report in 2018 focused on mental health and wellbeing and the inextricable link between the mind and the body – between mental and physical wellbeing.

Recommendations from the Report included the following: -

- Develop an ACE Aware Northumberland Plan
- Support all schools to adopt whole-school approaches to promote mental health and wellbeing

- Prioritise mental wellbeing in the workplace as part of the North East Better Health at Work Award
- Grow initiatives which increase social connectedness
- Make a cross sector commitment to prevention through the Prevention Concordat for Better Mental Health

All of the above recommendations have seen progress.

10. An ACE Aware Northumberland Plan is in place and includes the following desired outcomes: Shared understanding across the county of ACEs, their impact and what can reduce/ameliorate their impact. A range of universal and targeted projects are in place to PREVENT Aces occurring. A range of interventions are available to INTERVENE when ongoing Aces are identified in children and young people's lives for the children and their families). A range of approaches are in place to MITIGATE the impact Aces are having/have had on young people's and adult's lives.

11. A Senior Mental Health Leads in School Coordinator has been appointed on secondment from their teaching position. A senior mental health lead has been identified in the vast majority of schools in Northumberland. All schools in Northumberland have access to the Friends Resilience Programme which is a training programme for teaching staff to support their pupils' emotional health and resilience.

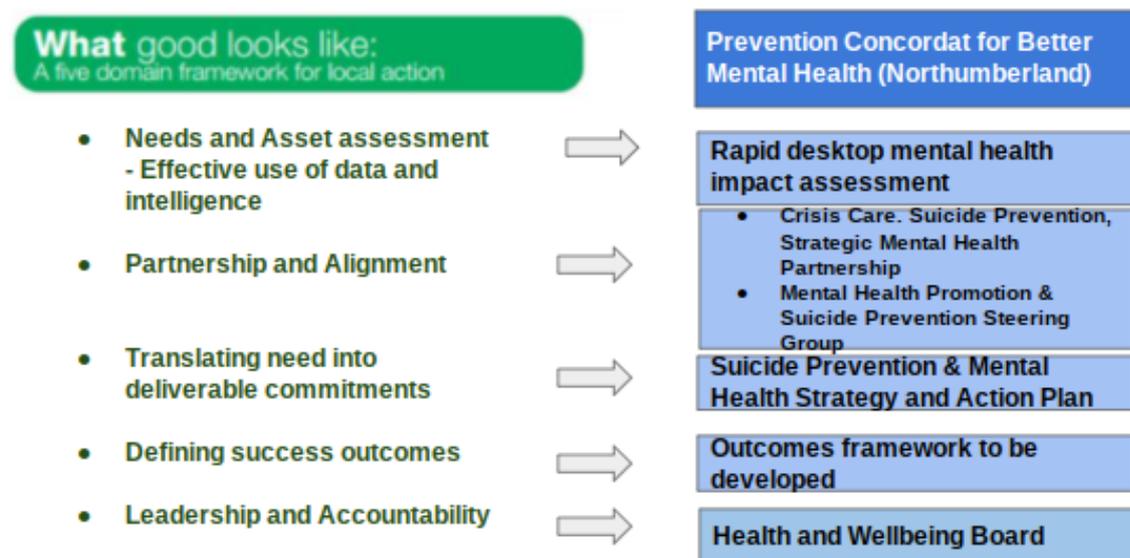
12. During Covid there has been continued email contact to support businesses to promote important campaigns albeit in a digital format (such as Mental Health Awareness Week). An online version of the Health Advocate Training has been developed and is being rolled out so that businesses new to the award or those wishing to train more advocates can do so. Better Health at Work Award (BHAWA) assessments are being completed using MS Teams. A contingency plan from the regional co-ordinators has been rolled out that allows businesses to select from three amended assessment options for 2020/21 taking into account the difficulties they have experienced during Covid. The first online Sharing Good Practice Event for businesses on the award took place in September, with topic experts including mental health. The Award continues to have a strong mental health/wellbeing focus and features throughout the different levels of the award with two full criteria sections at bronze and silver. The BHAWA coordinator is aware of some excellent examples of how individual organisations are supporting their staff during this time as their assessment reports come in.

13. Suicide Prevention Grants have been awarded to local VCS organisations to support communities and individuals during Covid 19 to support social connectedness and loneliness. The Communities Together Project supported by the Locality Coordinators/health trainers/support planners etc, working with local communities and VCSE organisations enabled support to be put in place very rapidly when lockdown occurred. This was able to happen due to the work that had already been done by the Empowering Communities project and the commissioning of the Local Coordinators.

The links and connections that had already been made enabled Northumberland to set up a support response very quickly mobilising community assets.

14. Northumberland were successful in their sign up to the Prevention Concordat for Better Mental Health, this demonstrates our commitment to preventative mental health and wellbeing. A multi-agency Mental Health Strategic Partnership is now in place which is taking forward the recommendations in the Concordat. The Concordat Framework will now support our Covid 19 mental health priorities and recovery, including a rapid desktop mental health impact scoping document.

Prevention Concordat for Better Mental Health Framework



Public Mental Health and Wellbeing and Covid-19

15. The LGA and the Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH) jointly produced a briefing about the public mental health and wellbeing issues arising from the Covid-19 outbreak. The briefing highlighted that while many people have acted in solidarity in response to COVID-19, and there will be some positive benefits from this community spirit and response, the epidemic will likely have many psychological impacts on the population which may have a detrimental effect on the short, medium and long-term mental health of some residents. In turn, this may reduce people’s resilience and their ability to cope. Longer term impacts in terms of trauma, grief and distress may exacerbate the burden of mental ill-health in the community long after recover.

16. Key principles underpinning local responses should include:

- Whole systems approach – no single agency can be left to address this by themselves, requiring input from all sectors including voluntary, statutory, employer and faith – as well as local neighbourhood action.
- Population wide and life course approach – an evidence-based understanding of local need and interventions that target the whole population (including children

and young people), populations at higher risk and people who need additional support (linking to wider work to support vulnerable circumstances during the outbreak).

- Build on existing arrangements – for example, mental health programmes for young people, multi-agency suicide prevention partnerships and bereavement networks. Also building on existing local and national resources that promote wellbeing and healthy ageing.
- Good communication – both to professionals and to the public. Ensure strong system links so that organisations are aware of what support and advice is available through the community hubs and local resilience forums. Highlight positive examples of communities coming together and supporting each other.

Covid 19 - Responding to mental health impacts

17. To enhance mental health protective factors and to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 and prevent further harm, the following were considered to enable a prompt response. Provider capacity to address the anticipated increased prevalence, capacity for early intervention, building on community assets, self-help, working in collaboration and consideration of who we should be targeting.

Local response

18. A rapid desktop mental health impact assessment was completed using an agreed framework across the region (attached as a background paper).

19. Partnership and Alignment Regular meetings are taking place of our Crisis Care, Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Strategic Partnership. This is a multi- agency strategic group, refreshed and aligned to include taking forward the Prevention Concordat for Better Mental Health. This is supported by an operational Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention Steering Group which is meeting more frequently due to Covid 19 and the potential impact on mental health, and the need for groups and organisations to support each other, and then subsequently the clients and the communities they are working with.

20. The Children and Young People's (CYP) Emotional Health and Wellbeing Group chaired by the CCG which oversees the CYP Children's Local Transformation Plan and has representatives from health, social care and education attend, has been on hold over recent months due to COVID 19 priorities. However, a recent meeting has taken place between the CCG chair and the Clinical Network as part of their CYP local transformation plan support and challenge visits and the attendance and function of the group was re-visited. The group is being reinstated with the first meeting to be held at the end of November. The meeting will be attended by a representative from the Clinical Network

who will support the chair in revisiting the functionality and governance structure of the group with those in attendance.

21. The Mental Health Support Team Trailblazer groups with representatives from health, education and social care have been amalgamated into one group at present. This group is currently meeting on a more regular bi-weekly basis to support implementation of the Wave 3 trailblazer teams, as well as regularly reviewing the support currently being provided to school during the COVID 19 pandemic.

22. Suicide Prevention The North ICP (Integrated Care Partnership) Suicide Prevention Group, of which Northumberland is an active participant, has developed several workstreams. As a result, we now have the following in place:

- A regional mental health training hub managed by Northumberland and Tyneside MIND, which gives increased capacity for suicide prevention and mental health training in Northumberland. This compliments the other training offers we have already in place for example, via the Public Health commissioned Integrated Wellbeing Team, and the NCC Learning Together Platform.
- A Real Time Alert System for suspected suicides, and postvention support provided by If you Care Share.
- The 'Be a Game Changer' Men's Project (Newcastle United Foundation & Foundation of Light Sunderland) is also in place and includes work with grassroots clubs.
- As previously mentioned, suicide prevention grants have been given to VCS Organisations.
- A self-harm drama project is also being developed.

23. Men Suicide rates are highest in men (Northumberland and nationally). It was agreed that specific training for those coming into contact with men was required. It was decided that targeting barbers and hair professionals would be beneficial. Bespoke training has been commissioned from the Lions Barber Collective. The Collective is an international group of top barbers who have come together to raise awareness of suicide prevention. It is acknowledged that barbers are in a unique position to help their clients, through the trust and bond they build with their clients.

24. NCC Workforce The NCC Workplace Health & Wellbeing Group are meeting every 6 weeks. Recent focus has been on the BITC Sleep and Recovery Toolkit and ensuring staff are aware of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Network and workshops. A variety of self-help guides on a range of wellbeing topics have been created. Staff webinars have been made available on the staff intranet which include support covering gambling wellbeing, financial wellbeing/Northumberland Community Bank Q&A and mental health.

25. Children and Young People An Educational Psychologist has been appointed to roll out the 'Wellbeing for Education Training Programme'. Initial training for this programme took place for Senior Mental Health Leads at the Senior Mental Health Leads Virtual Conference in November. The programme supports staff working in schools and colleges to respond to the additional pressures some children and young people may be feeling as a direct result of the pandemic, as well as to any emotional response they or their teachers may be experiencing from bereavement, stress, trauma or anxiety over the past months.

26. Northumberland CCG and partners have been successful in being awarded funding for a further Trailblazer Mental Health Support Team in the Ashington/Bedlington Area. The Wave 3 geographical area was selected based on the deprivation index and multi-agency data on prevalence rates and wider psycho-social needs in these areas.

27. Kooth Online support for Children and Young People (aged 11 – 25 years) is now also available in Northumberland commissioned by the CCG. This support requires no waiting lists, referrals or thresholds. It allows young people access to a range of tools, resources and activities that offer support to those struggling with mental health. These include online discussion boards, reading and contributing to self-help articles, daily goal trackers and an online journal.

28. Qwell Online support for teachers is also now available, funded jointly by the CCG and Public Health. The MELVA drama project (online) a participatory and interactive programme for children and young people is also being funded by Public Health, creating an accessible and effective way to educate children and the adults who support them about mental health and wellbeing, including empowering them to take an active role in improving their mental health outcomes.

Summary

29. There has been progress on the recommendations made in the Director of Public Health's Annual Report 2018. This includes development of an ACE Aware Plan; support for schools to adopt whole-school approaches promoting mental health and wellbeing; prioritising mental wellbeing in the workplace as part of the North East Better Health at Work Award; initiatives which increase social connectedness (being innovative due to Covid 19); and a cross sector commitment to prevention through the Prevention Concordat for Better Mental Health. Strong partnership working has enabled a prompt response to increase capacity and ensure the right response to support mental health and wellbeing.

Implications

Policy	Strategic Policy Implications have been considered.
Finance and value for money	Funding has been agreed for specific projects and packages of support in line with appropriate mechanisms.
Legal	No specific issues
Procurement	Procurement support has been provided where necessary including for the MELVA drama online project and Qwell Teacher Support Package.
Human Resources	No specific issues
Property	No specific issues
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	All services involved have processes in place to deal with equality duties.
Risk Assessment	N/A
Crime & Disorder	N/A
Customer Consideration	Partnership Working across sectors has enabled discussion to consider the most appropriate response for mental health and wellbeing.
Carbon reduction	N/A
Health and Wellbeing	This paper is relevant to the mental health and wellbeing of all our residents and our staff.
Wards	All wards

Background papers:

Mental Health Impact Assessment Scoping Paper – Covid 19

Report sign off

	Full name of officer
Monitoring Officer/Legal	Helen Lancaster
Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer	Chris Hand
Relevant Executive Director:	Cath McEvoy
Chief Executive	Daljit Lally
Portfolio Holder(s)	Richard Dodd

Author and Contact Details

Yvonne Hush, Public Health Manager, NCC
Email: yvonne.hush@northumberland.gov.uk
Tel: 07970341824