

Mental health and wellbeing action plan

Purpose of report

For direction.

Summary

The government has committed to developing a new cross-government, 10-year plan for mental health and wellbeing for England. As part of the process to develop the plan they have recently published [a discussion paper and call for evidence consultation](#).

The 10-year Mental Health and Wellbeing plan will apply to all ages and cover a wide spectrum of mental health issues from prevention up to crisis. The government has stated it is committed to improving mental health and wellbeing outcomes, particularly for people who experience worse outcomes than the general population. They state that this is part of their commitment to 'level up' and address unequal outcomes and life chances across the country.

The closing date for submission to the consultation is 7th July 2022. The final LGA submission to the consultation will be signed off by the Lead Members of the Community Wellbeing Board and the Children and Young People's Board.

Recommendations

Members are asked to give their views on items that should be included in the LGA response to the 10 year cross-government mental health and wellbeing plan.

Action/s

Officers will;

- Also work closely with the Community Wellbeing Board to develop a consultation response
- Continue to engage with the department to ensure the view of the local government sector is taken into consideration.
- Circulate the LGA's response with lead members for sign off

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Mental health and wellbeing action plan

Background

1. Mental health needs of children and young people were rising even before the pandemic but these have been exacerbated by Covid-19. There are now 1 in 6 children and young people who have a probable mental health disorder, an increase from 1 in 9 in 2017. This has had a significant impact on the system; with a 25 per cent rise in children presenting to councils with mental health needs and a 77 per cent increase in referrals for specialist mental health, although an overall reduction in referrals for mental health to NHS for the first time in four years.
2. Supporting young people's mental health should not be seen as solely an NHS issue, however it needs to be recognised that council funding has not kept pace with that of the NHS resulting in councils being unable to provide vital services that are essential to supporting children and young people's wellbeing.
3. There is a range of work ongoing in children's mental health by the Government and the NHS at the moment, including the roll out of mental health support teams in schools (MHSTs) which provide mid to low level support in schools and will be rolled out to 35 per cent of pupils by April 2023. Schools have also been provided with funding to apply for support for training for teachers to become senior leads for mental health. These initiatives are part of the 2017 Green Paper.
4. There has not been a significant investment or plan for recovery from the pandemic for children and young people outside of academic catch up. Some limited funding was awarded to councils through the Wellbeing for Education Recovery and Wellbeing for Education Return programmes.
5. The cross-government mental health and wellbeing action plan does not introduce new funding or legislation, but it provides the opportunity to ensure that mental health is front and centre of government policy going forward.

Summary of LGA views to date (please see appendix for further detail of our proposed topics for submission)

6. Local government has a key role in supporting communities to be and stay well and councils require an equal level of funding with the NHS to ensure that they can undertake this role.
7. Although we supported the intentions set out in the 2017 Green paper 'Transforming children and young people's mental health provision,' the roll out of this has been too slow, particularly in the face of growing need. The government urgently needs to build on the progress made through the Green

Paper and empower councils to develop a systemic approach to mental health, that effectively brings together all local partners and is underpinned by investment in prevention and early intervention.

8. Significant elements of the Green Paper focus on support in schools and it is important that children and young people can access support in these spaces, however, there also needs to be support available for children who do not wish to access mental health support at school, such as early help hubs or through supportive digital platforms. Furthermore, there are increasing pressures on teachers and there needs to be appropriate wrap-around support for them.
9. Ensuring that all women receive access to the right type of care during the perinatal period is needed to reduce the impact of maternal mental health problems for the mother and family during pregnancy and beyond, for the first two years of life on infant mental health and the child's future adolescent and adult mental health. Infant mental health is crucial to the long-term development of good mental, physical and emotional health and wellbeing throughout the whole life course.
10. We are concerned about the growing difficulties in accessing the right help and support for children and young people with the most complex and overlapping needs, finding themselves on the edge of the criminal justice or care systems and/or the brink of hospitalisation.
11. We need to ensure that support for children with additional needs is well integrated with support for mental health needs.
12. Family and household circumstances can have a major influence on young people's mental health and wellbeing. A whole household approach to young people's mental health recognises the important roles that parents, carers or siblings can play in supporting young people's mental health.
13. There is a strong link between poor mental health, poverty and wider health inequalities. We are working with government on a range of projects to support residents in this space but there needs to be a cross-system recognition on the impact that poverty can have on people's mental health.

Questions for members

14. Do members agree with the priority areas set out in the summary of LGA views to date, and appendix?
15. Do members have any further comments regarding the key questions presented as part of the consultation document?
 - How can we all promote positive mental wellbeing?
 - How can we all prevent the onset of mental ill-health?
 - How can we all intervene earlier when people need support with their mental health?

- How can we improve the quality and effectiveness of treatment for mental health conditions?
- How can we all support people living with mental health conditions to live well?
- How can we all improve support for people in crisis?

Implications for Wales

16. None, it is a plan for England

Financial Implications

17. None

Next steps

18. Officers will draft the consultation response using input from the Children and Young People Board and the Community Wellbeing Board with a final draft going to lead members for sign off.