

Taking forward a programme of work on mental health

For discussion and decision.

Summary.

This paper proposes a programme of work on local authorities' role on mental health, in order to better support their responsibilities around prevention, promotion and the provision of services for those experiencing mental health problems.

Our aim is that the programme will focus particularly on access to employment and accommodation.

Recommendation/s

- That members agree to the proposed programme of work (Paras 10-16) and give a steer on the approach and focus.

Action/s

Officers to progress as directed.

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Taking forward a programme of work on mental health

Background

1. The LGA is already taking forward work to support implementation of the mental health crisis concordat. We are currently carrying out a two phase research project, with ADASS, to better understand how local authorities are planning for and commissioning community based mental health services for those at risk of and experiencing mental health problems. We are aiming to hold a seminar in March 2014 to disseminate the findings of this work to local authorities and their partners. We are also producing a tool kit and practice briefing for local authorities and their partners on their safeguarding responsibilities for those at risk of or experiencing mental health problems for publication in March 2014.
2. Early findings from this research work suggest many local authorities are working well with their health partners to deliver quality community based services for people at risk of and experiencing mental health problems. It also suggests that local authorities, and their partners, are experiencing a number of challenges in this area including competing priorities such as pressures arising from the Better Care Fund and the Care Act and significant funding pressures.
3. This work aims to raise the profile of mental health issues, the role that local authorities and their partners can play, and best practice.

Why is this important?

4. Alongside their role in commissioning and providing community based services for those experiencing mental health problems, local authorities have an important strategic role in enabling people with mental health problems to live successfully within their local communities.
5. People living with mental health problems experience significant challenges particularly in accessing paid employment and in living independently, and there is evidence that problems in these areas may be worsening. The Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework data (ASCOF) for example, suggests that whilst there were improvements in the numbers of people who require secondary mental health services being in paid employment during 2012/13, this has declined in all regions during 2013/14 (to less than 5% in one region). It demonstrates a more mixed picture in relation to adults who are in contact with secondary mental health services being able to live independently, with the numbers rising in 2013/14 in a number of regions (in London to over 75%) but again with large regional disparities. (We have set out the ASCOF data at Annex i).
8. In many areas, local authorities are engaged in proactive work to enable and promote the provision of a wider range of services, such as green spaces, leisure and employment opportunities and housing and support, so that people experiencing mental health problems can live more successfully within their local communities. This project would seek to share learning and raise the profile of this work, so that local authorities and their partners can review the benefits that such approaches might have for the people living with mental health problems living in their areas and their wider communities.

9. We would aim to make the most of opportunities presented by the increased focus and priority being given to mental health by DH Ministers and DfE. We would ensure that it included attention to the issues facing adolescents and young adults with early onset mental health problems, and therefore address the very important transitional issues for this group.
10. The project would also consider mental health promotion, which would help to address the recent challenge by Mind about support for public mental health.

What might an initial programme of work cover?

11. We are proposing that we initially hold a high profile 'round table' discussion on local authorities' wider strategic role in respect of mental health. The aims of this will be to:
 - 11.1. increase public attention and focus on this key issue;
 - 11.2. explore examples of positive practice Health and Well Being Boards and local authorities are involved in;
 - 11.3. review the opportunities and challenges for local areas in developing a more proactive approach to promoting mental health;
 - 11.4. explore existing work the local authorities and their partners are supporting that enable and promote the provision of green spaces, leisure and employment opportunities and housing and support, so that people experiencing mental health problems can live more successfully within their local communities;
 - 11.5. review current barriers and possible levers for change at a local and national level; and
 - 11.6. review the potential role of the LGA in this important area.
12. We would aim for such a discussion to have a high profile chair (such as David Brindle) and to include key members from the CWB Board, local mental health champions, HWB Board representatives, senior officers from local authorities involved in positive work in this area and representatives from key mental health organisations. We would aim to invite the Minister Norman Lamb to take part in the discussion.
13. The discussion could centre around the following themes:
 - 13.1. How can HWB Boards contribute to the creation of 'mentally healthy communities' that actively promote mental health?
 - 13.2. What role can LAs play in promoting mental health for everyone, in ensuring that the mental health needs of vulnerable adults accessing care and support services are identified and in enabling people with identified mental health needs are able to live within their local communities;
 - 13.3. How can we learn from existing work being developed locally by local authorities and their partners to enable and promote the provision of green spaces, leisure and employment opportunities and housing and support, so that people

experiencing mental health problems can live more successfully within their local communities;

- 13.4. How can we build on the examples of proactive work that Health and Wellbeing Boards and LAs are currently engaged in to promote mental health in a positive and enabling way;
 - 13.5. What are the challenges and opportunities in respect of this work at a local, regional and national level;
 - 13.6. What are the current barriers and possible levers for change at a local and national level; and
 - 13.7. What role might the LGA (working with key partners) play to support local authorities in this important area.
14. We would then aim to hold an 'internal workshop' with a small group of members from the CWB Board and officers, to review the key messages from this round table discussion, and develop a set of proposals for the LGA to go forward – to present to the Board.

Concurrent programme of work to disseminate the findings from the Crisis Concordat work.

15. Alongside the work above, we will aim to disseminate the key findings from the mental health Crisis Concordat work. This will consist of:
 - 14.1 Jointly holding a seminar (with ADASS) to review the findings of the mental health crisis concordat research – aimed at local authorities and their partners – to promote the delivery of effective policy and practice in this area with the following aims:
 - 14.2 To review how local authorities and their partners can take forward work to implement the mental health crisis concordat. We would aim to position the crisis concordat, within local authorities' and their partners' wider responsibilities in respect of the Better Care Fund and work to implement the Care Act; and
 - 14.3 To test out the feasibility and initial content of a self-assessment tool for local authorities, so that local authorities can assess where they are in respect of delivering services that improve outcomes for people who experience mental health crisis.
- 15 We would anticipate that initial work to develop such a 'self-assessment' tool will be carried out with TEASC and ADASS prior to the seminar.

- 16 We would then aim to work with TEASC to review how this might form the basis of a peer review programme on mental health. (April 2015 onwards).

Next steps

- 17 Officers to take forward work on the initial round table discussion to be held in March 2014
- 18 LGA to hold an 'internal workshop' with a small group of members from the CWB Board and officers, to review the key messages from this round table discussion, and develop a set of proposals for the LGA to go forward

Members are asked to:

19. Agree to the proposed programme of work (Paras 10-16) and give a steer on the approach and focus.