

# CABINET

Agenda Item: 6

**Ward:** All

**Portfolio:** **COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICE**

**Report Author(s):** Cllr Heather Shearer

**Meeting Date:** 7<sup>th</sup> October 2019

**SUBJECT:** **Mental Health & Wellbeing Champions**

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	Seen by:	Name	Date
<b>Officer Sign off</b>	Chief Executive/ Deputy Chief Executive(s)	Tracy Aarons	24/09/2019
	Legal	Lesley Dolan	19/09/2019
	Finance	Paul Deal/Duncan Moss	19/09/2019
	Group Manager	Claire Malcolmson	24/09/2019
<b>Elected Member Sign off</b>	Portfolio Holder/ Leader of the Council	Cllr Heather Shearer Cllr Ros Wilkins	24/09/2019
	Ward Member(s) (if appropriate)		
<b>Summary:</b>	<p>The Council plays a crucial role in improving both the physical and mental health of our community.</p> <p>In March 2016 the Council approved the appointment of a District Councillor to act as a Mental Health Champion, who would raise awareness of the issues of mental ill health and tackle the stigma around mental health issues and ensuring that our own policies and procedures do not discriminate. By raising awareness amongst staff and Councillors of the issues around mental health, the Council can begin to create a positive environment and offer effective support.</p> <p>This paper asks the Cabinet to continue its support for the appointment of a Mental Health Champion(s), delegating to the Leader the responsibility of appointing an existing Councillor(s) to the role and the delegation to the Group Manager, Community Health to identify an officer to take the lead officer role to support the member Champion.</p> <p>The model of appointing Councillors as Champions has resulted in increased networking and raised awareness both in our District and in councils across the UK. It is suggested the Mental Health Champion be considered as part of a wider scheme of Champions that can influence positive actions and seek to improve the health and wellbeing within the communities of Mendip.</p>		

<b>Recommendation:</b>	<p>Cabinet is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Approve the continued support for the appointment of Mental Health Champion from amongst the District Councillors to champion the awareness and understanding of mental health issues.</li> <li>2. Agree the re-launch of the Mental Health Champion(s) at the Mental Health Event on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2019.</li> <li>3. Delegate authority to the Leader to appoint further Champions linked to wellbeing, giving oversight to the Portfolio Holder for Community Health.</li> <li>4. Require nominated Champions to provide and annual report of outcomes achieved.</li> </ol>
<b>Direct and/or indirect impact on service delivery to our customers and communities:</b>	<p>Councillors will be acting as community leaders influencing communities and voluntary agencies to address local issues. Any provision to co-ordinate actions will have to be delivered within existing resourcing or external funding sought.</p>
<b>Contribution to Corporate Priorities:</b>	<p>The introduction of Champions will contribute to Council's role in promoting health and wellbeing in all communities.</p>
<b>Legal Implications:</b>	<p>There are no legal implications to the decision to appoint a member champion for mental health or further expansion into wider health and wellbeing champion roles. The Council is already a member of the Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board which has a statutory duty to act to improve health and wellbeing in Somerset.</p>
<b>Financial Implications:</b>	<p>There are no additional financial resources coming from this decision. Should the member champions identify specific priorities or actions that require resources beyond those within operational plans then a further paper will be returned to Cabinet identifying the aspirations and resources required.</p>
<b>Climate Change Implications:</b>	<p>Many interventions that support positive mental health, social inclusion and wider wellbeing focus on community activities that also contribute positively to behaviour changes that make a positive impact on the Climate Change Actions e.g. encouraging and supporting activities in the towns and parishes including community gardens, promoting allotments &amp; cooking groups using locally sourced foods.</p>
<b>Impact on Service Plans:</b>	<p>Member support will be provided by the Community Health &amp; Wellbeing Policy Officer within current service plans but should the Member Champions identify specific priorities or actions that require resources beyond those within operational plans then a further paper will be presented to Cabinet identifying the aspirations and resources required.</p>

<b>Value for Money:</b>	Poor mental health alone carries an economic and social cost of £105 billion a year in England. The business cost of mental ill health among the UK workforce is thought to total £26 billion. Working to raise awareness and tackle mental health and other health and wellbeing issues will help reduce these costs.
<b>Equalities Implications:</b>	Risk factors for poor mental health in adulthood include unemployment, low income, debt, violence, stressful life events, inadequate housing, fuel poverty and other adversity such as serving in combat. Risk factors disproportionately affect the mental health of people from marginalised groups. Targeted intervention for groups at higher risk of mental illness can prevent a widening of inequalities in comparison with the general population.
<b>Risk Assessment and Adverse Impact on Corporate Actions:</b>	The recommendations in this report support the Council's aim to promote health and wellbeing within communities; as a consequence there is unlikely to be any adverse impact or risk to the Council if the recommendations are approved.
<b>Scrutiny Recommendation (if any)</b>	

## **BACKGROUND – Mental Health**

Among people under 65, nearly half of all ill health is attributable to mental illness and around half of the people with lifetime mental health problems experience the first symptoms before the age of 14.

When people experience a mental health problem, early access to effective treatment and support can make a huge difference. Seventy-five per cent of children and young people experiencing a mental health problem do not access treatment.

Many social conditions can be affected by, or in themselves affect, a person's mental health. Worries over other issues, such as long-term illness, housing problems, social deprivation and benefits, can make people anxious and depressed, or exacerbate mental health problems.

Stigma and discrimination affect nearly nine out of ten people with mental health problems, restricting people's working lives, curtailing their social lives and relationships and leading to social isolation. At its worst, the stigma people face can mean taking their own life.

Poor mental health carries an economic and social cost of £105 billion a year in England. The business cost of mental ill health among the UK workforce is thought to total £26 billion. Over the last Parliament, demand has grown rapidly. Referrals to community mental health teams have risen nearly 20 per cent. By 2030 there will be approximately two million more adults in the UK with mental health problems than there are today.

## Supporting Our Communities

As member of the Somerset Health & Wellbeing Board the District has an ambition to work together with partners over the next ten years to create:

- A thriving and productive Somerset that is ambitious, confident and focused on improving people's lives
- A county of resilient, well-connected and safe and strong communities working to reduce inequalities
- A county infrastructure that supports affordable housing, economic prosperity and sustainable public services
- A county and environment where all partners, private and voluntary sector, focus on improving the health and wellbeing of all our communities

As a district we are committed to supporting the Somerset Joint Mental Health Strategy and through this we can ensure that, where relevant, the services we provide help to improve mental wellbeing and prevent mental health issues developing. We can also work with partners who have more direct roles in supporting those with mental health needs, to ensure that, where possible, our systems and processes support the outcomes they are trying to achieve.

Within the Mendip area we also have our own local health wellbeing board and it is at these meetings that the Council can build the important relationships with our local partners to tackle mental health issues collectively.

Mendip District Council has a crucial role to play in improving the mental health of our community, tackling the stigma around mental health issues and ensuring that our own policies and procedures do not discriminate.

Many of our staff come into contact with vulnerable members of the public and the active roles our Councillors play within the community see them in contact with residents who may have mental health issues. By raising awareness amongst staff and Councillors of the issues around mental health we can begin to create a positive environment and offer effective support.

Similarly, by reviewing our policies and procedures, as they are developed, we will ensure that we do not unknowingly discriminate against people with mental health issues.

In March 2016 the Council approved the appointment of a District Councillor to act as a Mental Health Champion, who would raise awareness of the issues of mental ill health and tackle the stigma around mental health issues and ensuring that our own policies and procedures do not discriminate. By raising awareness amongst staff and Councillors of the issues around mental health, the Council can begin to create a positive environment and offer effective support. The role of this was to include, but not be limited to:

- Advocating for mental health and wider wellbeing issues in Council meetings and policy development
- Reaching out to the local community (e.g. via schools, businesses, faith groups) to raise awareness and challenge stigma
- Raising an understanding amongst district Councillors of the challenges faced by those with mental health and wider wellbeing needs.

- Listening to people with personal experiences to get their perspectives on local needs and priorities
- Scrutinising the work of other local services that have an impact on wellbeing: e.g. health, social care, housing, Police.
- Fostering local partnerships between agencies to support people and communities more effectively
- Encouraging the Council to support the mental health and health and wellbeing of its own workforce and those of its contractors.

It was a very successful role and has resulting in an increase understanding amongst staff and communities:

- Mendip District Council officers continue to benefit from the Mental Health First Aid course provided by Mental Health First Aid England and organised for free through Public Health at Somerset County Council. Through having a number of Mental Health First Aiders, the Council is now better equipped to support residents who may have mental health problems.
- Facilitating the development of 5 Dementia Action Alliances (DAAs) set up in each town/city in Mendip with a district-wide DAA providing support and opportunity to share best practice in working towards the whole district becoming dementia friendly.

This paper asks the Cabinet to continue its support for the appointment of a Mental Health Champion(s), delegating to the Leader the responsibility of appointing an existing Councillor(s) to the role and the delegation to the Group Manager, Community Health to identify an officer to take the lead officer role to support the member Champion(s).

In re-appointing a Mental Health Champion(s), the District Council will signify its commitment to raising the understanding of mental health and wellbeing issues and its resolve to work with partners to ensure that those with mental health needs receive appropriate support.

The model of appointing Councillors as Champions has resulted in increased networking and raised awareness both in our District and in councils across the UK. Therefore, this paper suggests the Mental Health Champion be considered as part of a wider scheme of Champions supporting the health and wellbeing agenda in the District:

- 1) Veterans' Champion: The Council's continued commitment to this role was confirmed at the Full Council meeting in May 2019 with the appointment of Cllr Damon Hooton.
- 2) Parish/Towns Champion: Scrutiny Report October 2018 recommended creating a Parish Champion. This role was to build positive relationships between parish and district councillors, advocating on behalf of the District Council and pro-actively promoting Parish Forum attendance. Additionally this role can help to bridge communications and share best practice on improving community's health and wellbeing.

These roles demonstrate the commitment of the Council to raise awareness and act to improve the health and wellbeing of the communities in Mendip by typically:

- Making sure that their area of interest is taken into account when developing policy or making decisions
- Asking questions about performance and resourcing for the area
- Raising the profile of the area and make the authority aware of good practice.

- Engaging with external bodies who work in the area
- Engaging with other officers and members in relation to the role.
- Engaging with community groups with an interest/stake in the area
- Reporting action to the council

## **World Mental Health Day**

On the 10<sup>th</sup> October 2019 an event to celebrate World Mental Health Day has been organised in the Council Chamber “Health & Mind Matters”.

The event will be attended by a number of organisations and groups all actively supporting individuals and communities within the Mendip area and encouraging them to explore their physical and mental wellbeing. The event is open to everyone where people can learn about support organisations within Mendip, discuss healthy lifestyles and address budgeting and debt support. There will also be a “physical activity corner”, mindfulness area, free prize draw and refreshments.

Staff and councillors are encouraged to attend and it would be an excellent opportunity to re-launch the Districts commitment to Mental Health by announcing the newly appointed Mental Health Champion(s).

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Cabinet is asked to:

1. Approve the continued support for the appointment of Mental Health Champion(s) from amongst the District Councillors to champion the awareness and understanding of mental health issues.
2. Agree the re-launch of the Mental Health Champion(s) at the Mental Health Event on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2019.
3. Delegate authority to the Leader to appoint further Champions linked to wellbeing, as appropriate, giving oversight to the Portfolio Holder for Community Health.
4. Require nominated Champions to provide an annual report of outcomes achieved.

## **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

Mental health problems are a significant issue and result in lives being blighted where support is not provided. The stigma around mental health is such that people often avoid tackling problems. As a member of the Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board the District Council already supports the Somerset Joint Mental Health Strategy. However, the appointment of a Member Champion will enable it to focus its support at a local level.

Extending the Champion concept to other areas of health and wellbeing further supports the Council’s commitment to improving lives of our communities.

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### **List of background Papers:**

- Positive Mental Health – a Joint Strategy for Somerset 2014 -2019, Somerset County Council and Somerset CCG - [Positive Mental Health Strategy for Somerset](#)
- Improving Lives in Somerset Strategy 2019-2028 - Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board <http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/jsna/>
- Mental Health Champion Report February 2019
- Poster for Mental Health Day 2019