

## **REPORT TO WEST AREA PEOPLE BOARD**

**5 September 2016**

### **Young People Mental Health – taking forward change at a community level**

#### **1. Background**

- 1.1 West Area Committee has been focused on the mental health and well-being of young people for some considerable time. They have considered feedback from the Youth Parliament as well as directly from young people themselves via West youth providers and the wider West VCS Network and the West Community Helpers. They also continue review lessons learnt and case studies from the West Holiday Hunger programme.
- 1.2 West Committee also continues to fund and develop the Healthy Lifestyles project, embedding specialist support directly within schools to encourage young people to try new activities as well as recognise the importance of physical activity to improve their mental health and overall wellbeing.
- 1.3 More recently the People Board (July 2016) received a comprehensive presentation from Janette Sherratt, Commissioning Lead for Mental Health from the CCG. This presentation explained the steps currently being taken to transform the CAMHS service (Children's and Adolescent Mental Health Service) alongside a large-scale cultural change across the city to recognise the need to talk about mental health openly to then move forward and to make a positive change.
- 1.4 One of the work-streams to support this change is being led by Simon Marshall, the Council's Director of Education. The work stream is focusing upon 'Thriving / Coping' also supported by public health. The primary focus of this group will be promoting resilience and self-help, developing mindfulness approaches and increasing the capacity of the universal work force to meet the mental health needs of children, young people and their families including the development of the mental health lead role in schools.

#### **2.0 Thriving and coping work stream - what the research is telling us**

- 2.1 The Chair of the Area Committee and the West Area Co-ordinator met with Simon Marshall to understand the work stream noted above, to determine how best the West Committee could support the wider strategic direction for the city.
- 2.2 Simon explained that promotion of resilience is key, to build the ability of a community to prevent, offer support and intervene, where appropriate, successfully, in connection with mental health issues. Children, young people and families often need timely, low-level support to adjust to life's circumstances, where they may be faced with temporary difficulties. Often the best intervention is within the community, with the possible addition of on-line self-support.

- 2.3 Digital and web based support is required, communicated in such a way that all communities are able to access, using a language which they understand, trust and respond to, sign-posting quickly to local 'trusted' community support.
- 2.4 School-based interventions including mindfulness and peer support are required, across all schools. This is currently being trialed across 30 schools in Sunderland (in the West these schools are Farringdon Academy; Academy 360; Pennywell Early Years Centre; Highfield School; North View Academy).
- 2.5 Connections are required, to ensure pathways are not only known and understood but also accessible at the right time, in the right way and in the best language to ensure maximum benefit.
- 2.6 An area that was identified when carrying out the research was the need for more mental health training across communities – similar to health champions/dementia Friends. Whilst this would need to be explored further the initial findings have identified that if more people were trained (such as schools assistants, governors, lunch time assistants, young people, youth workers, community workers and parents) this would tackle the stigma and also raise awareness – in particular for self-harm.

### **3.0 Options for a specific West Project**

- 3.1 Train West Community Helpers and Youth Workers to be Mental Health Champions – approximate costs of £2,000.
- 3.2 Continue the Healthy Lifestyles project for a further 12 months and adapt the scope to include training mentors and teachers to recognize the signs and begin an activity plan to address issues. There is currently underspend with this project, with a detailed report being prepared for the November 2016 People Board.
- 3.3 Support West VCS organisations to adapt their websites and programme of activities to ensure support pathways are communicated, understood, accessible and ensure sign-posting is timely and appropriate. It would be useful to support the assurance that all of our West VCS websites have links to the wellbeinginfo.org site, which is commissioned by Public Health and therefore kept continually current and up-to-date, so the same message and information would be received via all of our VCS websites - approximate costs of £2,000.
- 3.4 Following the above activities and the embedding of the mental health champion model, the trained community representatives and workers could then be invited to come together to an organised workshop, facilitated by the West Area Coordinator and Community Officer, to develop proposals and ideas for a Call for Project, to develop new approaches to work towards resolving the critical issue of young people's mental health and wellbeing, linked to the Thriving and Coping city-wide workstream at all times, to share lessons learnt.

#### **4.0 Share lessons learnt**

- 4.1 Whichever action the West Area Committee chooses to take, we should ensure that we share lessons learnt, feeding results back into Simon Marshall and the 'Thriving/ coping' workstream as well as the Children's Trust – Together for Children.
- 4.2 Information can be shared via dedicated feedback sessions, case studies and the key outcomes achieved. We can share what works and what doesn't work, where the barriers are being identified and where additional foresight and joined-up working is required/would be beneficial.

#### **5. Finance**

- 5.1 At the West Area Committee in June 2016, the remaining West Health Plan SIB funding was aligned to support young people's mental health. The budget aligned was £48,579.
- 5.2 If options noted in section 3 were agreed, a recommendation would be made to October Area Committee, to enable immediate progress thereafter to be made.

#### **6. Recommendations**

- 6.1 Note the contents of the report and consider next steps to recommend to October Area Committee.