Date Published: 02 September 2021

Bracknell Forest Council

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION

09 SEPTEMBER 2021

SUPPLEMENTARY PAPERS

TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION

The following papers have been added to the agenda for the above meeting.

These were not available for publication with the rest of the agenda.

Kevin Gibbs
Executive Director: Delivery

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8.   **WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE**   3 - 6

Overview and Scrutiny Panel Chairs to provide verbal updates on the
work programme and highlight any proposed changes such as scope,
scheduling or duration.

The Commission to consider the scope for Mental Health review from
the Wellbeing and Finance Panel.

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Mental Health Review
Wellbeing Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Reason for review

The lockdown measures of the COVID19 pandemic had the knock-on effect of disrupting support services, activities and groups that many residents rely on for good mental health. This was the case across all sectors: statutory, voluntary, community and social enterprise. These enforced changes took place at a time of higher anxiety due to the uncertainty of a health pandemic and when people were required to pull back from friends and family. It is therefore expected that, in some cases, mental health will have worsened, leading to increased pressure on mental health services.

In the Bracknell Forest COVID Community Impact Assessment of July 2021:

- One third of residents reported that the pandemic has negatively affected their mental health. This was higher than in the July 2020 survey.
- Residents reported that their pre-existing mental health conditions, along with social isolation, have worsened during lockdown due to limited support available.
- However, around one third of responses reported a positive impact for their mental health, and for many, household and caring relationships have improved.

The impact assessment also notes:

- Within the mental health services, there continues to be high pressure linked to the increasing complexity of social care, mental health and physical health needs.
- Partners have shared their concern about the increasing prevalence and complexity of mental health needs.
- Residents identified mental health services as a particular priority in the recent "What matters most?" survey conducted by Healthwatch Bracknell Forest.

The data suggests we are at the beginning of a wave of mental health and wellbeing pressures.

Self-help and prevention are the best ways to support the largest number of people in the shortest period of time. Early intervention has the best outcomes and prevents more severe illness, allowing resources to be targeted towards those in most need of support measures. Understanding how the early stage system currently works is vital to improving these services to address the increasing need.

There are reports that it is difficult to navigate the self-help and community support pathways, resulting in clients presenting in the acute channel later in their illnesses. Understanding the customer journey and any barriers in the first stages of the process could stop clients reaching crisis.

Objectives/scope

The COVID Community Impact Assessment notes that there have been clear increases for specific services such as eating disorder support. The Executive Director: People told the Overview and Scrutiny Commission that referrals to drug and alcohol services had increased by 31%[1]. This review will focus on those two areas as they are experiencing clear increases in demand.

For these services, the review aims to understand:

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[1] The first 6 months of 2021 compared with previous years

- The size of any increased demand that mental health services and community groups are experiencing and whether this is related to COVID19
- How clients access primary care providers (CCG, GP practices, others?) and any barriers to accessing these services.
- How community support networks and services meet community needs and divert clients from higher level support services
- The effectiveness of the current pathways in supporting clients and diverting from high level support
- Whether health inequalities that have been seen to contribute to worse COVID outcomes for some groups are also present in mental health primary services (lack of support for key minority groups meaning they have a disproportionate level of referrals to more intensive support and interventions)

The review will do this by (not an exhaustive list):
- approaching service providers for data on levels of demand
- reviewing relevant KPIs for insights into demand and delivery requirements
- mapping the network of early intervention and self-help services
- speaking to service providers and clients to understand how the system should work and is working
- customer journey mapping of the current processes and identifying the client's emotional journey through these services
- reviewing published reports, standards and other publications to identify best practice or operational models that should be in place

Delivery methods:
- Interviewing key health professionals and commissioners of services (Frimley Clinical Commissioning Group, Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust (BHFT) mental health, GPs)
- Interviewing relevant clients, client groups, 3rd sector support groups
- Customer journey mapping, including the emotional journey of the client and family
- Consulting other local authorities to understand how their schemes are run
- Desktop review of mental health data and health outcome data for different referral pathways

Demonstrating impact

Bracknell Forest Council does not deliver the primary care services in scope for this review. The review aims to work with the NHS and local health partners to support continuous improvement of mental health services. This scrutiny will ensure providers and commissioners hear the voice of local people regarding their needs and experiences.

 Successful outcomes include:
- strengthening existing good relationships with providers, commissioners and the public
- influencing partners to deliver improvements
- increasing Councillor knowledge of local mental health systems, promoting health-focused decisions across all areas
- delivering effective, transparent scrutiny that engages residents.

Council theme:	Council team:
• Caring for you and your family • Value for money	• External health review
Review due:	**Proposed by:**
• February 2022	• Work programme

Equality Impact Assessment

The determinants of mental health interact with inequalities in ways that put some people at a far higher risk of poor mental health than others[i], for example:

- Children from the poorest 20% of households are four times as likely to have serious mental health difficulties by the age of 11 as those from the wealthiest 20%
- Children and young people with a learning disability are three times more likely than average to have a mental health problem
- Men and women from African-Caribbean communities in the UK have higher rates of post-traumatic stress disorder and suicide risk and are more likely to be diagnosed with schizophrenia

The review recognises these inequalities and will include evidence from members of disadvantaged groups.

To address social, economic and political determinants the Mental Health Foundation recognises the critical role of community-led support. The Foundation has found that, rather than top-down approaches, providing communities with the knowledge, skills and support to look after themselves and their neighbours is a key part of addressing inequalities[ii]. The review's focus on self-help and early intervention reflects this approach.

Financial and legal implications

This review seeks to engage and influence local health partners for the benefit of residents. It is not anticipated there will be any legal or financial implications for Bracknell Forest Council arising from the recommendations. However, any implications for the council will be fully addressed in the review report.

Climate change implications

Supporting those in need in the community means that formal facilities do not need to be built, operated and maintained, reducing the demand on energy and other resources.

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[i] CentreforMH_OurPlace.pdf (centreformentalhealth.org.uk) Page 8

[ii] Submission to Commission for Equality in Mental Health..pdf Page 5

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