

Report to Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board

21 November 2022

Subject:	Better Mental Health Programme
Director:	Lisa McNally, Director of Public Health
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1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Board considers and comments upon this update on the Better Mental Health Programme;
- 1.2 That the Board notes and endorses ongoing plans to continue and extend the Programme.




2 Reasons for Recommendations

An update on the Better Mental Health Programme was requested previously by the Board. Since then we have evaluated the effectiveness of current projects and have committed funding to expanding the Programme to target additional key groups, as identified through stakeholder engagement to inform the Sandwell Better Mental Health Strategy.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	<p>Best start in life for children and young people</p> <p>Four of the Better Mental Health projects focus on children and young people, from early years to school age. This includes evidence-based parenting and activities programmes delivered by Sandwell Council's Parent Support Team.</p>
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	<p>People live well and age well</p> <p>Good mental health is integral to overall health. On average, people with severe mental health problems die 15-20 years younger than the general population and poor mental health is both a cause and consequence of health and social inequalities. It is therefore important that we work to prevent mental health problems and promote wellbeing alongside ensuring timely, high quality treatment for people already experiencing mental health problems.</p>
	<p>Strong resilient communities</p> <p>The Better Mental Health Programme aims to improve understanding of mental health and wellbeing among Sandwell's communities and increase capacity among voluntary and community sector organisations supporting mental wellbeing. Our approach draws on established strong links with our voluntary & community sector, in line with Stronger Sandwell principles for asset-based community development.</p>
	<p>A strong and inclusive economy</p> <p>Good population mental health and wellbeing are fundamental to a strong and inclusive economy. By focusing on preventing mental health problems and promoting mental wellbeing, the Programme contributes to supporting more of our residents to remain economically active.</p>

4 Context and Key Issues

4.1 Last year Sandwell MBC Public Health were successful in securing £391,272 funding from PHE's (now OHID) Prevention and Promotion Fund for Better Mental Health 2021/22. Our approach to developing our Better Mental Health programme for Sandwell was to identify a range of projects that would complement and bolster existing support across the life course. Our programme draws on established strong links with our voluntary & community sector, in line with Stronger Sandwell principles for asset-based community development.

4.2 The programme aims to:

- Deliver interventions to improve mental wellbeing among Sandwell residents of all ages, with a particular focus on groups at increased risk of poor mental health.
- Improve understanding of mental health and wellbeing among Sandwell's communities, including available support; and
- Increase capacity among voluntary and community sector organisations supporting mental wellbeing.

A suite of projects was identified to provide evidence-based interventions and direct support for key groups across the life course, including parents of young children, working age men and those from ethnic minority communities, and through building knowledge and capacity within the voluntary and community sector to support organisations in their work to improve mental health and wellbeing in their communities. The projects were selected based on engagement from stakeholders



and residents on what communities need and value. Appendix 1 provides a summary of the projects making up the Sandwell Better Mental Health Programme.

- 4.3 The Programme was evaluated in June 2022 using a mixed methods approach. Quantitative data on numbers of people engaged and changes in self-rated wellbeing (measured pre- and post- intervention using the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale) were supported by qualitative analysis of interviews with project leads, and testimonials and case studies from service users/participants describing their experiences.
- 4.4 Overall a total of 1,402 unique beneficiaries were reached by the end of 2021/22 Q4, with most projects continuing into Q5. The self-rated wellbeing of individuals participating in the Better Mental Health Programme was significantly improved at the end of the intervention period, with a 17.8% change in mean WEMWBS scores.

Thematic analysis of interviews with project leads demonstrated that the projects have been very well received in our communities. The themes identified around impacts were consistent with testimonials and feedback received from participants and service users, with social connection, improved confidence and wider wellbeing emphasised throughout. There was an emphasis on partnership working throughout, ensuring that projects are as accessible as possible and a constant strive for change and improvement. COVID-19 and its impact on services, safety and planning was identified as a key challenge, as well as barriers to access including attendance, marketing and high demand for services. All projects demonstrated a plan to continue and expand their offer, with a focus on project sustainability and role of the voluntary and community sector.

- 4.5 A number of projects are continuing into next year through current and additional funding identified. Projects A and B will be funded through the Public Health budget (Children's). Projects C and D are continuing delivery over the current academic year using existing OHID funding. Projects E, F, G and elements of projects H, I and J are being funded to end March 2023 through the Public Health reserve (Mental Health allocation). The Programme will be expanded over the next 3 years to focus on additional target groups, using allocated Mental Health budget from Public Health reserve. This will be informed by stakeholder and resident engagement being undertaken to inform the development of the Sandwell Better Mental Health Strategy.
- 4.6 Reducing loneliness and social isolation is a key priority within the Better Mental Health Strategy. Analyses of the 2022 Residents Survey are being carried out to map patterns of loneliness and social isolation across the borough and identify the main groups affected.

5 Appendices

1. Better Mental Health projects funded via Prevention & Promotion Fund for Better Mental Health 2021-22



6 Background Papers

N/A

