

READING HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

DATE OF MEETING:	18 JANUARY 2019	AGENDA ITEM:	9
REPORT TITLE:	RESPONSE TO THE HEALTHWATCH READING REPORT 'WORKING WITH SERVICE USERS WITH MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS'		
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ORGANISATION:	READING BOROUGH COUNCIL / BERKSHIRE WEST CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUP		

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This is the joint response of the local authority, Reading Borough Council (RBC), and the local clinical commissioning group (Berkshire West CCG) to a report presented by Healthwatch Reading to the July 2018 meeting of the Reading Health and Wellbeing Board. 'Working with Service Users with Mental Health Needs'

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2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

2.1 That the Health and Wellbeing Board notes this joint response and asks Healthwatch Reading to share it with the Reading Advice Network and others who contributed to the 'Working with Service Users with Mental Health Needs' report brought to the Board on 13 July 2018.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 The Health and Social Care Act 2012 requires local authorities to establish a Local Healthwatch in their areas as a consumer champion for healthcare and social care services. Healthwatch Reading is commissioned to deliver this service for the Reading locality, which includes promoting and supporting the involvement of local people in the commissioning, provision and scrutiny of local health and social care services.

3.2 The Reading Advice Network (RAN) was founded in 2013 and exists to bring together all the voluntary organisations that give information and advice to people who live or work in Reading. It aims are to:

- improve the quality of those services, by encouraging them to work towards a quality standard designed for the voluntary sector and that adds value to the current Reading Voluntary Action (RVA) Safe and Sound accreditation;
- make it easier for people to use local organisations; and
- be the collective voice for those organisations.

3.3 Healthwatch Reading prepared a report which was the outcome of a Reading Advice Network (RAN) forum held on 30 May 2017 which had brought together 14 different information, advice or support organisations to share experiences of working with local people with mental health needs. The report gave details of the event, noting that the contribution of an invited service user about their lived experience of mental health needs had been valued, and that the Forum had also heard findings from a local survey of service users about their perceptions of the availability and quality of support. Professionals from the local NHS community mental health trust had also attended the forum and taken an active role in discussions.

3.4 The report set out the findings of the forum and a summary table set out five main themes which the forum had identified as affecting the voluntary sector's ability to support clients with mental health needs, along with a series of proposed solutions. It was noted that the number of service users with mental health needs was increasing, which had an impact on the individuals and on the network of support services.

The five themes were:

- Poor interaction between the statutory and 3rd sectors
- Inadequate 3rd sector funding
- Perception that some frontline statutory staff did not provide adequate or appropriate support at the client's first point of contact
- Clients did not know where to go for help, particularly at times of crisis
- Little resource for professional development within the 3rd sector

3.5 The report urged local decision-makers - Reading's NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups (sic), and Reading Borough Council officers responsible for commissioning services from the voluntary sector via the 'Narrowing the Gap' framework - to respond to the proposals and state how they would use the report to inform the way they planned, designed and funded local services to best meet the needs of people with mental health needs.

## 4. ISSUES AND RESPONSES

### Issue (1): *Poor interaction between the statutory and 3rd sectors*

4.1 Amongst the organisations attending the RAN forum, there was a perception that statutory services do not recognise the level, variety and standard of work carried out by third sector providers - and a concern that this leads to a reluctance on the part of statutory sector staff to work with third sector organisations or a lack of understanding of how to do this.

4.2 Reading is fortunate in having a good range of third sector providers contributing to mental wellbeing, whether through direct mental health support or by offering other types of practical or emotional support which help people to stay well, and to manage mental health recovery through better social inclusion and support through difficult situations. The local authority and the clinical commissioning group have now jointly commissioned a social prescribing service to support people to connect with these services, and staff across health and social care are now able to refer people into social prescribing.

- 4.3 The Council has recognised that its social care staff need support to stay abreast of the local third sector offer and aims to provide this through various channels. Reading's social care staff are moving towards a new way of working - the "three conversations" model - with a greater emphasis on identifying personal and community assets. As part of this transition, the Neighbourhood Wellbeing Team is working alongside Adult Social Care to raise awareness of voluntary and community support. Wellbeing officers now attend the Adult Social Care 'Front Door' team meetings and morning briefings to share knowledge and upskill staff on what support is available, including around mental health and recovery. The Neighbourhood Wellbeing Team organised a community services networking event for social care staff in December. This was helpful to both Council staff and voluntary sector partners by increasing mutual understanding of the local support available and appropriate referral processes.
- 4.4 The Council hosts the Compass Mental Health Recovery College which offers a range of courses to support people to manage their mental wellbeing. Many courses are offered in partnership with other organisations, including other Council departments, the NHS, the police and third sector organisations. The College welcomes any opportunity to develop its partnerships with community groups, and includes third sector representatives on its governance board to help facilitate this. Healthwatch's report will be taken to the next meeting of the Governance Board to inform a specific discussion about how to progress this.
- 4.5 The inclusion of third sector organisations in multi-disciplinary case conferences is something which is now being trialled through an Integrated Care Planning project. This has highlighted some information governance issues which need to be addressed in order to progress joint working across the statutory and third sector, and the aim is that learning from this specific project will be applied more broadly in future. An information sharing agreement has been drawn together, with support from the Council, Clinical Commissioning Group, Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust, selected GP surgeries and Reading Voluntary Action. It is hoped that once this agreement has been finalised, it will allow information and referrals to be shared more freely between participants (in line with GDPR regulations). If the trial is successful, there is potential to roll this service out to include more GP surgeries and an increased number of voluntary sector organisations. It is hoped that this will lead to better outcomes for the people of Reading. Neighbouring authorities are keen to take a similar approach, and are waiting for a finalised version of the agreement, and a draft has been shared with other departments within the council, to promote the practice.
- 4.6 The CCG has recently completed a public consultation on a voluntary sector strategy. A key objective is to improve joint working between the CCG and local third sector organisations. An action plan will be completed in collaboration with the three third sector infrastructure organisations operating across Berkshire West to implement key stages of the strategy.

#### **Issue (2): *Inadequate 3rd sector funding***

- 4.7 The Council engaged with the local third sector over the summer of 2017 to develop its second community services commissioning framework - Narrowing the Gap II. Regrettably, both the Council and the CCG were obliged to operate on a reduced level of funding for this round. However, local organisations were invited to work with the Council to mitigate against the impacts of these reductions as far as possible, and the two commissioning bodies came together to jointly commission a peer support service for mental wellbeing as well as a social prescribing service and a carers support service. The engagement exercise included joint development of service specifications and proportionate monitoring requirements.

- 4.8 The CCG is using its Urgent Emergency Care (UEC) transformation monies innovatively this year to utilise the voluntary sector to provide support to the hospital over the winter months. Initiatives include;
- moving the Prevention of Admission to Hospital service - commissioned from British Red Cross - from 5 days to 7 days per week
  - identification of patients at risk of becoming stranded for non-clinical reasons and support getting them home - also delivered by British Red Cross
  - hospital voluntary sector navigators - commissioned from Reading Voluntary Action and Involve - connecting patients to a wide range of community services and activities to support their health and wellbeing
  - a hospital befriender pilot commissioned from Age UK Berkshire and Age UK Reading.
- 4.9 The CCG's Voluntary Sector Strategy recognises the need to support the local third sector, including through greater stability of funding over a longer period of time to achieve sustainability and continuity of services that are aligned to the CCG commissioning priorities.

**Issue (3): Perception that some frontline statutory staff did not provide adequate or appropriate support at the client's first point of contact**

- 4.10 The Council recognises the importance of good customer care at every point of contact with services, and the Healthwatch Reading / RAN report has been shared with teams so that the issues highlighted can be noted and addressed. The Council has Customer Commitments and Service Standards that commit it to providing clear information, giving individual attention to customers and providing a prompt service. The service standards apply to all customers, including colleagues in other departments and partners. Good customer service is important to Reading Borough Council and it has held Accreditation for 2 awards for the last 9 years for CCA Global Standard and Customer service Excellence
- 4.11 The CCG also acknowledges the importance of the issues raised by Healthwatch Reading, and will be taking the 'Working with Service Users with Mental Health Needs' report to a future meeting of its Clinical Commissioning Committee so that a plan to address the issues can be developed. The CCG will be very happy to share this with Healthwatch Reading.

**Issue (4): Clients did not know where to go for help, particularly at times of crisis**

- 4.9 The Council's Neighbourhood Wellbeing Team maintains a guide to community support for mental wellbeing, as referenced in the Healthwatch Reading report. [https://search3.openobjects.com/mediamanager/reading/enterprise/files/mental\\_health\\_services\\_leaflet\\_october\\_2018.pdf](https://search3.openobjects.com/mediamanager/reading/enterprise/files/mental_health_services_leaflet_october_2018.pdf)  
This is constantly being updated, and whilst the guide has been circulated to NHS and social care staff previously, the Healthwatch Reading report serves as a reminder of the need to repeat this exercise regularly to accommodate staff turnover as well as changes to the content of the guide.
- 4.10 To support the Royal Berkshire Hospital and other partners in developing services, the Council's Mental Health Recovery College, Compass, recently co-ordinated a community event on 'What is crisis?' This brought service users, families and organisations together to explore what people understand about support to manage in a crisis situation. The Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust's Crisis Support Team were part of this event and

delivered a presentation on their services to help improve awareness and understanding. People's comments are being used to improve preventative support and information resources, but health and social care providers recognise the need for more community outreach in this area.

#### **Issue (5): *Little resource for professional development within the 3rd sector***

- 4.11 The Council has commissioned Reading Voluntary Action (RVA) to support third sector development within Reading, which includes supporting voluntary and community groups to access training and other resources which equip them to provide services safely, effectively and in a sustainable way. Similarly, the CCG has commissioned RVA to provide infrastructure support to the voluntary and community sector.
- 4.12 RVA hosts a regular Wellbeing Forum, which supports networking and the sharing of good practice between local groups delivering wellbeing support. The Council and the clinical commissioning group are happy to support these forums, and would be interested in exploring ways to offer more support and information to groups working with service users who have mental health needs.
- 4.13 Third sector providers offering social care support can also access training developed by the Council. This supports a wide range of core social care skills and knowledge. Training courses on safeguarding adults awareness and domestic abuse training is offered at no cost and offers support to organisations wishing to develop their own safeguarding adults in-house training. In addition, the Council funds free access for the sector to a wide range of social care and management skills online learning modules, and RVA has a guest account to the Council's subscription to Research in Practice for Adults. Full details of the Council's support is available at [www.reading.gov.uk/pvittraining](http://www.reading.gov.uk/pvittraining)

### **5. CONTRIBUTION TO READING'S HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGIC AIMS**

- 5.1 The issues raised in the 'Working with Service Users with Mental Health Needs' report are relevant to the following priorities from the Reading Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2017-20:
- Reducing loneliness and social isolation
  - Promoting positive mental health and wellbeing in children and young people
  - Reducing deaths by suicide
- 5.2 The Health and Wellbeing Board has previously agreed that all plans in support of Reading's 2017-20 Health and Wellbeing Strategy should be built on three foundations - safeguarding vulnerable adults and children, recognising and supporting all carers, and high quality co-ordinated information to support wellbeing. Addressing the issues raised by Healthwatch Reading will improve the sharing of information about mental health support, recognise the particular vulnerability of people with mental health needs, and also improve the availability of support to mental health carers.

### **6. COMMUNITY & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

- 6.1 The Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group are both committed to engaging with people with mental health needs, their families and carers, and community groups, in developing local support for mental health. The Reading Mental Wellbeing Group brings together stakeholders working to promote mental wellbeing, and has strong engagement across the community sector. The Group will be reviewing its Terms of Reference shortly,

to include exploring more effective ways to involve people with mental health needs and carers.

- 6.2 The CCG ran a series of listening events in June 2018 which resulted in developing a draft strategy for future commissioning from the voluntary and community sector. This was then put out to public consultation, and the results will inform the final strategy and action plan.
- 6.3 Both commissioning bodies recognise the need to be creative in how to capture the views of people who have used mental health services. Both the stigma which still surrounds mental illness and the nature of the issue generally mean that traditional engagement techniques may not be effective. The Royal Berkshire Hospital has recognised the difficulties this poses in seeking feedback from people who have attended the Emergency Department in mental health crisis. The recent Compass Recovery College community event on 'What is crisis?' was organised to help address this and so support the Hospital and other partners in developing services. The aim is to build on this with further outreach.

## **7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public body must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
  - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 7.2 An Equality Impact Assessment is not relevant to the decision the Health and Wellbeing Board is being asked to make in relation to this report.

## **8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

## **9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 10.1 *Working with Service Users with Mental Health Needs* - Healthwatch Reading report presented to the Reading Health and Wellbeing Board 13<sup>th</sup> July 2018