

Chapter 4 Feeling Good

Introduction

Public mental health' is taken to mean a public health or population health science approach to mental health and the mental health variations exhibited by populations. Whilst wellbeing as a concept may be hard to measure, there is ample evidence for interventions to prevent mental illness, promote good mental health and support early intervention where required.

There is a strong economic argument that, as a society, we need to work proactively to support and improve population mental health. Proactive identification of wider determinants of mental ill health and intervention to address them will therefore play a key role in a system wide strategy to meet the current and future mental health needs of the people of Herefordshire.

Issues

England's Chief Medical Officer (CMO) published a review of the evidence for public Mental Health in September 2014. This recommends that the NHS and Public Health England should focus on commissioning services for which there is evidence framed according to the World Health Organisation model of mental illness prevention, mental health promotion and treatment, recovery and rehabilitation.

In addition, stigma and discrimination remain key barriers in ensuring fair, prompt and equal treatment for people affected by mental health issues. Local activity and inclusion in national initiatives such as "Time to Change" can help overcome mental health stigma and produce individual and societal benefits in terms of engagement, recovery and economic inclusion. Stigma was one of the issues that people felt in Herefordshire.

Unemployment is consistently related to higher rates of depression, anxiety and suicide, particularly when compounded by inadequate benefits. Work can also positively enrich people's mental health, increasing life satisfaction, preventing mental ill health and act as a positive environment for people recovering from mental ill health.

Stakeholder views

There is a need for professionals to have a deeply embedded understanding of how to promote good mental health and wellbeing.

Carer

There is a strong need for early intervention work to prevent increased activities in other services in the future.

Mental Health Practitioner

It's important to not feel stigmatised and be able to talk about how you are feeling.

Patient/ Service User

Work, as paid or unpaid vocational activity, including things such as supported placements, is one of the best ways to support a person's mental health.

Mental Health Practitioner

We should be investing a lot more in schools to equip young people with life skills. There should be opportunities, not necessarily through mental health services, that enable people to deal with issues in their lives. It needs to be taken upstream.

General Practitioner

Delays in getting support mean that a person's mental health has deteriorated until a lot more support is needed.

Patient/ Service User

Mental Health Needs Assessment

People with mental health told us that they valued employment and volunteering and wanted support to maintain or return to employment, training and education.

Strategies for preventing mental ill health, promoting good mental health and providing early intervention and low-level continuing support have found form in 'social prescribing'. whilst evidence for specifically commissioning 'social prescribing' is limited, as an approach it contains elements of tackling stigma and social exclusion, preventing mental ill health, promoting good mental health and providing low level support to people who require it. The diversity of approaches also enable patient choice, avoid labelling that may result from engagement with formal mental health services and provide opportunities to combine mental and physical activities within a social environment.

Recommendations

Well-being

- For Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group to adopt low prioritisation of funding for mental well-being interventions without evidence of effectiveness.

All Agencies Response

- For Herefordshire to have an all-age mental health strategy with contributions from organisations across our economy to co-ordinate mental illness prevention and mental health promotion.

Stigma

- Herefordshire CCG and its partners to make an explicit commitment to tackling mental health stigma by pledging its support for "Time to Change" and raising awareness of mental health.

Sources of Advice and Information

- Consideration of a web-based directory of services to aid practitioners, the public and communities.