

SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

1. In November 2018, the Health Integration and Commissioning Select Committee (the predecessor to the Adults and Health Select Committee) considered the outcomes of an Enter and View Report by Healthwatch Surrey on the Abraham Cowley Unit, an inpatient mental health ward operated by Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust. This report highlighted specific challenges around the delivery of inpatient mental health services in Surrey. As part of these discussions, Members of the Select Committee reflected on how national challenges relating to the treatment of mental health were manifesting themselves in Surrey and on the provision of services locally. Members recognised that more in-depth consideration was needed into how the public sector across Surrey supports people through mental illness to ensure the best outcomes for residents in response to the growing burden of mental illness. As a result, the Select Committee agreed to form a task group to investigate patient experience of adult mental health services in Surrey.
2. On 8 March 2019, the Health Integration and Commissioning Select Committee formally established the cross-party Mental Health Task Group, which would aim to map the individual and carer's journey through adult mental health services in Surrey.
3. However, due to a combination of Select Committee restructuring and the Covid-19 pandemic, the Task Group's work was delayed until the spring of 2020. The Task Group members agreed on 20 February 2020 to report back to the new Adults and Health Select Committee with its findings and recommendations at the public Select Committee meeting on 15 October 2020. At this meeting the Members also agreed an outline of the work programme, proposed key lines of enquiry, the methodology to be used for interacting with witnesses, and the format of witness sessions.
4. The Mental Health Task Group scoping document is attached as Annex 1 of the full Task Group report (attached to this report as Annex 1) and provides a detailed outline of the scope and remit of the Task Group.
5. The Task Group was initially scheduled to start hearing from witnesses in April 2020 but these sessions were rescheduled for June 2020 due to the pandemic and took place remotely using video conferencing software.
6. The members of the Task Group were as follows:
 - Nick Darby (Chair)
 - Bernie Muir

- Angela Goodwin
- Chris Botten (Co-opted from the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee)

7. The objectives of the Task Group were as follows:

- Review the journey of adults with mental health conditions in Surrey through support services and interventions to assess how their interactions with different public sector organisations aid their recovery
 - Assess whether there is integration in the treatment of patients' physical and mental health
 - Identify any potential gaps in the provision of services
8. Between 8 June 2020 and 1 September 2020, the Task Group conducted 13 separate evidence-gathering sessions with 41 witnesses from a wide variety of organisations.
9. The Task Group decided to undertake a “bottom up” approach to evidence gathering, which would involve speaking to service users and charities in order to identify potential gaps in mental health services and areas requiring improvement before testing these findings with service providers and commissioners.
10. A list of the witness sessions conducted by the Task Group is attached as Annex 2 to the full Task Group report.
11. Key lines of enquiry (attached as Annex 3 to the full Task Group report) were formulated and agreed by the Task Group before the first witness session took place. These were shared with all witnesses in advance of meetings and updated throughout the evidence-gathering process in response to findings from each witness session.
12. Members were pleased with the number of witnesses they were able to speak to. From the outset, a key aim was to ensure representation from a wide range of witnesses so that as many views and experiences as possible were represented in the Task Group's findings and recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that:

1. Surrey County Council conducts a review of the nature and length of contracts currently offered to third sector providers, and that all future contracts are for a minimum of five years
2. Surrey County Council lobbies central government for more funding for mental health to enable further initiatives to achieve early intervention, and that a review is undertaken of third sector funding
3. A solution is found to the problems surrounding the sharing of data and IT infrastructure between the NHS, Surrey County Council and external providers to enable third sector organisations to fully and safely support those in their care, and that Surrey County Council and Surrey Heartlands liaise as a matter of urgency

4. Public Health undertakes an employer-focused mental health campaign in 2021 to help improve employer knowledge about mental health and ensure that Surrey employers are aware of how to access courses and training
5. From 2021, induction-level training in mental health awareness and suicide prevention is provided for all Surrey County Council members of staff and councillors, as well as all affiliated organisations
6. From 2021, frontline members of staff and decision makers from all public and health organisations in Surrey receive training so they use instructions and terminology with service users that are appropriate for those with mental health issues, learning disabilities and autism to ensure that those whose conditions are not immediately obvious are better served
7. From 2021, GPs receive regular training to ensure they understand how to use resources such as Surrey Information Point and Healthy Surrey, so that primary care partners are aware of what mental health services and third sector organisations are available in Surrey, and for these resources to be updated by Surrey County Council on a regular basis so that health partners can access all of the necessary information as easily and quickly as possible
8. Surrey County Council and Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust explore how they can work more closely together to ensure Surrey County Council social workers are involved as early as possible (including at the diagnosis stage) so that those with autism, Asperger’s and/or learning disabilities – especially those with complex needs – are fully supported and potential mental health issues are identified

(Please note that details of further recommendations for NHS commissioners and providers can be found in the full Task Group report.)

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

The recommendations agreed by the Task Group are based on the key themes raised by witnesses and the frequency with which these were reported. These themes are outlined in detail in the full Task Group report.

The recommendations are also those that meet the SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timebound) criteria.

The Task Group is confident that the recommendations will help improve adult mental health services and partnership working across the healthcare system in Surrey.

Section 151 Officer Commentary:

Although significant progress has been made over the last twelve months to improve the Council’s financial position, the medium-term financial outlook is uncertain. The public health crisis has resulted in increased costs which are not fully funded in the current year. With uncertainty about the ongoing impact of this and no clarity on the extent to which both central and local funding sources might be affected from next year onward, our working assumption is that financial resources will continue to be constrained, as they have been for

the majority of the past decade. This places an onus on the Council to continue to consider issues of financial sustainability as a priority in order to ensure stable provision of services in the medium term.

The Section 151 Officer recognises that supporting people to maintain good mental health is important now more than ever, and supports the proposals set out in this paper to improve the provision of Mental Health services across Surrey's health and social care system. Increased funding from government would clearly help Surrey to manage growing demand for mental health services and increasing acuity of needs more effectively, and in doing so generate whole system efficiencies. However, as set out above, the economic outlook means that increased funding is not considered likely and so the Council must plan on the basis that the continued delivery of Mental Health services is within the Council's existing financial resources.

It will therefore be important to clearly identify any investment required from the recommendations set out in this report and ensure that there is agreement about how to fund these costs within existing resources before this investment is committed. This would include initiatives such as the enhanced training offer.

Effective joint planning with key partners in the NHS and third sector will clearly be essential, both to the successful implementation of the proposals set out in the paper (for instance the length of contracts for third sector providers) and so that the funding of any investment required can be appropriately shared across all partners.

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer:

The recommendations that Cabinet is being asked to consider do not in the main have any specific legal implications. However, the suggested review of the nature and length of contracts with third sector providers will need to include a consideration of the possible application of the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and the Surrey County Council Procurement and Contract Standing Orders. In addition, the review will need to consider the extent to which extended contracts are subject to more robust reporting mechanisms or of milestone delivery mechanisms.

What Happens Next:

The Task Group's report and recommendations will also be submitted to all relevant NHS commissioners and providers.

Progress made on the Task Group's recommendations will be reviewed on a six-monthly basis, starting in April 2021.

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Consulted:

See Annex 2 of the full Task Group report

Annexes:

Annex 1 – Report of the Mental Health Task Group