

CABINET – 27 October 2020

CABINET RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF THE MENTAL HEALTH TASK GROUP

(Adults and Health Select Committee)

Recommendations:

The Task Group recommends 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.)

Mr Nick Darby
Chairman of the Mental Health Task Group

Cabinet Response:

I welcome this report and the recommendations put forward by my colleagues on the Mental Health Task Group. I welcome the opportunity to raise mental health awareness and understanding across the whole system as this will help to address and reduce the inequalities people with mental ill health face. The importance of maintaining good mental health and wellbeing is paramount at this time.

Much of the substance of what has been presented is rightfully based on user feelings. In order to support our teams in continuing to drive forward transformative change, I understand that the Task Group will continue with their good work and explore these feelings further, in order to obtain more specific examples of where the system is potentially letting down some of our most vulnerable residents. This would allow us to better prioritise these areas and ensure best outcomes for all who use our services and I commend the task group's commitment to taking this initial piece of work to the next level.

Additionally, I would welcome further input on whether those who fed into this task group were seeking clinical or general support or whether they were ASC clients (i.e. in need of/in receipt of a package of care and support). Once again, this would also allow us to ensure that where there are service issues or challenges, that this can be dealt with quickly and with the necessary resourcing.

I recognise the integral role of the voluntary sector in the delivery of mental health support and wish to resource the sector fairly. An increase in funding from central government would be welcomed, although I have noted the Section 151 officer's commentary regarding the economic outlook, which means that work will need to be done within existing financial resources.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognise and thank the voluntary sector for their contribution to improving people's outcomes and stepping up rapidly to different service delivery options after the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Implementation of the recommendations will need strong collaborative work with system partners from the NHS, third sector and other key colleagues including departments across the Council such as procurement and Children's services.

Reply from Mrs Sinead Mooney
Cabinet Member for Adults and Public Health
27 October 2020