

Councillor Muir

By Email

25 November 2020

Dear Councillor Muir

Thank you for sharing the findings from the Mental Health Task Group. We appreciate your efforts to engage people who use services and the learning you have captured from their experiences. Helping people to improve their mental health is one of the biggest challenges for us in Surrey Heartlands and it requires a fully integrated system approach, with each agency playing its part.

Good progress has been made in recent years to bring mental health support closer to communities and to integrate expertise across our footprint. It would be helpful if this could be reflected in any future work undertaken by the Mental Health Task Group. Practice examples include: the GPIMHS model where we have mental health practitioners embedded within primary and community networks; Surrey Safe Havens which involve a partnership between Community Connections and Surrey and Borders Partnership (SABP); the Surrey High Intensity Partnership Programme bringing SABP and Surrey Police together to support people with complex mental health needs; iAccess drug and alcohol services delivered jointly by SABP and Catalyst; Psychiatric Liaison services embedded in all 4 of our acute hospitals to manage people with both mental health and physical health needs; IAPT providers working with Richmond Fellowship to provide employment support; and, the Criminal Justice Liaison and Diversion services bringing together SABP and Barnardos to help families in contact with our criminal justice pathway.

Our response to the Task Group recommendations is outlined below:

1. Sharing Information

We recognise that there is more to do to make it easier for people to find the right support when they need it and to avoid them having to tell their stories more than once. We are sorry that people have found it so difficult and frustrating to get to the right help first time, and we thank your witnesses for being so open about their experiences. We are developing the Surrey Care Record which will bring multi-agency information together and ensure relevant professionals have appropriate access to records to support good care planning and reduce the fragmentation people have experienced. We will also make sure that information about access to medical records is clearly communicated to all service users.

2. Life-long learning

Surrey Heartlands is committed to life-long learning and improvement and we support your recommendation for GPs to be able to access additional training. Mental Health training sessions and on-line suicide awareness are currently available to GP's and we will continue to promote these sessions through our PCNs. For PCNs that already have the GPIMHS service,

there is a nominated GP from each to undertake the GP Advanced Diploma in Mental Health. As GPIMHS spreads across the ICS this will become the standard.

To improve primary care access to mental health resources, work has also taken place over the summer to link together information on the Healthy Surrey and GP Footfall websites. GPs can also access advice and guidance from the SABP's Single Point of Access and crisis teams using the consult connect system.

3. Third Sector Partnerships

The third sector are an essential and valued part of our mental health system. They have seen an increase in demand and acuity within their services as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, but they are also reporting positive changes in relationships with other providers. Community Connections are now better integrated within the SABP Single Point of Access and attend regular joint reviews to ensure people are navigated to the right services and support. Additionally, Community Connections are represented at all levels of our mental health governance and recognised as delivering good outcomes for people with mental health needs. However, there is still more to do to ensure the impact of their work is widely promoted, recognised and appreciated within our ICS. We are very aware that the current contractual model creates vulnerability for 3rd sector organisations, and we are committed to reviewing this as part of our work on transforming outcomes through integrated commissioning.

4. Digital Solutions

There are many examples of spreading digital innovation in Surrey Heartlands to support for people with mental health needs and practitioners. This includes our development of an integrated Surrey Care Record, virtual consultations, real-time home monitoring for people with dementia and carers, and the digital first primary care programme which will offer online help for people with depression. All our providers are now offering online intervention, and in most cases, we can blend this with in-person contact where clinical need and user preference dictates. Our aim is to continue to develop our digital offer to provide better access choice for people using our services and carers.

5. Resourcing

NHS England has made a massive commitment to increase mental health funding by £2.3bn to support delivery of the Long-term plan. We are seeing fair shares allocations into Surrey Heartland's to support transformation of community and crisis services. However, mental health services have historically been under resourced and there is more to do to bolster provider resilience in our system, including across the 3rd sector.

6. GPIMHS

GPIMHS is our flagship model of mental health integration within primary and community networks and it is supported by the national mental health strategy and Long-Term Plan. There is a national expectation that integrated primary and secondary community mental health services like GPIMHS are in place across the country by 2023/24. In Surrey Heartlands we are ambitious about going further, faster with our model and we are expecting additional NHS England transformation funding to be available from early 2021 to support our vision.

Once again, we thank you for sharing the Task Group report with us and can assure you of our commitment to improving mental health outcomes in Surrey Heartlands and to building on the success of our recent Mental Health Summit.

Yours sincerely,



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