

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXTERNAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 13 APRIL 2010

REPORT OF HEAD OF CHANGE AND SCRUTINY

Report prepared by Esther Bell

1. Kent and Medway Mental Health Commissioners Consultation – Draft Live It Well Strategy

1.1 Issue for Consideration

1.1.1 To consider and respond to the consultation on the draft strategy for improving the mental health and wellbeing of people in Kent and Medway.

1.2 Recommendation of Head of Change and Scrutiny

1.2.1 That the Committee responds to the Live It Well Strategy Consultation on improving mental health and wellbeing of people in Kent and Medway.

1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

1.3.1 The Consultation on improving mental health and wellbeing of people in Kent and Medway was sent to Maidstone Borough Council on 30 March 2010. The closing date for responses to this consultation is 7 May 2010 and it was therefore required to go on to the Committee's April agenda in order that the Committee meets this deadline.

1.3.2 The draft Live It Well Strategy is attached at Appendix A and the consultation questions are attached at Appendix B.

1.3.3 The External Overview and Scrutiny Committee recently published its Mental Health Review Report and it was therefore felt appropriate that the Committee respond to the consultation document on improving mental health and wellbeing of people in Kent and Medway. The following is an extract from the executive summary of the Committee's review:

"Mental health service provision across the boroughs is fragmented and complicated; the working group spent a significant amount of time

simply trying to map service provision and establish what services were available for residents in the public, community and voluntary sectors. The group found that there was a lot of support for those with mental health issues, however this was not always clearly publicised and members felt that for those residents in distress, the time and effort required to identify available services was prohibitive. The need for improved coordination between service providers from all sectors was clear, particularly in increasingly difficult financial times when coordinating services could make more efficient use of limited funding.

Throughout the review, the group became increasingly concerned about the waiting times for counselling and other psychological therapies. Although encouraged by the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) programme, the group felt that this was an issue that urgently needed to be addressed in order to prevent mild to moderate mental health issues becoming more severe.

A survey of GPs in Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells reflected the concerns of councillors, with only 18.75% of respondents agreeing that the current provision of mental health services was adequate. Waiting times, the limited variety of available treatments and knowledge of voluntary sector provision were all specifically highlighted as issues by GPs.

As a result of their enquiries, members of the working group were keen to emphasise the need to:

- monitor access to psychological therapies and establish whether more funding needs to be directed at tackling mild to moderate mental illness to prevent deterioration of patients' mental health;*
- improve access to information about voluntary, community, public and private mental health services for all sectors of the community; and*
- encourage joined-up working between service providers to ensure seamless and complementary provision of services for the benefit of all residents experiencing mental health problems."*

1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

1.4.1 The Committee could agree not to submit a response to this consultation; however this would fail to contribute to the improvement of services for residents suffering from mental ill health.

1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

1.5.1 Mental Health issues have an impact on the “a place that has strong, healthy and safe communities” priority theme within the Strategic Plan 2009-12 and the “health and older people” topic within the Sustainable Community Strategy.

1.6 Other Implications

1.6.1

1. Financial
2. Staffing
3. Legal
4. Equality Impact Needs Assessment
5. Environmental/Sustainable Development
6. Community Safety
7. Human Rights Act
8. Procurement
9. Asset Management

1.7 Relevant Documents

1.7.1 Appendices

- Appendix A – Draft Live It Well Strategy Consultation Document
- Appendix B – Consultation Questions