

BRIEFING TO COUNCIL

Report Title: Council Motion – “Addressing Mental Ill Health in Schools”

Portfolio Holders: Councillor Chadderton, Cabinet Member for Children’s Services and Councillor Jacques, Cabinet Member for Education and Culture

Date: 7th November 2018

Background: A motion was agreed at the Council meeting held on 7th July 2018.

“This Council notes that:

In March 2016 the Department of Education produced advice for school staff titled 'Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools'.

This guidance identified that:-

1. Approximately 10% of 5-16 year-olds have a clinically diagnosed mental health disorder.
2. A further 15% of 5-16 year-olds have problems that put them at risk of developing mental health problems.

Recent calls from government have called for more work to be done on supporting young people in schools with mental health difficulties and also possibly including this as an assessed component of future inspection regimes.

Council welcomes the:-

- Recent plan adopted by Oldham’s Health and Wellbeing Board to transform the borough’s Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) by employing additional staff to bring down waiting times to six weeks.
- Employment of a specialist mental health school advisor.
- The production of the toolkit ‘Supporting young minds through tough times – the whole school and college approach to emotional health and well being in Oldham

Council believes that an aspiration to ensure positive mental health and well-being in the students and staff of all of our academies, colleges and schools should be a high priority, and acknowledges the progress being made towards implementing the toolkit including a comprehensive training programme for school and college staff and governors to deliver:-

- an appropriate strategy in place
- a designated Mental Health Lead to coordinate, and monitor, the delivery of that strategy
- Mental health First Aiders in each academic year group to provide first-hand immediate support
- Mental health Peer Mentors where appropriate
- Access to mindfulness and similar programmes
- Access to professional Counsellors in the secondary and tertiary sectors

The toolkit enables every educational establishment to focus on:-

- Promoting positive mental health in all students and staff
- Training staff and peer mentors so they are aware of common mental health conditions; the signs of, and risk factors for, mental ill-health; how they might support students in crisis or otherwise in need; and the support services available to these students and their families
- Promoting self-help strategies and online resources (such as those relating to personal resilience and mindfulness) to students and staff to enable them to better manage their own mental health

Council welcomes the commitment of its staff, school and colleges in implementing the strategies and actions in ‘Supporting young minds through tough times’ to provide the best possible support to children, young people and staff across Oldham and resolves to ask the Lead Cabinet Member(s) provide a report back to full Council on progress made within 12 months.”

It was resolved that the Lead Cabinet Members would provide a report back to full Council on progress made within 12 months.

An progress update was provided to the Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee on 11th September 2018 from Public Health Commissioning.

Progress in Supporting Schools and Colleges across Oldham

The Oldham whole school and college approach to emotional health and wellbeing framework aims to promote social, emotional and mental wellbeing across Oldham

schools and colleges, tackling mental health problems of pupils with more serious difficulty and provide guidance to commission safe and effective emotional health and mental wellbeing interventions or services.

The framework sets out key actions that head teachers and college principals can take to embed the whole school approach to emotional and mental wellbeing. The actions contained in the eight principles are informed by national evidence based practice and practitioner feedback on what works. If applied consistently and comprehensively across the whole school or college setting it can positively impact on:

- The cognitive development of children, learning, motivation, and sense of commitment and connectedness with learning and with school / college.
- Staff well-being, reduced stress, sickness and absence, improved teaching ability and performance.
- Pupil well-being including happiness, a sense of purpose, connectedness and meaning.
- The development of the social and emotional skills and attitudes that promote learning, success, well-being and mental health, in school/college and throughout life.
- The prevention and reduction of mental ill health such as depression, anxiety and stress. Improving school behaviour, including reductions in low-level disruption, incidents, fights, bullying, exclusions and absence.
- Reducing risky behaviour – such as impulsiveness, uncontrolled anger, violence, bullying and crime, early sexual experience, alcohol and drug use.

Opportunity Area status has provided additional funding to employ a co-ordinator to lead and further develop the whole school / college approach to emotional health and mental wellbeing programme. Two Emotional and Mental Wellbeing Advisors will be employed to build capacity and up skill teaching and support staff to deliver robust social, emotional and mental wellbeing class room based interventions, peer support, low level interventions and develop supportive networks across all schools and colleges. The team will proactively work in partnership with the Public Health Team, Health Young Minds, Educational Psychology and Tameside Oldham and Glossop (TOG) Mind.

A multi-agency steering group has been established under the Opportunity Area Board to further develop and support the implementation of the programme. This includes representation from Oldham Council, Pennine Care Foundation Trust, MIND, Schools (Primary and Secondary), Oldham College and CCG.

Oldham Council and Oldham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) were successful in delivering the nationally funded Mental Health Services and Schools Link Programme, run by the Anna Freud National Centre for Child and Families. Two workshops for 3 Cohorts were delivered to 56 primary and secondary schools from Oldham. The aim of programme is for schools, colleges and mental health professionals to make changes in the way they support children and young people with their mental health. The programme is currently being evaluated, however the initial evaluation suggests that the programme was a considerable success in strengthening communication between schools and mental health professionals, and building joint working relationships between commissioners, schools and providers as well as across council directorates.

An educational psychologist will be appointed as part of the virtual school team to build capacity to work directly with schools, carers, social workers and wider professionals to support the needs of looked after and previously looked after children. They will be leading on social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) on behalf of the virtual school head linking directly to wider work across the Council and Whole School Approach.

A review of training currently being delivered to educational settings is being scoped and led by the new Health and Wellbeing Co-ordinator with support from Public Health and School Improvement.

A pilot is running between May to July 2018 to test a systemic approach to measuring pupil wellbeing, mental health and resilience across Oldham. There are 7 primary and 1 secondary school participating in the pilot programme. The aim is to trial an approach to measuring pupil wellbeing, mental health and resilience, and to review its benefits and disbenefits to schools, particularly in relation to their ability to improve the wellbeing of pupils through SEMH interventions.

A procurement exercise has been undertaken for the provision of school staff training to deliver pilot mental health and resilience programmes in schools. 12 primary schools and 2 secondary schools have expressed an interest in the pilot. Once evaluated the aim is to offer out to all schools. Schools/Colleges/Clusters will be able to apply for additional grant funding for additional support. This could be support with a strong evidence base, or local initiatives already in place which need evaluation. This will include:

- Training programmes such as Youth Connect 5, Mental Health First Aid, Leading a Mentally Healthy School, Trauma Informed Schools / ACE's
- Counselling
- Evaluation of local initiatives e.g. from positive steps, TOG Mind, Sports Development, VCSE and other partners agencies.
- Educational psychologists – Graduated Response, Behaviour, Multi-element plans
- Therapeutic interventions, such as group work, play therapy, art therapy.
- Youth worker programmes, e.g. in particular those targeting young people at risk of disengagement due to poor mental health.