

**BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL (BMBC)**

This matter is not a Key Decision within the council's definition and has not been included in the relevant Forward Plan.

**Report of the Executive Director  
Core Services**

**SCRUTINY TASK AND FINISH GROUP (TFG) REPORT ON  
ADULT MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS CARE****1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1 To report to Cabinet the findings of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee (OSC) from the investigation undertaken on its behalf by the Adult Mental Health Task & Finish Group (TFG). This included understanding the broad spectrum of mental health illness and related services, which led to a specific focus on crisis care.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 **That Cabinet considers the conclusions and recommendations set out in section 6 as a result of the TFG's investigation into Adult Mental Health Crisis Care.**

**3. Introduction/Background**

- 3.1 As part of its work programme the OSC agreed to undertake a TFG investigation into adult mental health. Given both the local and national focus on the challenges being faced in relation to mental health issues, the OSC maintains a focus on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and felt it was an opportune time to undertake a specific investigation into adult mental health.
- 3.2 The members of the TFG who undertook this investigation included the following: Councillor Paul Hand-Davis (TFG Lead Member), Councillor Jeff Ennis, Councillor Annette Gollick, Councillor Caroline Makinson, Councillor Ralph Sixsmith, Councillor Sarah Tattersall, Cllr Neil Wright and Co-opted Member Mark Smith, Vice-Chair Healthwatch Barnsley. The group specifically co-opted Mark Smith as he is involved in a number of forums, both locally and nationally who provide support and challenge to the provision of mental health services. This provided additional expertise to the group as well as helped to avoid duplication of other work which has been undertaken.

**4. What the Task & Finish Group (TFG) looked at**

- 4.1 Initially, the TFG met to consider the scope of the investigation. This included discussing all the key challenges they are aware of in relation to adult mental health, such as access to early help through to crisis care. It was evident that there is a lot of confusion amongst our communities in relation to adult mental health services, access to them as well as the performance of the agencies involved at different stages. Due to the complexities, the group agreed to receive an over-arching presentation on adult mental health in Barnsley and from this decided to focus on crisis care. This is an area they felt they could contribute positively to at this time; particularly following on from the report by Healthwatch Barnsley on Crisis Care published in January 2016.

4.2 The TFG undertook a number of 'check and challenge' sessions with officers regarding the work being carried out, future plans and key challenges. This involved asking questions of them regarding their work, their involvement and partnership working with other agencies including the impact of this on Barnsley residents. This included meeting with:

- Council representatives working in Public Health and the Communities Directorate who are responsible for the commissioning of preventative services;
- Officers from the Council's Adult Social Care Mental Health Social Work Team who provide assessment, care and support;
- Barnsley Clinical Commissioning Group's (CCG) lead commissioner of mental health support services;
- Officers from South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (SWYPFT) who provide local adult mental health support services;
- Officers from South Yorkshire Police (SYP) who could provide insight into the impact of responding to mental health incidents on SYP; and
- The Lead Nurse for Urgent Care and Mental Health at Yorkshire Ambulance Service (YAS), with whom the group held a teleconference.

## **5. What the Task & Finish Group found**

5.1 The TFG received a presentation which gave a high level overview of mental health in Barnsley. This included providing TFG Members with an understanding of the Mental Health Continuum and the importance of language and terminology to refer to individual programmes of work. This clarified that in the way we would not talk about 'physical health' being all encompassing, we should think about mental health in terms of the following locally co-produced terms:

- Being Mentally Healthy and Resilient - which the majority of the population can be served by self-care, social support and Early Help Services;
- Common mental health issues such as low mood and low level anxiety - which can be assisted by Enhanced Primary Care such as the Improving Access to Psychological Therapy (IAPT) service available at GP practices;
- Significant and lasting mental health issues such as severe and persistent distress - which require support from Seamless Secondary Care such as Community Mental Health Teams;
- Finally, those who are 'Unwell and In Crisis': requiring support from Specialist Mental Health Services.

5.2 The group welcomed the variety of work being done both locally and regionally to prevent mental ill-health as well as meeting specific needs within each part of the Mental Health Continuum. This included recent developments in suicide prevention work and creation of a suicide learning panel to aid in both suicide prevention but also in ensuring appropriate support is provided to those who are affected.

5.3 It was acknowledged however that provision of information as well as the sharing of this amongst agencies continues to be a challenge which acts as a barrier to providing effective support services to those in need. This is coupled with the absence of a strategic group which could help to avoid silo working amongst partner agencies in relation to mental health. This group however would need to be made up of those with appropriate seniority in their organisation to make decisions which can be enacted.

- 5.4 Given TFG members' experience in communities, they expressed concern regarding ongoing support to those with significant and lasting mental health issues, especially in relation to out of hours support. The TFG were advised of how a number of local partners work together to provide these services and the complexities involved. This includes the challenges that arise from different agencies working on different geographical footprints and the need for particular specialties depending on incidents. Also in operating in line with legislation and the requirements this places on the presence of particular agencies at certain times; all of which are operating against a backdrop of finite resources.
- 5.5 In 2014, 22 national bodies involved in health, policing, social care, housing, local government and the third sector came together and signed the Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat (CCC). This national agreement sets out how organisations will work together better to make sure that people get the help they need when they are having a mental health crisis. Within Barnsley, the local agencies come together as part of an implementation group; however challenges arise in getting appropriate representatives from each organisation who have authority to make changes. This group has potential, however requires some revitalised commitment from all partners to ensure the creation and delivery of an effective action plan.
- 5.6 The group challenged the use and availability of Barnsley's Section 136 suite, which provides a place of safety for those detained by the police, whilst potential mental health needs are assessed and any necessary arrangements made for on-going care. Since previous investigations, it was evident that there had been improvements in its availability and this was no longer an area of concern. The group also welcomed knowledge of work in development around a 'memorandum of understanding' in South Yorkshire for the operation of s136 suites.
- 5.7 In relation to undertaking assessments and provision of support services, the TFG were reassured that agencies were cited on meeting a person's whole needs and not just the presenting mental health issue. This includes supporting physical needs, support with finances, undertaking benefit claims and access to housing. However, it was acknowledged that these issues are not all necessarily easy to resolve; nor are all agencies (especially those in the private sector), sympathetic to those with enduring mental health illness.
- 5.8 A lot of work is in place to try to prevent mental health needs escalating and deal with them through early intervention. However it is evident that service users often find all the services difficult to navigate. Also, some communities still feel there is a stigma attached to mental ill-health and see accessing support as a weakness. Therefore, it can be difficult for services to intervene before issues escalate. The group were advised that a new early intervention and prevention service is shortly due to be commissioned which will combine a number of existing contracts and will therefore be easier for service users to navigate. The TFG welcomed this but were keen to ensure that this did not duplicate work already being done in communities and that the new service was clearly promoted through Area Councils and Ward Alliances.
- 5.9 During the TFG's investigation, a national report 'Policing and Mental Health: Picking up the Pieces' was published which highlights a national issue of police officers increasingly being used as the service of default in responding to people with mental health problems. The report reflects that demand for police to respond to mental health-related calls is increasing. Also, that the response usually requires more than one officer in attendance and can be of some duration. The TFG were advised that on the whole, the national report reflects the challenges being experienced locally. There are some excellent examples of

partners working well together locally; for example having a Mental Health Professional in the Safer Neighbourhood Services Hub who can provide expert advice and assistance when dealing with issues. However this is not currently part of core funding arrangements. There are also a number of occasions where the police are transporting people to hospital as there is no ambulance service available or are left waiting a considerable time at an incident for an ambulance to arrive. The group concurred with the national report that there needs to be a re-think and long-term solutions to these issues.

- 5.10 Within YAS, the TFG were informed that focused work is being undertaken to better understand and more effectively address demand on services as a result of mental health incidents. This includes better presentation and analysis of data as well as basing Mental Health Nurses in the control room to assist with handling and de-escalating both 999 and 111 calls, which is having positive results. There continue to be challenges with access to information across different services, such as access to patient mental health records, as well as telephone numbers for services which are not just general access ones used by the public. YAS acknowledges the demands on their services and the priority which has to be given to certain calls; however it is also noted that frequently in relation to mental health incidents, patients don't need a paramedic but a trained Mental Health response which is discreet and available 24/7.

## **6. Recommendations**

- 6.1 The TFG acknowledges that demand for mental health services at all stages on the continuum are increasing both locally and nationally against a backdrop of limited resource. Whilst recognising that there is evidence of excellent partnership working amongst local agencies, the TFG makes the following recommendations in support of assisting with the continual improvement of services and support to local communities:

6.2 **Recommendation 1 ACROSS ALL TFGs: A Multi-Agency Conference is held in relation to addressing the complex needs in our communities covering Housing, Substance Misuse and Adult Mental Health**

A common feature of the OSC TFG's undertaken in 2018-19 on Social Housing, Substance Misuse and Adult Mental Health is the close, cyclical links between them. Each service area has raised challenges in relation to accessing the other services, difficulties in sharing information between them, as well as demands on services which could be avoided. It is therefore recommended that a large conference is held for those working at both a strategic and operational level in these and partner services to come together and develop an action plan to address some of these issues and monitor this on an ongoing basis.

6.3 **Recommendation 2: A Strategic Mental Health Alliance is formed which can oversee all the work that is taking place across the continuum of mental health services and agencies involved in meeting mental health needs**

The TFG are acutely aware of both the number of agencies undertaking work to support those with mental health needs across the continuum and the challenges they face. The group therefore feel it is important that there is some co-ordinated strategic oversight of this to assist in enabling them to operate effectively, especially given the challenges highlighted in relation to information sharing.

6.4 **Recommendation 3: Focus is given by all agencies to reinvigorate the Barnsley Crisis Care Concordat (CCC)**

Linked with recommendation two, the group feel that as well as strategic oversight, there needs to be opportunity for those making decisions at an operational level to

communicate, share information and work together to resolve issues arising in dealing with mental health crisis care. It is important that each agency signed up to the CCC sends appropriate representation who can attend consistently and help drive the improvement and efficiency of crisis care responses 24/7; especially as most 999 and 111 calls in relation to mental health occur out of office hours.

**6.5 Recommendation 4: Consideration is given to the commissioning of a non-clinical transport service**

Given the high-demand being placed on police and ambulance services in responding to incidents, the TFG feels that having access to a non-blue light transport service for patients would be beneficial. This would both reduce the amount of inefficient use of police time and provide a more appropriate, discreet response for patients.

**6.6 Recommendation 5: Professional Mental Health Workers within the Safer Neighbourhood Service Hub are assigned as part of core funding arrangements**

Due to the challenges of information sharing and the positive impact having Professional Mental Health Workers in the Hub with access to patient information has, the TFG feel that this professional support should be considered as a core part of this service, rather than something which only has time-limited funding.

**6.7 Recommendation 6: An Elected Member Talkabout is held on Mental Health**

As a result of the evidence of increases in mental ill-health amongst all our communities across the mental health continuum and the rising demand for services; the TFG feel it would be beneficial for all Members to better understand differing mental health conditions as well as the services available in Barnsley, including the Recovery College which is open to everyone. This session would also provide opportunity for Members to think about their own mental wellbeing and how they can help themselves and others to be more resilient, incorporating elements of Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Training as well as inviting local speakers to bring to life their experiences of mental illness.

**6.8 Recommendation 7: The Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertakes further investigation of Adult Mental Health Services as part of its future work programme, with a focus on early intervention and preventative services**

Given the mental health continuum and acknowledgment of both the spectrum of illness and therefore the appropriate response, the group focused their investigation on crisis care. It is evident that there continues to be challenges of access to mental health services in Barnsley, especially in relation to lower level support services which help to prevent issues escalating, which merit further investigation and clarity.

**6.9 Recommendation 8: The Police Crime Panel (PCP) undertakes further investigation into the 'Policing and Mental Health: Picking up the Pieces' report and the implications for local services**

As highlighted by the investigation, there is evidence that issues identified on a national level are present for our local services. Therefore, the TFG would recommend that the findings in this report are explored at a local level and assurance sought in relation to long-term solutions being put in place.

**6.10 Recommendation 9: The Council's Elected Member Mental Health Champion and Senior Management Team Champion should lead on driving the Mental Health agenda including acting as an advocate for the above recommendations**

Helping to drive this agenda is a role which is key for both the Council's Elected Member Mental Health Champion, which is currently Cllr Margaret Bruff and the Council's Senior Management Team Champion, which is currently Wendy Lowder. The TFG recognises the

importance of this agenda being driven at a strategic level in support of enabling effective services at an operational level. It is important that these 'Mental Health Champion' roles continue to be assigned appropriately to relevant representatives within the Council.

**6.11 Recommendation 10: Steps are taken to ensure that there is access to 24/7 mental health crisis care support, especially out of office hours**

Given the local knowledge and experience of TFG members, as well as the evidence presented, the group constantly highlighted and challenged the importance and availability of access to 24/7 service provision. It was evident that calls for support in crisis from the public often occurred out of office hours. This created challenges not only for service users, but also for those trying to provide support having difficulty in contacting other professionals required. By providing effective out of hours support, it is hoped that the need for s136 detentions could be reduced which is of benefit both to service users as well as services themselves.

The TFG would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who provided information, attended meetings and assisted with the TFG's investigation; it is much appreciated.

**7. Implications for local people / service users**

7.1 The investigation undertaken by the TFG as well as the recommendations made are in support of improving health outcomes for people in Barnsley. The TFG recognises the importance of people's mental health in all aspects of their life and the negative impacts poor wellbeing can have on individuals and communities. The TFG is also cognisant of the need for access to effective 24/7 services in relation to mental health crisis care.

**8. Financial implications**

8.1 There are no specific financial implications, although in responding to the recommendations in the report, the financial implications of these would need to be fully assessed by the appropriate services responding.

**9. Employee implications**

9.1 There are no specific employee implications, although in responding to the recommendations in the report, the employee implications of these would need to be fully assessed by the appropriate services responding.

**10. Communications implications**

10.1 It is evident that there is a lot of confusion amongst our communities in relation to adult mental health services in Barnsley and access to them. It is therefore important that opportunities to share this information clearly and in accessible formats, is maximised. A specific recommendation is included in the report in developing and improving Elected Member knowledge of this which they will be able to disseminate in their communities.

10.2 Throughout the investigation, information sharing amongst agencies was consistently highlighted as a challenge which acts as a barrier to providing effective support services to those in need. Therefore, in the development of the strategic alliance and CCC, it is hoped that this is something which could be addressed.

## **11. Consultations**

11.1 Consultations have taken place with: the Adult Mental Health TFG Members; the OSC; Councillor Jim Andrews; Councillor Margaret Bruff; Councillor Jenny Platts, Council Officers from Public Health, Communities and Adult Social Care; Barnsley CCG; SWYPFT; SYP; YAS; and the Council's Senior Management Team.

## **12. The Corporate Plan and the Council's Performance Management Framework**

12.1 As outlined in the Corporate Plan, the three priorities for Barnsley are: a thriving and vibrant economy, strong and resilient communities; and citizens achieving their potential. Positive mental wellbeing is critical to achieving all of these priorities, therefore it is essential the Council and its partner organisations work together to support these aims.

## **13. Promoting equality & diversity and social inclusion**

13.1 The TFG is keen to ensure that all Council services and activities are accessible to all its communities. Throughout the TFG's involvement in this work they have specifically referred to making sure that services are accessible to all, particularly given the vulnerabilities of those requiring mental health crisis care support.

## **14. Tackling the impact of poverty**

14.1 A growing body of evidence has shown strong links between those of lower socioeconomic status and an increased likelihood of developing and experiencing mental health problems. Similarly, employment status is linked to mental health outcomes, with those who are economically inactive to be more likely to experience common mental health problems. It is therefore important to acknowledge that increased mental health support may be required in our more deprived communities. Also that tackling the impact of poverty will help to improve mental wellbeing amongst our communities.

## **15. Tackling Health Inequalities**

15.1 There are large health inequalities between Barnsley and England, and within Barnsley itself. Improving people's mental wellbeing and reducing health inequalities will help local people to reach their full potential. The investigation undertaken by the TFG and recommendations made are in support of improving services across the borough; with recognition that additional work may be required in specific communities to help address health inequalities.

## **16. Risk management issues**

16.1 This issue relates to the following risks currently logged on the Council's Strategic Risk Register (SRR), as follows:

- 3025 – 'Failure to Safeguard vulnerable service users'
- 3026 – 'Failure to achieve a reduction in Health inequalities within the Borough'
- 3047 – 'Failure to protect the health of the population from preventable health threats'

16.2 It is likely the recommended activities detailed in this report will contribute further to the effective mitigation of these risks, and it would be appropriate for any follow-up report to be cognisant of these risks.

## 17. **Glossary**

BMBC	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
CCC	Crisis Care Concordat
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group
IAPT	Improving Access to Psychological Therapies Service
MHFA	Mental Health First Aid
OSC	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
PCP	Police Crime Panel
SWYPFT	South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
SYP	South Yorkshire Police
TFG	Task and Finish Group
YAS	Yorkshire Ambulance Service

## 18. **Background papers & links**

- Barnsley Healthwatch, Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat Report, January 2016:  
<https://healthwatchbarnsley.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Healthwatch-Barnsley-Mental-HealthConcordat-report-final.pdf>
- Policing and Mental Health: Picking up the Pieces, November 2018:  
<https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/wp-content/uploads/policing-and-mental-health-picking-up-the-pieces.pdf>
- Barnsley All-Age Mental Health and Wellbeing Commissioning Strategy 2015-2020:  
<https://barnsleymbc.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s10452/All-age%20Mental%20Health%20Commissioning%20Strategy%202015%20-%202020%20-%20ADOPTED.pdf>
- Mental Health Awareness: Hidden – A short documentary film based on ‘A Tiny Feeling of Fear’ by Barnsley author Jonathan Lee:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9PsQfg2pBDY>

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