

Briefing Note

Title: Better Mental Health Fund 2021-2022: Project Overview and Timeline for Delivery

Date: 5 October 2021

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Intended Audience:

Internal

Partner organisation

Public

Confidential

1.0 Purpose or recommendation

1.1 This briefing note provides an overview to Health and Wellbeing Together of the 'Better Mental Health (BMH) Fund 2021-2022' and timeframes for the commencement and delivery of mental health projects across the City of Wolverhampton utilising this fund.

2.0 Overview

2.1 The Better Mental Health (BMH) Fund 2021-2022 is administered by Public Health England (PHE). This fund is part of the government's Mental Health Recovery Action Plan 2021-2022 which seeks to ensure the mental health impacts of COVID-19 are rapidly addressed, services can respond quickly and pressures on the NHS are reduced.

3.0 Background and context

3.1 The BMH Fund aims to prevent mental ill health and promote good mental health amongst the most deprived communities in England. The focus on deprivation is part of the government's Levelling Up agenda which seeks to restore the economy, level up the country and build back better.

3.2 Local authority eligibility to BMH Fund was based on the ranking of upper tier local authorities in the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2019). All eligible local authorities were allocated a flat sum of funding with an additional further payment to reflect population size. The grant conditions included funding to be used for expansion of existing evaluated public mental health programmes for the purpose of increasing impact, equity and reach. It also incorporates approaches to whole system development to create communities that are inclusive, participative and supportive to those in need.

3.3 City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC) intention to bid to the BMH Fund was shared with the Wolverhampton Mental Health Stakeholder Forum and Wolverhampton Suicide Prevention Forum. It was later approved in principle by PHE in June 2021, with funding made available to the local authority late August 2021. All BMH Funded projects have been

aligned to CWC corporate finance, legal and procurement regulations and must be completed with finance discharged in line with PHE grant agreement by 30 May 2022.

- 3.4 All grant recipients are encouraged to consider signing up to the Prevention Concordat for the Better Mental Health Programme as part of their expression of interest for funding to encourage sustainability of efforts to build focus and investment in the better mental health agenda.

4.0 Summary of BMH Funded Projects 2021-2022

- 4.1 CWC will continue to share progress updates on BMH Fund development with the Wolverhampton Mental Health Stakeholder Forum, Wolverhampton Suicide Prevention Stakeholder Forum, and with the One Wolverhampton Mental Health Sub-Group (Adults and Older People).

PHE grant funding has now been approved for the following project areas:

Expansion of the Head 4 Health programme run by Wolves Foundation:

- 4.2 The initial scope of the 'Head 4 Health' programme was focused on men over the age of 18 and will now extend to include a much wider focus on any adult facing a variety of life challenges/ complexities who may wish to improve their physical and mental health and wellbeing. Workshops for up to 200 adults will run across the BMH Fund life cycle.

These workshops will last for eight weeks in small group format, with sessions which are informal yet informative. They incorporate a range of physical activity interventions and sessions covering different topics, such as coping with stress, through to alcohol awareness. The sessions will also include guest speakers from organisations across the city including NHS Healthy Minds, Recovery Near You and The Samaritans, as well as many others. Additionally, there are sustained 'extra time' sessions, offering a safe and informal space for individuals to talk about how they are feeling with an offer to continue to attend support sessions for as long as they would like. New BMH Funding will also ensure provision of counselling sessions for those requiring more structured interventions to support wellbeing issues.

Suicide Prevention Training / Education Campaign:

- 4.3 Suicide Prevention training will be provided to primary care workforce, including General Practitioners (GPs) and front- line workforce across the city. This programme of training will aim to raise awareness amongst a wide range of professionals on their knowledge of suicide prevention. It will aim to strengthen the understanding of risk and protective factors and will equip training participants to better respond and support patients / service users who are at risk of suicide ideation.

As a key community engagement point for a range of diverse communities, barber shops and hairdressers will be targeted to upskill staff in listening supportively to people who may be experiencing challenging times and at future risk of taking their own lives and sign posting to locally available support. A suicide prevention City-wide campaign will help promote engagement with this project as well as raising awareness of the role we can all play in keeping each other safe and well.

Mental health training and Skills and Education in Communities:

- 4.4 Wolverhampton is keen to build capacity and resilience within communities and enable them to deliver grass-root solutions to local issues. Strong partnerships already exist with local community organisations, community champions, and CWC. We will capitalise on these community networks to boost a community response to improving mental health and skills development.

In the first instance, mental health training will be provided to community champions. This training will enable champions to share learning with communities to normalise mental health conversations, reduce stigma and encourage people to talk and seek support early, whilst strengthening existing connections with community development workers from Black Country Healthcare Foundation Trust (BCHFT).

Skills and education are key to helping communities recover from the detrimental impact of the pandemic and helping those who need support to get back into work. Productive and rewarding employment can provide people with both manifest and latent benefits, ranging from economic stability, a sense of individual identity and purpose, sense of belonging, time construction and routine. A working group will be established to target those most vulnerable in the City facing significant barriers to securing rewarding and productive work and to deliver education and skills support with a goal of improving confidence, self-esteem, and enhanced levels of employability competencies.

Empowering Communities Programme (understanding community needs and assets):

- 4.5 The Empowering Communities Programme (ECP) provides a unique opportunity for an academic institution to deliver a multi-dimensional information gathering intervention to support future production of a mental health needs assessment for the City of Wolverhampton. The ECP will include:
- a. City-wide survey of personal wellbeing** based on national metrics as well as probing questions to provide further insight into how the pandemic has impacted upon people's mental and physical health and wellbeing, helping identify both risk and protective factors.
 - b. Systematic review of evidence** on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic upon different population groups to identify those likely to be exposed to factors which mean they are at a greater risk of developing mental health problems.
 - c. Co-creation and evaluation of mental health projects** Using findings from the systematic review, the academic provider will engage nine groups across the city known to be at greater risk of experiencing mental health problems across the life course (children and young people, adults, older adults). The Academic institution is to work with communities in these groups using evidence-based frameworks such as making every contact count 'MECC' and 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' to co-create and evaluate projects which help communities share their unique experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic. These projects will help communities explore not only the challenges faced by their members during various pandemic phases, but also the

protective factors local people have drawn upon to promote and protect their mental health and wellbeing.

The findings from all ECP activities above will be collated by the academic service provider into a preliminary baseline need assessment style report for the City of Wolverhampton Council.

Update the 'Stay Safe, Be Kind' (SSBK) digital resource catalogue:

4.6 A project group is being established to review the digital catalogue of mental health and wellbeing promoting resources on the local authority SSBK digital platform to ensure these are up to date, accessible and inclusive. The issue of digital exclusion will form part of the review and there will be consideration of alternative approaches to mental health promotion information and support provision outside of the digital offer.

5.0 Oversight of project delivery and reporting to PHE on BMH Fund progress

5.1 Where appropriate, BMH Funded projects will be required to capture data regarding actual/estimated reach and relevant project participant characteristics. These will need to be collated by local authorities for relevant period reporting to PHE.

5.2 In recognition of the challenges faced by local authorities in the ongoing management and delivery of the BMH Fund whilst continuing to address the COVID-19 pandemic, PHE have released a supplementary budget to support administration and evaluation of the BMH Fund.

5.3 This funding will be utilised to appoint a project manager for the life cycle of the BMH Fund programme until May 2022 which will enable timely notification of any project delivery challenges to enable suitable resolution to be considered between relevant providers, CWC, and PHE.

6.0 BMH Fund Outcomes Report

6.1 Following successful delivery of the BMH Fund programme by May 2022, learning from all the BMH Fund project activities will be collated by the local authority into a BMH Fund Outcomes Report for the City of Wolverhampton and shared with local stakeholders and HWT Board.

6.2 The report will outline findings from BMH Fund activities for HWT to consider along with recommendations regarding the future possible sign up by HWT to the Prevention Concordat for the Better Mental Health Programme.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevention-concordat-for-better-mental-health-consensus-statement/prevention-concordat-for-better-mental-health>

7.0 Mental Health Needs Assessment Report for City of Wolverhampton

7.1 A multi-stakeholder group with members representing the life-course (children and young people, adults, older adults), led jointly by CWC and Wolverhampton CCG, will form a mental health needs assessment working group to consider **BMH Fund Outcomes Report** alongside other available information / data on population mental health and wellbeing.

7.2 The needs assessment group will also assess progress against existing outcome measures across the city for wider determinants, vulnerable groups, service activity and outcomes which provide the overarching evaluation and monitoring framework in the existing Joint Public Mental Health and Wellbeing strategy 2018-2021 to form a Mental Health Needs Assessment Report for City of Wolverhampton.

7.3 Learning from these needs assessment activities will provide a better understanding of the work needed to promote public mental health and wellbeing which should dovetail into, and closely align with the delivery of BCHFT Clinical Strategy 2021-2024.

8.0 Refresh of Joint Public Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2018-2021)

8.1 The Multi-stakeholder working group will utilise feedback from HWT on the **Mental Health Needs Assessment Report** to develop a refresh of the existing Joint Public Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2018-2021) which will outline priority areas for action, along with principles for joint working and leadership to prevent mental health problems and promote good mental health and wellbeing across the City of Wolverhampton.