

LINCOLNSHIRE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

Open Report on behalf of Derek Ward, Director of Public Health

Report to	Lincolnshire Health and Wellbeing Board
Date:	29 March 2022
Subject:	The Mental Health Challenge

Summary:

The Mental Health Challenge is a national scheme hosted by the Centre for Mental Health, which seeks to identify elected members (*Member Champions*) to champion mental health and wellbeing in their local area. LCC, ELDC, NKDC and SKDC are current member authorities.

The purpose of this report is to seek strategic support to collaborate across the Lincolnshire Health and Care system to understand how best to support Lincolnshire's *Member Champions*, to maximise the benefit *Champions* can bring for improving mental health and wellbeing outcomes.

Actions Required:

That the Health and Wellbeing Board notes the proposal to explore how best to support *Member Champions* for mental health and wellbeing, & comments on the future development of this role.

1. Background

Good mental health and wellbeing are fundamental for supporting people to live happy and healthy lives. Mental health problems can affect anyone and have a significant effect on the lives of individuals, their families, communities and wider society. 1 in 4 adults and 1 in 6 children will experience a mental health problem in any year. For many local children and adults, the pandemic is likely to have exacerbated their mental health needs.

Mental ill health is an umbrella term for many different conditions including, for example, depression and anxiety, eating disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, bi-polar disorder and many others. The multi-agency Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Autism Partnership in Lincolnshire works together to ensure a joined-up approach to prevention and treatment of mental ill health across the life course.

Mental health promotion is a key part of our work on prevention, as we support people to build resilience and know how to look after their mental health and wellbeing to prevent the development of mental ill health. Mental health promotion includes a range of activities such as:

- Awareness campaigns that help people to know how to look after their mental health;
- Working with Shine Lincolnshire to ensure the continued success of voluntary and community groups supporting mental health and wellbeing;
- Widening access to training so that across our communities people have the knowledge and confidence to talk about mental health and wellbeing; and,
- Promoting social connectedness (especially in vulnerable populations).

The Mental Health Challenge

To complement and enhance these activities, this paper is seeking strategic support to develop a county-wide approach to supporting Member Champions, who are a part of [The Mental Health Challenge](#) ('The Challenge') hosted by the Centre for Mental Health. The Challenge is a growing network of councillors across England who share ideas, seek advice and receive support with the aim of improving the mental health and wellbeing of their local communities.

Within The Challenge, every local area is different, and each Member Champion will have their own unique priorities. The Challenge seeks to recognise their interests, hopes and concerns by supporting them to introduce effective interventions and to speak up for mental health. There are currently more than 130 councils in England with Member Champions for mental health. With the Centre's support and advice, Member Champions have pioneered a new kind of local leadership for better mental health.

Local Authorities are asked to take up the Mental Health Challenge by appointing one elected council member to be the Member Champion for their local authority. Any elected member of a county, borough, unitary or district council can become a member champion for mental health. Many are supported by a lead officer from the council staff team who works alongside them. The Centre for Mental Health provides member champions and lead officers with regular updates (at a national level) on policy and research, with training and learning opportunities, and with bespoke reports, briefings and advice. In Lincolnshire we currently have Member Champions in Lincolnshire County Council, East Lindsey, North Kesteven and South Kesteven District Councils.

Mental Health and Wellbeing in Lincolnshire

Member Champion support for the mental health and wellbeing agenda has the potential to be an important way to enhance our mental health promotion in Lincolnshire. Initial discussions through the Mental Health Learning Disabilities and Autism Partnership and with wider District colleagues have identified some key potential benefits to this approach including:

- Promoting campaigns to support mental health and wellbeing across social media and within their local communities.
- Sharing key challenges around mental health and wellbeing with their elected member colleagues. This could include inequalities in outcomes, and how these relate to a wide range of factors such as housing, employment, access to support, and how we can protect our own mental health.
- Proactively listening to people of all ages and backgrounds about what they need for better mental health and sharing this with officers to help guide our local activity.

- Understanding mental health transformation work and how Districts can support this at a local level.

Next Steps

Already across Lincolnshire already there are some positive examples of Member Champions supporting the wider mental health and wellbeing agenda and service transformation in discrete places. To build on this positive experience, and to ensure that local Member Champions are supported by the local system as well as the national programme, there is support from across the MHLDA Partnership for a proposal to develop a support framework for Member Champions. Such a framework could include, for example:

- Developing local data packs for mental health and wellbeing to understand need;
- Sharing information on new and existing local initiatives to support mental health and wellbeing; and,
- Ensuring that mental health and wellbeing training opportunities are available and accessible to Member Champions.

Any framework would need to be developed collaboratively between key stakeholders, starting with County Council and District Officers, and NHS and Community and Voluntary Sector colleagues, to ensure the work complements and enhances ongoing programmes of work to improve outcomes for mental health and wellbeing.

2. Conclusion

Member Champions for Mental Health and Wellbeing are a good way to raise the profile of mental health and wellbeing, and to support action at a local level to improve outcomes. As part of a wider approach to mental health promotion, we are proposing to explore, with colleagues across Lincolnshire, the development of a local framework to support Member Champions.

3. Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy

The Council and Clinical Commissioning Group must have regard to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Mental health and emotional wellbeing (Children and Young People) and Mental health (Adults) are both priorities in the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Improving mental health and wellbeing across all ages is therefore a firm priority in Lincolnshire. These strategic priorities are underpinned by the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, which identifies a range of mental health needs and inequalities in outcomes across Lincolnshire.

4. Consultation

Not applicable.

5. Appendices

None.

6. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Lucy Gavens, who can be contacted at lucy.gavens@lincolnshire.gov.uk