

HOUSING SELECT COMMITTEE			
Report Title	Housing and Mental Health		
Key Decision	No	Item No.	5
Ward	All		
Contributors	Director of Housing Services		
Class	Part 1	Date:	16 th December 2019

Reasons for lateness and urgency

This paper is distributed late as it was not possible to publish it during the period of heightened political sensitivity in the pre-election period for the recent general election. The paper needs to be considered by the committee at this meeting in order for the committee to be able to complete the rest of its work programme over the remaining meetings of the 2019/20 municipal year.

1 Purpose

- 1.1 This report updates Housing Select Committee on the progress of the development of a mental health handbook to help housing practitioners deliver housing services in Lewisham.
- 1.2 This handbook has been designed as a practical tool for housing staff to help residents who have low level mental ill health. There are a number of areas where work is ongoing; officers continue to work with partners to develop this handbook.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that Housing Select Committee notes the work to date, the areas of continued work, and the content of the draft mental health handbook, as outlined in appendix A

3 Policy context

- 3.1 The contents of this report are consistent with the Council's policy framework. It supports the following priorities of the Council's corporate strategy 2018-22:
 - Open Lewisham
 - Giving children and young people the best start in life
 - Delivering and defending health, social care and support
 - Building safer communities

3.2 It also supports the delivery of the Council's Housing Strategy 2015-2020, specifically the objective of helping residents at times of severe and urgent housing need and the Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy: Health and Wellbeing for all by 2023.

4 Background

4.1 In 2016/17 Housing Select Committee carried out an in-depth review of housing and mental health. At its meeting on 7 March 2017, Housing Select Committee discussed the housing and mental health review draft report and agreed the recommendations.

4.2 Officers in the strategic housing division were asked to provide a response to these recommendations. The report was submitted for review to Mayor and Cabinet on 19 July 2017 and Housing Select Committee on 6 September 2017.

4.3 Mayor and Cabinet welcomed the report and agreed with the recommendations in the report stating that:

- Officers should work with housing provider partners and third sector organisations, as relevant, in order to action these recommendations.
- A small working group should be formed, comprised of specialist officers from the main housing providers operating in the borough. The group will look into the most effective ways to achieve the aims of the review, while considering the following:
 - Ensuring that housing associations and other partners focus their work on mental health appropriately. In particular, being clear on the distinction between the roles of housing providers and mental health professionals.
 - Ensuring that housing associations are not given responsibilities that they are not resourced to provide, which would have a detrimental impact on other core functions of the service they deliver.

4.4 Housing Committee welcomed the response from Mayor and Cabinet and have seen the works progress to date.

5 Update

5.1 Following the review, officers formed a working group to work on the recommendations and improve partnership working. A number of partners were asked to join the group and contribute, including:

- Advice Lewisham
- Family Mosaic
- Housing Strategy and Programmes, LBL
- Lewisham and Bromley Mind

- Lewisham Homes
- London and Quadrant
- Mental Health Joint Commissioning
- Neighbourhood Coordinators, LBL
- Phoenix Community Housing
- Prevention, Inclusion and Public Health Commissioning, LBL
- Private Sector Housing Agency, LBL
- SCAIT, LBL
- Single Homeless Intervention and Prevention, LBL
- South London and Maudsley NHS Trust

5.2 A recommendation arising from the Committee's review was that *'Housing providers and local partners, including the Council, SLAM, Mind, and other local organisations that regularly deal with mental health issues, should work together to develop an agreement/protocol on dealing with cases of low level mental health.'*

- 5.3 The working group, chaired by Lewisham and Bromley Mind, met frequently during the financial year 2018/19, and considered best practice and protocols produced by other local authorities. It was agreed by the group that a handbook would be more appropriate in order to focus on a lower level of mental ill health and establish a shared understanding of service provision.
- 5.4 The working group produced a handbook for use by officers working in areas where they may come into contact with individuals experiencing lower level mental ill health. The handbook covers an introduction to mental ill health and the borough. It describes the role of housing providers in helping their residents who may be suffering mental ill health.
- 5.5 The handbook also includes:
- a guide to local mental health pathways and community services available to Lewisham residents
 - how the information-sharing processes operate
 - information on capacity and the Mental Health Act
 - a directory of partners who may be involved in a resident's care.
- 5.6 A copy of the handbook can be found in appendix A.
- 5.7 The handbook is a useful guide to officers working in housing or mental health. It provides important context to each area and is designed to help staff work more effectively with each other.
- 5.8 Partners signed up or awaiting confirmation of sign up to the commitments in the handbook are:
- Regenter B3 (Brockley PFI), Peabody, Hyde Housing, Hexagon, Housing for Women, Optivo, Clarion.

These partners are in addition to those listed at 5.1.

- 5.9 All housing associations operating within Lewisham will be asked to be a partner listed in the handbook, and to contribute to its further development.

6 Going forward

- 6.1 We expect that the handbook will become part of the induction for anyone joining this area of work. In essence, it is a common operating practice which should help minimise variation in experiences and outcomes for residents. It can also improve professionals' knowledge and partnership working.
- 6.2 The handbook will be produced in accessible formats and published on the council's website. The handbook will be regularly reviewed to ensure it continues to reflect best practise, service and legislation changes.
- 6.3 There has been positive ongoing engagement from the partners listed in this report. There continue to be areas for development to ensure that this handbook has maximum impact:

Key areas of development

- Work with partners to increase engagement with residents on mental health, and explore options to produce a version of this handbook for residents of Lewisham
- Monitor and maintain dialogue with partners around the handbooks use and usefulness, to ensure it is having impact.
- Expand on the commitments from housing and health partners detailed in page 5 of the handbook
- Ensure that any work undertaken in other areas of council activity, particularly around BAME inequalities in mental health, are fed into the handbook
- Following ongoing work with partners on the 'duty to refer' where households are at risk of homelessness, feed this into the handbook
- Develop the handbook for professionals working specifically in homelessness services '

All partners signed up have committed to having a named officer at their organisation to contribute to the maintenance of this handbook. Officers within Housing will work closely with partners already signed up to the commitments within the handbook, to ensure the booklet fulfils its purpose.

- 6.4 The handbook will be finalised and officers aim to have more partners signed up to the commitments within the handbook, prior to the launch. A series of events to launch the handbook will be arranged with the aim to launch in Spring 2020.

7 Financial implications

7.1 This report updates Housing Select Committee on the progress of the development and introduction of a mental health handbook. It will help housing practitioners in the delivery of housing services in Lewisham. As such, there are no direct financial implications from this report.

8 Legal implications

8.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

9 Equalities implications

9.1 The handbook is focussing on mental health, with a view to improving knowledge about access to mental health services for those with low level mental ill health in the borough. The handbook is designed to have a positive impact and to reduce inequalities arising from mental ill health, specifically around housing.

9.2 We expect that through the development and use of the handbook, understanding and collaboration between partners will improve. This in return will benefit residents.

10 Crime and disorder implications

10.1 There are no specific crime and disorder implications to this report.

11 Background reports and report author

11.1 For further information please contact Rachel Dunn on Rachel.Dunn@lewisham.gov.uk.