

## KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

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### HEALTH REFORM AND PUBLIC HEALTH CABINET COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Health Reform and Public Health Cabinet Committee held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House on Tuesday, 12 October 2021.

PRESENT: Mr A Kennedy (Chairman), Mr Baker (Vice-Chairman), Mr D Beaney, Mrs P T Cole, Ms S Hamilton, Mr D Jeffrey, Mr B H Lewis, Mr J Meade, Mr D Ross, Mr A Weatherhead and Ms L Wright

ALSO PRESENT: Mrs C Bell

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms S Dene (Senior Commissioning Manager), Dr A Duggal (Deputy Director of Public Health), Ms E Kennedy (Democratic Services Officer), Ms J Mookherjee (Consultant in Public Health), Miss K Reynolds (Democratic Services Officer) and Mr T Woodhouse (Suicide Prevention Programme Manager, Public Health)

### UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

**169. Apologies and Substitutes**  
*(Item 2)*

Apologies were received from Mrs Bruneau, Mrs Constantine and Mr Webb.

**170. Declarations of Interest by Members in items on the agenda**  
*(Item 3)*

There were no declarations of interest.

**171. Minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2021**  
*(Item 4)*

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2021 are correctly recorded and a paper copy be signed by the Chair.

**172. Verbal updates by Cabinet Member and Director**  
*(Item 5)*

- 1) Mrs Clair Bell, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, said that she would resume visits to the services and would be attending the Health and Wellbeing Awards in Ashford the following week. She highlighted that the Suicide Prevention Team had recently won an award at the National Mental Health Awards.

It was said that the recent Joint Kent and Medway Health and Wellbeing Board meeting was used as a session to introduce the issues facing Kent and Medway in light of Covid-19 and looked at how other authorities had dealt with these issues. The Joint Board looked to resolve those issues through taking on the broadest view of its purpose - to overcome health inequalities - in an established plan.

Mrs Bell highlighted the success of a programme which raised awareness among 16-24 years olds of sexual health services using social media platforms. It was also said that the '10 Minutes Shake Up' physical activity summer programme had attracted interest with over 4000 views – a 1300% increase from the previous year. The Council had also promoted the 'Stoptober' campaign which provided support services for smokers who wanted to quit. This was considered an important research-backed campaign, particularly as nationwide smoking rates had increased since the first Covid-19 lockdown.

Members were told that a consultation had been conducted in early August on community mental health services, including Live Well Kent and the Release the Pressure Programme. This was intended to improve service delivery of personal outcomes ahead of the end of the contract with the strategic providers in March 2023.

Mrs Bell said that residents had been reminded of local support services, including Every Mind Matters, in connection with World Mental Health Day. It was said that the pandemic had a negative impact on mental health and many people did not know what to do to improve their mental wellbeing. Every Mind Matters, found at the link below, provided residents with a personalised action plan to better deal with stress and anxiety - <https://www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/health/one-you-kent/every-mind-matters>. This included the free 24/7 mental health text service through which a trained volunteer could provide support to an individual in need.

Public Health had set up temporary stall at Bluewater Shopping Centre. They had supplied 200-300 Release the Pressure promotional cards and had 35 in-depth conversations with people who shared their concerns. Posters regarding the Release the Pressure service were to be on display in Bluewater Shopping Centre toilet facilities for a few weeks to reach further people.

In response to questions from Members it was said that:

- The national text service had a large capacity as volunteers were recruited based on demand. Volunteers were home based so there was a quick turnaround. There were also volunteers based in New Zealand to provide around the clock support.
  - The combination of different platforms was designed to reach individuals from various backgrounds. There was data to suggest that the services were reaching a broad demographic.
  - Sexual health service advertising could be expanded to additional social media sites, such as dating apps, to reach a wider audience.
- 2) Dr Allison Duggal, Interim Director of Public Health, said that the Covid-19 rates were rising and stood at 267 per 100 000 of the Kent population. Cases were predominantly in 10–14-year-olds due to a number of breakouts in schools. There was also a rise in cases in 40–50-year-olds that was still being investigated. 12–15-year-olds were being vaccinated at school and flu vaccinations had been encouraged for all age groups.

Dr Duggal said that the service was looking at post-pandemic mental and physical wellbeing strategies. There were two new organisations that the service had been working with. Furthermore, two new staff members had been appointed to work on the whole systems obesity offer and on migrant health services around Napier Barracks and across partnerships.

Members were told that Public Health was looking to capitalise on work done with some of the local communities, such as the Romany community in East Kent. This had included behavioural insight work to inform health improvement plans.

In response to questions from Members it was said that:

- A letter would be drafted to Mr Bartlett raising Member concerns around access to General Practitioner (GP) services in East Kent and GP surgeries still insisting on telephone consultations.
- There were great strides being made with social prescribing. This could be discussed in further detail outside of the meeting.
- Covid-19 in Kent was predominantly the Delta variant. There were no concerns about other variants at the time of the meeting. It was expected that Covid-19 self-testing kits would be charged for in the future, however, the costs would vary according to several factors. This was not expected to affect outbreak situations. The mixed results of lateral flow tests were being investigated by Health Security Agency.
- People placed in Napier Barracks had already undergone isolation. There had been outbreaks of Covid-19 at the facility, however, these had been addressed.
- The Kent Resilience Forum was looking into the protests held by 'anti-vaxxers' outside of school gates. A coordinated response was being used and work was being undertaken with the Kent Police, schools and the County Council.

### **173. 2021-25 Suicide Prevention Strategy** (Item 6)

- 1) Jess Mookherjee introduced the paper which provided an update on the suicide prevention programme. The paper included information on the impact of Covid-19 on suicide rates and the Suicide Prevention Programme; the Preventing Suicide in Kent and Medway: 2021-25 Strategy; the Kent and Medway Better Mental Health Pledge / Prevention Concordat for Better Mental Health; and the New Support Service for People Bereaved by Suicide.
- 2) Tim Woodhouse emphasised that the main focus was to endorse the new multiagency strategy. It was said that the strategy for the next five years would promote well-being to the whole population, including a three-year support service for people who had been bereaved by suicide.
- 3) In response to questions from Members, it was said that:
  - The mental health need was the same for men and women, although their needs were expressed in different ways.
  - Although there was a relatively low response rate to the consultation, engagement-focused workshops were run in the lead up to the draft strategy.
  - Members could play a role in recommending organisations to be included in the multiagency strategy.
- 4) RESOLVED to:
  - 1) Consider and endorse the Preventing Suicide in Kent and Medway 2021-25 Strategy
  - 2) Comment on the suicide prevention programme.

**174. Public Health Commissioning Report**  
(Item 7)

- 1) Sharon Dene, Interim Head of Strategic Commissioning (Public Health), gave an overview of the Public Health Commissioning Function and the services provided. It was highlighted that the aim of Public Health commissioned services was to reduce health inequalities and to improve the health of the population. This required an ongoing transformation to ensure efficiency, effectiveness, and improved outcomes. The three, interrelated areas of focus for the commissioned services were: Start Well, Live Well, and Age Well.
- 2) Members were reassured that although service delivery had been impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic, the service performance levels were improving. It was said that a hybrid model of service delivery - through online mechanisms and face-to-face options – would continue as lockdown restrictions eased.
- 3) It was highlighted that further information regarding the Public Health COVID-19 grants would be brought to the Committee at a later date.
- 4) In response to questions from Members, it was noted:
  - The Public Health Commissioning budget was confirmed in March each year. Basic services were planned based on needs analysis, and additional services were provided if the budget allowed. Bidding for additional funding was also undertaken where possible.
  - Surveys had been conducted to establish why young people exit substance misuse treatment in an unplanned way. It was said that more detail on this topic would be circulated to the Committee.
  - Public Health Champions assisted people to navigate through the services on offer. Software was also being developed to direct people to the correct services. However, this project had been put on hold due to the pandemic.
  - Further information would be brought back to the Committee regarding the school public health service, particularly regarding Tier One interventions.
- 5) RESOLVED that the Public Health Commissioning Report be noted.

**175. Performance of Public Health Commissioned Services**  
(Item 8)

- 1) Sharon Dene, Interim Head of Strategic Commissioning (Public Health), gave an update to Members regarding the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Public Health commissioned services. In the latest available quarter, 11 of 15 KPIs were RAG rated Green, two Amber, and two Red.
- 2) The first Red KPI was the delivery of the NHS Health Checks Programme which was paused due to the Coronavirus pandemic (COVID) between March 2020 and August 2020. The Committee was informed that Public Health the provider was working on a future recovery plan and that the performance was improving. The second Red KPI was Young People exiting specialist substance misuse services in a planned way.
- 3) RESOLVED that the performance of Public Health commissioned services in Q1 of 2021/22 be noted.

**176. Work Programme**  
(Item 9)

RESOLVED that the Work Programme for 2021/22 be noted.