

HEALTH SELECT COMMISSION
Thursday 2 September 2021

Present:- Councillors Yasseen (Chair), Baum-Dixon (Vice-Chair), Atkin, Aveyard, Baker-Rogers, Barley, Griffin, R. Elliott, Thompson, Wilson, and Wooding.

Apologies were received from Councillors Andrews, Bird, A Carter, Haleem, Havard, Hughes, and Hunter.

The webcast of the Council Meeting can be viewed at:-

<https://rotherham.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

21. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 8 JULY 2021

Resolved:-

That the minutes of the meeting held on 08 July 2021 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

22. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

23. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

The Chair confirmed that no members of the press or public had submitted questions in relation to any matters of business on the agenda.

24. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Chair confirmed that there was no reason to exclude members of the press or public from observing any matters of business on the agenda.

25. SUICIDE PREVENTION

Consideration was given to an update presentation in respect of suicide prevention in Rotherham presented by the Strategic Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health and Public Health Specialist. The presentation included national context, changes to the way suicide is tracked, and how Rotherham's rates compare with that of similar localities and with the nation. Rotherham's action plan was described as well as examples of partnership working and various avenues of support for suicide prevention.

In discussion, Members expressed the desire for more information around wider factors that intersect with suicide. The response clarified these factors including relationship breakdown, relationship loss, financial hardship, and other sources of emotional distress. It was noted that only about one third of suicides are related to a mental health condition; therefore, it was important to have multiple pathways to support rather than simply by the health care route.

Members also requested further assurances that learning is shared between neighbouring areas where rates are lower. The response from officers noted that the regional neighbours work closely together and network to share good practice continually. Action plans were also assessed by national Samaritans, and national leaders have been to visit Rotherham twice, and had commented on the good practice at Rotherham that should be implemented more widely throughout the nation.

Members also requested clarification around historic changes to the way instances of suicide have been recorded and whether the data is accurate. The response from officers provided assurances that Rotherham's data was accurate and that the coroner does not have a greater preparedness to determine a death as a suicide than in other areas.

Members also expressed concerns around Rotherham's higher-than-average figures for men as well as now the sharply rising category for women as well. The response noted national picture for men in 40s and 30s is also being reflected locally. Specific findings regarding the need to support children who have been bereaved by suicide were also cited.

Members expressed the desire to know more about what tailored support is available and what good practice is being put in place to help target vulnerable groups specifically based on their unique needs. The response from officers noted the differences in age groups and gender and how these groups are being supported, especially children who have experienced bereavement due to suicide.

Members expressed interest in the take up, effectiveness, and sustainability of the small grants funding. The response gave details about the nature and use of this funding, which is usually small, one-off sums that become available and are applied for on an ongoing basis, but the effects of these can be far-reaching.

Members also sought more information around learning that has been captured during the pandemic about how to more effectively support individuals who may be at risk. The response from officers noted apps and resources that are available, including the Stay Alive app for smartphones. The response further noted the Make Every Contact Count training of Council staff.

Members wished to hear an update around suicide prevention training of the voluntary sector and Councillors. The response from officers provided resources and referenced potential training that is available while noting the challenges the pandemic has presented in terms of in-person training.

Resolved:

1. That the update be noted, and that the next update be presented in 12 months, to include analysis of contributing factors.
2. That a resource pack be circulated to Members, and that two members be invited to participate in the Train the Trainer programme.
3. That every effort is made to ensure that positive work sustained by the small grants funding can continue.

26. ROTHERHAM HEALTHWATCH UPDATE

Consideration was given to an update presentation from the Service Manager of Rotherham Healthwatch, which described recent initiatives and research undertaken by the programme as well as identified potential areas for collaboration and feeding into scrutiny work for the coming year.

Resolved:-

1. That the update and opportunities for scrutiny collaboration be noted.
2. That thanks to Lesley Cooper be recorded on behalf of the Chair for her leadership and dedication throughout her time at Rotherham Healthwatch which has had a positive impact on public health scrutiny in Rotherham.

27. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

Consideration was given to an update report in respect of the scrutiny work programme for 2021/22. Recent changes and additions to the work programme were described and the updated schedule of scrutiny work presented for endorsement.

Members were invited to participate in the work of upcoming sub groups.

Resolved:-

1. That the updated work programme be noted.
2. That the Governance Advisor be authorised to make changes to the work programme in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair, with any changes reported to the next meeting for endorsement.

28. URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair announced there was no urgent business.

29. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The Chair announced that the next meeting of the Health Select Commission would be held on 7 October 2021, commencing at 5pm in Rotherham Town Hall.