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**Report of Amanda Healy, Director of Public Health County Durham,  
Durham County Council**

**Purpose of the report**

- 1 To provide the Health and Wellbeing Board with an update on the Mental Health at Scale project.

**Executive summary**

- 2 Mental health at Scale is a Local Government Association (LGA) pilot programme. There are a number of prevention at scale programmes across the country.
- 3 The project has evolved based on partnership shared learning and reframed its goal as: "Tackling stigma and discrimination with a focus on young people, workforce and the community in order to build more resilient communities and reduce death by suicide."
- 4 There are a number of initiatives and approaches underway which are seeking to promote good mental health across a variety of settings. Partnership support is required in order to develop a shared understanding and approach across County Durham.

**Recommendations**

- 5 The Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to:
  - (a) Note the contents of this report.
  - (b) As leaders in their respective organisations, champion good mental health and support key elements of the project such as improving workforce mental health.
  - (c) Commit to delivering the Time for Change employer pledge

**Background**

- 6 Improving the population's mental health and wellbeing and preventing mental illness and suicide is a key priority for Durham County Council (DCC). The County Durham Partnership have identified mental health at scale as multi agency priority. The Local Government Association recognises the need for local government staff to be skilled in improving

the public's mental health, wellbeing and resilience. This is relevant to the entire workforce. It is also a priority for local government to demonstrate leadership in addressing the mental health and wellbeing needs of their communities and their staff.

- 7 During 2018, there has been a new vision developed for public health in County Durham. It has been developed through a review of the evidence, and has been grounded and supported through consultation with colleagues, Cabinet and partners. One of the core overarching priorities for 2018-20 is mental health at scale.
- 8 The Health and Wellbeing Board have hosted an annual “Big Tent” Engagement Event to gather the views of stakeholders for the last six years. These events have provided an engagement opportunity to inform the review of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. In order to ensure a more joined up approach, last year a wider partnership event took place across the County Durham Partnership. In County Durham, partners focused on World Mental Health day on Wednesday 10th October 2018. At the event Durham County Council and Pioneering Care Partnership signed the Time to Change employer pledge as a demonstration of organisational commitment to change how colleagues think and act around mental health in the workplace.

### **Mental health at scale**

- 9 Mental health at scale is a Local Government Association (LGA) pilot programme. The LGA offer a support manager and an LGA advisor for guidance during the project. They have provided networking and masterclasses around prevention at scale. They have commissioned training sessions delivered by the Design Council and commissioned programmes such as the behavioural insights programme in County Durham.
- 10 The mental health at scale project’s original focus was “Suicide prevention with a focus on capacity building, workforce development and reducing discrimination and stigma through Time for Change”.
- 11 The project has evolved based on partnership shared learning and reframed its goal as: “Tackling stigma and discrimination with a focus on young people, workforce and the community in order to build more resilient communities and reduce death by suicide.”
- 12 Adults spend much of their lives at work, and as such the workplace is a key setting in which to promote and protect mental health.

## **Workforce**

- 13 The County Durham Partnership, mental health at scale project, has a workforce development focus. Given the evidence for work place health initiatives, and the impact of the workplace upon mental health, sustained efforts are required to drive through change across County Durham.
- 14 Within County Durham, the Mental Health Partnership Strategy highlights the importance of workforce mental health. Public Health England suggest that solutions are needed that enhance people's sense of control, resilience, inclusion and participation, address health and wellbeing holistically, and reduce the barriers and negative impacts on people's mental health.

## **Workforce co-ordination**

- 15 A newly instigated workforce leads group is exploring the possibility of creating a universal approach to improving mental health across County Durham. Organisations such as Durham County Council have access to many opportunities to improve their wellbeing: through public health expertise, culture and sport professionals, welfare advice or carer's advice. Organisations such as Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust have an extensive offer attached to mental health. The police offer pastoral and trauma based care to its workforce. There are many examples of good practice in County Durham and a mapping exercise has been completed to help collate best practice, define what is organisationally bespoke and what is transferable to other organisations. This will help identify and shape a common approach across County Durham.
- 16 The County Durham Partnership has endorsed the Time for Change employer pledge and efforts are underway to work with partners to ensure the pledge is adopted by as many organisations as possible.

## **Workforce mental health training**

- 17 Workforce training is an issue that has been identified by each work stream in the County Durham Mental Health Partnership Strategy. Ensuring staff have the knowledge and skills to improve mental health and wellbeing and prevent mental illness and suicide is a specific recommendation within the NHS Five Year Forward View for Mental Health, and Public Health England's (PHE) public mental health leadership and workforce development framework.
- 18 Among adults, the workplace is a key setting for identifying and reducing stress, if line managers and occupational health staff have the right skills. The workforce leads group is assessing current practice

against established Public Health England/ Health Education England training competencies to establish the training need across County Durham. Large statutory partner organisations appear comparatively well resourced. However, variation in provision risks an inequitable approach to workforce and public mental health interventions. A universal approach to training and an accessible training resource could help to mitigate this.

- 19 In assessing an appropriate approach for County Durham, evidence has been reviewed from Public Health England and the Governmental Stevenson & Farmer report to indicate the most appropriate approach to mental health training. This is currently being implemented by Durham County Council.

### **Small and Medium Enterprises**

- 20 A significant part of the workforce challenge is how to extend the reach of the County Durham Partnership into many of the other employers across County Durham. Effective implementation of preventive strategies at work can not only promote better mental health but also help avoid some of the immediate substantial costs of absenteeism and presenteeism that are associated with poor mental health. The annual cost to employers is estimated to be between £33 billion and £42 billion.
- 21 Many employers across County Durham are small and medium enterprises (SME). Due to their size and scale they may not always have the resources and infrastructure available to larger employers to support employee health and wellbeing. Business Durham provide a business development and support offer to many SMEs across the county. (Business Durham themselves have committed to achieving Better Health at Work in order to act as an exemplar employer.) Work is underway with Business Durham and its network to explore how to provide support to the SME sector from an advisory and a co-ordination aspect in order to increase the number of workplace health interventions across multiple employers.

### **Behavioural insight**

- 22 A behavioural insight programme has recently been completed as part of the Mental Health at Scale programme. This included a focus on stigma and discrimination aimed at males. Two insight sessions were completed in the workplace, one private sector and one public sector organisation, with frontline employees (there was also a third session completed in the community) as well as 1:1 sessions with key stakeholders. It is anticipated that these findings provide an insight into the scale of the challenges surrounding stigma and some of the barriers around good mental health.

- 23 It is plausible that many of the barriers to good mental health are the unintended consequences of the current system. Tackling this will become a priority for the partnership. Potentially this will require a system wide response to removing the barriers in current practice. However it is anticipated that a large mass awareness campaign would be part of our approach to begin to promote good mental health in County Durham.

### **Tackling stigma and discrimination**

- 24 Tackling stigma will require a consistent and multi-faceted approach. Anecdotal feedback highlights how ingrained mental health stigma is across many of our communities. The Time for Change hub (stamp it out) will make a positive contribution towards community level interventions and will provide a focal point for local communications activity.
- 25 From a stigma perspective, tackling stigma models include a focus on workforce, policy and areas such as education. Time for change highlight five key organisational challenges to tackling stigma in the workplace: securing senior buy in, turning words into action, building awareness and momentum, finding time and 'opening a can of worms'. Support that could be offered to partners to assist with best practice, access services or support, support in developing a 'mental health champions' networks, could all be beneficial to a countywide movement.

### **Time To Change**

- 26 Time to Talk Day, 7<sup>th</sup> February, is part of the Time to Change campaign which is an approach working to change the way people think and act about mental health problems. In Durham County Council senior leaders championed the mental health agenda. Time to Talk day featured vlogs by Terry Collins, Chief Executive Officer and Jane Robinson, Corporate Director of Adult and Health Services. Cllr Lucy Hovvells is the Elected Member mental health champion and is chair of the North East Elected Members Mental Health Network.
- 27 Colleagues were encouraged to make mental health an agenda item at team meetings, all managers were encouraged to approach the subject with their teams and make staff aware that they can talk about their mental health.
- 28 Since signing the Time for Change Employer Pledge over 100 colleagues across Durham County Council have volunteered to become Time for Change champions. The champions' role is to actively tackle stigma and discrimination in their workplace and promote good mental health.

## **County Durham Time for Change Hub**

- 29 County Durham has recently been awarded Time for Change hub status. This will allow the hub to receive a small funding grant for operational purposes from the national Time for Change office. The hub could begin to fulfil a co-ordination role for county wide activity around stigma and discrimination. It could deliver key campaigns such as Time to Talk Day and World Mental Health Day to support the overall approach of the County Durham Partnership.

## **Social movement**

- 30 Social movements can be thought of as organised yet informal social entities that are oriented towards a goal. These goals can be either aimed at a specific and narrow policy or be more broadly aimed at cultural change. The THRIVE campaigns in London and Birmingham are based around the principles of a social movement for good mental health.
- 31 In County Durham development sessions are planned for early 2019 with national experts in social movements. These sessions will begin to explore social movements in communities across County Durham and how they can be instigated, maintained and allowed to flourish.
- 32 There is also an established CREE (Men's Sheds) network in County Durham. Using social movement methodology whereby they are allocated a collective budget, are encouraged to develop a new CREE model and utilise participatory budgets, could all help to extend the reach of the CREE network. This may help instigate key skills which could allow the CREEs to become sustainable.

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Legal Implications**

None

### **Finance**

Budget is required to support training provision and communications activity. The ACTIV fund will support the delivery of the various elements of the project.

### **Consultation**

Key stakeholders have been involved in the behavioural insight programme of the project.

### **Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty**

Public health actively seeks to address health inequalities.

### **Human Rights**

Not impacted by current activity.

### **Crime and Disorder**

Improved mental health may impact upon crime and disorder.

### **Staffing**

Currently delivered through existing resource across Durham County Council.

### **Accommodation**

Not required

### **Risk**

Programme elements such as tackling stigma may prove challenging from an evaluation perspective. Culture change around mental health may be a long term commitment.

### **Procurement**

N/A