

COUNTY COUNCIL

27 MARCH 2019

QUESTIONS FROM AREA ACTION PARTNERSHIPS

STANLEY AAP

Stanley Area Action Partnership's Supporting Stanley Task Group that covers health & wellbeing and older people has highlighted suicide prevention and mental health as a key area for action and support in the local Community. Would the County Council be able to update Stanley AAP on the progress that has been made in County Durham following the allocation of NHS England Suicide Prevention Funding to the Durham, Darlington, Tees Hambleton Richmondshire and Whitby Suicide Prevention Group and how they intend to engage with the AAPs to roll out mental health at scale training for frontline workers and share and support best practice suicide prevention work in local communities?

RESPONSE

Thank you Daniel and to the AAP for the Question.

In May 2018, the Local Government Association urged councils to change their focus on mental illness to helping everyone stay mentally well. Durham County Council are working with partners on a Local Government Association Programme focused on Prevention at Scale. 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."

This work is overseen by the Mental Health Strategic Partnership and managed through the work of the County Durham Suicide Prevention Alliance. The Alliance has been initiated to deliver multi agency approach of the actions highlighted in the Suicide Alliance Prevention Action Plan (2018-20).

County Durham has recently been awarded Time for Change hub status. The hub could begin to fulfil a co-ordination role for locality-based activity around stigma and discrimination and deliver key campaigns such as Time to Talk Day and World Mental Health Day to support the overall approach of the County Durham Partnership.

The hub will play a role in the co-ordination of part of the NHS England suicide prevention funding attached to the Durham, Darlington, Tees Hambleton Richmondshire and Whitby footprint area. The hub will explore opportunities to connect the local community to a small grants fund to help tackle stigma and discrimination in their area.

Durham County Council recently signed the Time for Change Employer Pledge. As part of our commitment to improving employee health and wellbeing, a structured programme of mental health awareness training is underway across the whole authority. The training will cover colleagues from across the AAPs.

The training programme also features universally accessible approaches to help build resilience as well as short online courses such as suicide awareness on the corporate e-learning portal, which AAP colleagues can also access.

DURHAM AAP

The Area Action Partnerships have been able to support many community projects over the past ten years with funding from their Area Budget. The minimum spend on Area Budget is currently £5000 but Durham AAP Board are asking if this could be reduced to £3000. They feel this would allow the AAP to support more community groups who, at the moment may not wish to apply for such a large amount. They also feel if the amount were to be reduced it would encourage smaller community groups to apply making the fund more inclusive. Durham AAP Board would be willing to pilot this approach over the next 12 months.

RESPONSE

Thank you to Durham AAP for the question this morning.

Despite the financial challenges facing the Council, we continue to invest over £4.4 million annually through locality budgets.

The vast majority of this funding is available for projects below £3,000. In terms of AAP Area Budgets, there remains a preference to focus on projects over £5,000 encouraging AAPs to concentrate on more strategic initiatives.

However, as detailed in the latest funding guidance that was issued in 2011, AAPs can use their area budget for projects requiring as little as £2,000, where they feel as a Board there are exceptional circumstances to do so.