The Worcestershire Youth Cabinet's

Mental Health Campaign

The Journey So Far

(Mid-Term Report)

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Mental Health Campaign: The Journey So Far

The aim of the Mental Health Campaign is to raise awareness about mental health and its true definition but also about mental health services themselves. Other aims of the campaign are to bring together different organisations (and stakeholders) and to foster and encourage true partnership working, joined-up thinking and co-operation between all services, providers, charities and organisations.

Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this document is to set out the journey so far of the Worcestershire Youth Cabinet and associated group's campaign on young people's mental health (provision). The (mid-term) report also includes proposals for the future stages of the campaign beyond the completion of the survey. This report is part of the package presented at the 13 June 2016 campaign meeting and was updated in August of the same year.

In the beginning...

Personally I began this campaign because of my personal experience of friends and peers at school complaining etc that they had depression and anxiety and other mental health-associated issues, disorders and illnesses but were unsure of how to access support and sometimes afraid or ignorant of ways to obtain advice. Some had resorted to unsafe self-diagnosis online and to Wikipedia and Google definitions. Although I hadn't had mental health issues myself, through following up my interest in mental health it dawned upon me that, through my work (and support) within the Worcestershire Youth Cabinet and later also the NHS Youth Board, Youth Advisory Board for Safeguarding (YABS) and Worcestershire Care Leavers Council (Speak Out), I myself could find out the real definition of mental health and the correct ways to deal with mental health and to access their services.

I noticed that schools and the local authority services and providers appeared ignorant of each other, particularly around seamless activities for the individuals. Joined-up thinking between all the different stakeholders in local authority service provision would address this. Therefore these two aims, raising awareness and ensuring co-operation, continue to be at the heart of the campaign.

I presented the plan and proposals for the mental health campaign to the Worcestershire Youth Cabinet on the 16th September 2015 where it was unanimously approved and adopted as an official WYC campaign by mutual consent. The first meeting dedicated specially to the work of the campaign was on the 30th September 2015 where people from all over the mental health spectrum met to define what work the mental health campaign would undertake. Since then support and interest has grown and various meetings have taken place, ending up in the release of a survey in August 2016.

What do we want to do?

Since the campaign's start in September, the WYC and associated groups have sought solutions to current issues within the service and have identified and promoted better treatment, better training, better awareness and better funding as its four long-term objectives. In order to promote and understand these problems, the campaign's main action has been to compile questions in a survey for young people across Worcestershire who have experienced mental health issues (both inside and

outside of mental health service provision) and to gather an evidence base for future work and undertakings.

Current work

As of August 2016, the mental health campaign (MHC)'s main task has been compiling a survey for release, analysing track success of the survey and building support, interest and influence with other groups. Since September 2015, the MHC has established contact (and mostly support and interest) with the following groups and many more:

- The Worcestershire Youth Cabinet and Youth Parliament
- Swanswell
- The Worcestershire County Council
- The Worcestershire NHS Youth Board
- The Worcestershire Care Leavers Council
- YSS and Worcestershire Young Carers
- The Diocese of Worcester and Church of England
- The Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Corporate Parenting Board
- South Worcestershire Locality Engagement Forum
- Healthwatch Worcestershire
- Worcestershire Health and Wellbeing Board
- Virtual Headteacher
- The Members of Parliament and Local Government of/in Worcestershire
- Young Solutions
- Health and Care NHS Trust
- Youth Advisory Board for Safeguarding (YABS)

Despite this large amount of support from a diverse body of groups, the WYC and the mental health campaign groups still are contacting and enlisting wider support and interest from other groups, living up to one of the two aims of the campaign: to encourage and facilitate joined-up thinking and true partnership working.

Other Campaign Issues

Other issues that the campaign seeks to focus on, in its later stages, are:

- ***Encouraging Mental Health First Aid –*** this will ensure that people know how to react to someone in a mental health crisis and so spot the signs (as part of general early intervention).
- ***MH Positive –*** this campaign seeks to dispel stigmas and taboos around the issue of mental health by promoting celebrity and well-known people who have mental health issues and who have achieved their goals in life, this is part of the wider effort to raise awareness about mental health and to show that mental health is not, necessarily, a barrier to getting on in life etc.

- ***Tackling the Factors –*** this campaign seeks to continue to encourage co-operation and partnership through tackling and/or recognising all the contributing factors to a person's mental health issue etc, for example they may be an unknown young carer or a person experiencing domestic abuse issues etc.

Future Actions

To encourage peer support and peer to peer mentoring, the WYC propose that those who successfully have received support from the service contribute to a case study to further promote the service etc.

The WYC also propose bringing in school officials and representatives to mental health campaign meetings as well as possibly extending our campaign research and evidence work to students in schools.

Nine months into the campaign, the WYC and other groups are now working to bring the campaign into its second phase: implementing and responding to survey evidence. For more information on this phase and other future actions read the "Next Steps: Delivering on the Mental Health Campaign" report.

If you want to establish contact or get involved with the campaign, contact youthcabinet@worcestershire.gov.uk