

Item 15vi - Question Time

To the Leader of the Council

“Following the motion agreed unanimously by the Council on mental health crisis services at the meeting on 7th September 2017, what plans does the Council have to continue work with NHS Highland to improve services for those who require emergency help with mental health?”

Response to Ms E Roddick

There has been a range of work undertaken by the Council since this commitment was made in September 2017. Beginning in March 2018 a series of four seminars took place on Mental Health and Wellbeing for elected Members to improve understanding of:

- local challenges in acute mental health services
- lived experience of mental health illness and use of services
- awareness of local community-based support,
- the Council’s role as an employer, and support to children, families and schools.

The seminars included representatives from NHS Highland, third sector organisations, individuals with lived experience and other partner agencies. These seminars also provided an opportunity to raise concerns and issues with NHS Highland.

A number of areas for further action have been included within the Mental Health and Wellbeing Plan which was agreed at Council in June. These included:

- Reducing stigma surrounding mental health and increasing awareness
- Increasing understanding of Adverse Childhood Experiences and linkages with mental health and wellbeing
- Focus on local solutions and local services – understanding of what supports are out there e.g. peer support, community supports.
- Supports for staff and members and community in relation to suicide awareness

The plan can be found at the following link:

https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/75461/item_7a_mental_health_and_wellbeing_action_plan

Mental Health and wellbeing is one of five priority themes for Community Planning Partners (CPP) in the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan. Under this theme, partners agreed that suicide prevention was a key priority and committed partners to jointly deliver a Suicide Intervention and Prevention Programme training to CPP staff, with a target of 500 staff receiving training over the year, and to develop a suicide prevention App. At end September 2019, 40 courses have been delivered reaching 483 from 63 organisations. Partners have redirected resources to support the delivery of this priority. Suicide awareness training for elected members took place on 26 September 2019. On 10 September, World Suicide Prevention Day, activities included social media messages to raise awareness and tackle the stigma associated with suicide were promoted to the public, and internally to staff.

I have met with NHS Highland to further discuss some of the issues, challenges and their response and have requested a further meeting to receive an update on progress.

I have also requested that a report be submitted on Mental Health and Wellbeing to the first meeting of the Health, Care and Wellbeing Committee on 12 February 2020.