

## Health and Wellbeing Board

26 April 2022

### Director of Public Health Report 2021

#### For Information

##### 1. Purpose

This report provides an overview of the Director of Public Health (DPH) Annual Report 2021 (Improving Mental Wellbeing in Walsall – “Together We Can”)

##### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Health and Wellbeing Board note the key messages, recommendations and progress on implementation from the DPH Annual report launched in January 2022.
- 2.2 Health and Wellbeing Board support the implementation of the recommendations through their respective organisation and help disseminate and promote with partners and residents.

##### 3. Report detail

- 3.1 Directors of Public Health in England have a statutory duty to write an independent Annual Report to demonstrate the state of health within their communities. It is a major opportunity for advocacy on behalf of the health of the population and as such can be extremely powerful both in talking to the community and also to support fellow professionals in public health.
- 3.2 The focus of the DPH Annual Report 2021 is mental wellbeing. The aim of the report is to;
  - Increase understanding of mental wellbeing amongst residents, communities and professionals.
  - Demonstrate the key role that individuals, communities and organisations play in supporting positive mental wellbeing.
  - Make recommendations for improving mental wellbeing in Walsall.
- 3.3 Mental wellbeing was already a priority for Walsall, however, COVID-19 has accentuated its importance. The virus and consequent social restrictions have had a considerable impact on health and mental wellbeing.
- 3.4 The Walsall residents’ survey carried out towards the end of 2020 highlighted that over 1 in 4 (28%) residents had low mental wellbeing. This demonstrated that certain groups were more at risk, including residents who are unemployed (or furloughed) and those with caring responsibilities.

- 3.5 The University of Wolverhampton and Birmingham Voluntary Sector Council (Research Section) were commissioned to undertake research into how certain factors influence mental wellbeing in Walsall at both an individual and community level. This included one to one interviews with residents (who are unemployed or have caring responsibilities) and focus groups with community representatives (e.g. police, community centre managers, Rethink, social housing reps, community cohesion team, One Walsall).
- 3.6 This research contributes rich insight into the complexities that have led to inequalities in mental wellbeing of carers and those who are unemployed across Walsall. It complements and adds value to the extensive stakeholder engagement and consultation undertaken throughout the development of the Walsall Multi-Agency Mental Wellbeing Placed Based Strategy 2022- 2032 (and other relevant strategies as appropriate). Together these have informed the recommendations within the DPH annual report. Quotes from the research have also been used throughout the annual report to complement some of the key messages.
- 3.8 Chapters of DPH Annual Report are;
- Understanding Mental Wellbeing
  - What is Walsall's Ambition and Where are We Now?
  - Important Role of Individuals, Communities and Organisations
  - Summary and Conclusion
- 3.9 A competition was held amongst students at Walsall College to come up with images for the front cover and throughout the report. The winning design was by Steven Goncalves and another entry created the tag line "Together We Can" which really captured a key message from the report.
- 3.10 The recommendations from the report are set out in three areas;
1. recommendations for every resident.
  2. actions for communities to be stronger and promote positive mental wellbeing.
  3. actions for Walsall Council and its partners to develop positive mental wellbeing across Walsall.
- 3.11 The DPH Annual Report 2021 is included in **appendix A** and the recommendations are as follows;

I (DPH) recommend that every resident;

- Make a commitment to putting yourself first, even just for a while.
- Make a (realistic) positive routine.
- Find out where you get support if you need it.

I recommend three actions to help communities be stronger and promote positive mental wellbeing;

- Connect to someone new in your community, even if it's just saying "hello".
- Let your friends know that it's ok not to be ok and you are available to speak to if and when they need you.
- Actively participate in your local community. This might be volunteering, attending a local group, helping a neighbour or sharing your views through a consultation on a local development.

I recommend six actions for Walsall Council and partners to develop positive mental wellbeing across Walsall;

- Develop and implement a set of co-production principles to enable greater voice and control to residents and communities and having relevant plans e.g. Corporate Plan more community centred.
- Implement a Mental Wellbeing Impact Assessment (MWIA) tool for use when undertaking any major plan, project, or proposal at strategic board levels.
- Increase the number of organisations signing up to the Mental Wellbeing Prevention Concordat. Mental Wellbeing Prevention Concordat is an agreed set of actions owned by local organisations to improve population mental wellbeing.
- Increase the number of organisations signing up to the No Wrong Door System and deliver wellbeing plans with service users.
- Develop targeted media campaigns to increase knowledge of our residents to maintain or improve mental wellbeing with specific focus on those more vulnerable to poor mental wellbeing.
- Provide easily accessible information on what support is available and when and how to access it as well as self-supported wellbeing plans. These will help identify and plan opportunities for maintaining or improving mental wellbeing.

3.12 A successful launch of the DPH Annual Report took place on 17th January at Manor Farm Community Association. January 17th is so called 'Blue Monday', described as the gloomiest day of the year, therefore an appropriate date to bring into focus the importance of good mental wellbeing.

3.13 Progress with the DPH Annual report recommendations is as follows;

- Recommendations in the DPH annual report were subsumed into the Walsall Multi-Agency Mental Wellbeing Placed Based Strategy 2022- 2032. This was approved by the Health and Wellbeing Board in January 2022.
- The No Wrong Door launched on 7th February and since its launch over 30 organisations have signed up as No Wrong Door Partners.

- [Walsall Mental Health Information Hub](#) has been developed and provides details of mental wellbeing support. The Thrive Let's Chat mobile unit provides awareness raising, early intervention and support in communities to address some of the things that negatively impact their mental wellbeing, such as housing, income, employment, debt, fuel poverty and supports people to access other services to help improve their mental wellbeing. The mobile unit is labelled with the Walsall Black Country 24hr emotional Wellbeing helpline. The mobile unit and other Better Mental Health funded/ commissioned projects encourage residents to undertake wellbeing plans.

#### **4. Implications for Joint Working arrangements:**

4.1 **Financial Implications:** Actions arising from the recommendations are accounted for within Directorate budgets.

4.2 **Legal Implications:** N/A

4.3 **Other Resource Implications:** N/A

#### **5. Health and Wellbeing Priorities:**

5.2 Improved mental wellbeing plays a key role across the JSNA priorities including Starting Well, Adult Wellbeing and Ageing Well. It is widely recognised that a child's emotional health and wellbeing influences their cognitive development and learning. Positive mental wellbeing also leads to a range of benefits including improved self-esteem and sense of belonging, increased levels of education and employment opportunities, reduced drug and alcohol misuse and more connected communities.

5.4 A robust strategy for improving mental wellbeing cross cuts all of the Marmot objectives empowering communities to be more resilient but also providing support to those that need it the most.

5.4 There are no adverse safeguarding implications for the most vulnerable sectors in the community.

- Appendix A – DPH Annual Report 2021

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