

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2

2 FEBRUARY 2022

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENTS TO ADULT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update on strategic developments within community mental health services for adults in Bridgend.

2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives/other corporate priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:

- **Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient** - taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy and independent lives.
- **Smarter use of resources** – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Welsh Government strategy 'Together for Mental Health' was launched in October 2012. This is a ten year strategy and has a strong emphasis on prevention and early intervention, in addition to setting out a framework for the provision of specialist mental health services for those who need them.
- 3.2 In 2019 the Welsh Government published a 'Review of the Together for Mental Health Delivery Plan 2019-2022 in response to Covid 19' in which a number of updated objectives were set out.
- 3.3 Adult Community Mental Health services in Bridgend are delivered through a number of teams including two Community Mental Health Teams, the Social Care Assessment and Recovery Team (SCART), the Approved Mental Health Professional hub and the Assisted Recovery in the Community (ARC) service. Services are also provided in the voluntary sector including advocacy and participation projects. The current operating model for these teams and services is set out in section 4 of the report.

- 3.4 Adult Social Care works in close partnership with the Mental Health Delivery unit of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg NHS Trust to ensure a seamless approach to assessing and meeting needs. The oversight of service delivery and development is managed through a Joint Operational Group.
- 3.5 The impact on mental health as a result of the Covid-19 Pandemic has been evident during 2021, affecting the number and type of referrals to services. This has influenced the way in which services respond and have adapted their operating models.

4. Current situation/proposal

- 4.1 The current situation for each of the teams that provide adult community mental health services is described below in relation to the team structure, referral rates the impact of the covid pandemic on the operating model and specific comments about each team.
- 4.2 The **Social Care and Recovery Team** is an early intervention and prevention team made up of social workers and support workers. The team provides short term interventions to help prevent people developing a serious mental health difficulty which may require support from secondary services. There is an open referral process to the team and referrals are received from across all agencies, with the majority coming from the police. Referral rates have almost doubled in 2021 from the level in 2020 and the majority are related to people suffering from anxiety, depression, some with suicidal ideation and others related to accommodation problems.

The team had to alter its operating model because of the pandemic and this involved changing methods of contact from face to face to phone and online contact. During recent months face to face visits have been reintroduced based on a risk assessed process, and with the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and social distancing. The team has developed effective joint working relationships with the Community Drug and Alcohol Team and the Housing Solutions Team which has brought a multi agency approach to working with people to address the issues causing mental ill health.

- 4.3 The **Approved Mental Health Professional Hub** coordinates and carries out Assessments under the Mental Health Act 1983. The hub consists of three social Workers (2 seniors) all of whom are Approved Mental Health Professionals. Referral and detention rates saw a sharp increase in 2021 (117% from 18 to 39 people detained) and an analysis of the data shows no single factor for this increase. There has been an increase in the number of new people (not previously known to mental health services) being assessed and detained and a move in the age of these people from a younger age bracket to the 45 to 60 age range. A key factor is the impact of loneliness and isolation caused by the pandemic. The hub continued to operate face to face during the pandemic as assessments have to be carried out in person in accordance with the Mental Health Act. The team had to adopt a robust risk assessment process, use PPE and observe social distancing rules. In this way the hub has continued to operate 'as normal' throughout the pandemic.

- 4.4 The **Community Mental Health Teams** (two teams, north and south) are multi disciplinary teams made up of social workers, nurses, occupational therapists psychiatrists and psychologists. The teams are a secondary mental health service and work with people who are at risk of hospital admission or on a rehabilitation pathway. There has been no significant change in referral numbers to these teams over the last year but there has been a notable increase in the number of young people on the autistic spectrum being referred. Many people who would have been referred to these teams in the past are now being supported and diverted away from secondary services by the Social Care and Recovery and the Assisted Recovery in the Community Service teams.

The Community Mental Health Teams adapted their operating model in response to the pandemic, in the same way as the Social Care and Recovery Team, with face to face visits almost returning to normal in the Summer/Autumn of 2021, but restricted again with the onset of the omicron variant of Covid-19.

- 4.5 The **Assisted Recovery in the Community Service** is an integrated Mental Health Daytime Opportunities service which is delivered jointly by the Council and Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board under a Section 33 Agreement. This Agreement was renewed in April 2021 and provides for joint governance and financial arrangements.

This is a preventative service that provides information, advice and support, short term interventions, occupational therapy, activity planning, social support and employment advice and support. The service consists of support workers, specialist employment workers, occupation therapists and counsellors. There is an open referral system with the majority of referrals coming from G.Ps. There was an increase in referrals at the beginning of 2021 but there has been a reduction in recent months which has taken the referral rate back to pre-pandemic levels. Most referrals are because of, anxiety, depression and stress caused by bereavement, family issues, trauma or work related difficulties. In September 2021 there were 50 people receiving support from an occupational therapist, 82 people receiving short term support, and 15 people having employment support. There are also a number of support groups operating. The operating model has adapted to phone and online contact with face to face meetings being held where risk assessment and guidance allows.

During 2021 the service ran a small grants to voluntary organisations scheme which was designed to provide funding to voluntary sector groups to provide services for the community which are in line with the aims and objectives of the Assisted Recovery in the Community service. Grants of up to £5,000 have be made to the groups below:

- Ty Ellis Counselling – Group therapy for people who have experienced a trauma
- Mental Health Matters Wales Talking Connections – Youth Counselling
- YMCA Bridgend – ERIC Youth Programme for Emotional Wellbeing
- New Horizons Recovery College – Interactive well-being courses (Anger Management, Resilience Skills, Confidence building). Also accredited courses for Service User and Carer representatives

- STEER Enterprises – Outdoor activities programme, with an emphasis on Rehabilitation
- Bridgend Community Bereavement service – Increased capacity for bereavement and grief counselling
- Platform – Evening Social Engagement Project
- Mental Health Matters Wales Lads and Dads Project – Establishment of community volunteering project

These services have been available since November 2021 and will help to provide a community response to the hidden harm and long term detrimental effects on people's mental health caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

4.6 As mentioned above the **Joint Operational Group** oversees service developments in community mental health services. The group is made up of senior managers from the Council's Adult Social Care department and the Mental Health Delivery Unit of Cwm Taf Morgannwg NHS Trust. The group meets on a monthly basis and is currently overseeing the following strategic service developments:-

- A review of operational policies and service pathways in community mental health services. An independent group will complete 40 interviews with staff, managers, people who have or are using services and carers in January 2022 and a report on the findings will follow.
- A scoping exercise to identify options for the closer alignment of community mental health services with the community clusters.
- Supporting people in crisis through the development of a 'Wellbeing Retreat' with the voluntary sector (see below).
- Application to the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board for additional staffing in perinatal and eating disorder services.
- The development of integrated day opportunity services for older people with dementia.

Senior Managers who attend this group have identified that the groups remit should also include reports on the activities of other groups linked to mental health services. Officers from the Council attend a range of groups and it has been agreed that feedback to the Joint Operational group would assist the sharing of information and related service developments. Examples of these other groups include, risk assessment design, crisis care concordant, town centre management groups, the self neglect partnership panel, psychology led intervention group, Armed Forces Covenant forum, homelessness cell meeting, accommodation step down group, domestic abuse group and service user and carer forums.

4.7 As mentioned above the Council and health colleagues have been working in partnership with a voluntary sector group to help support people who are experiencing crisis in their mental health. This work has been done with Mental Health Matters Bridgend, a charity which aims to support people with mental health difficulties by 'promoting the mental and emotional health of the public through the provision of information, advocacy, training and support'. The partnership has worked together since October 2020 and created the **Wellbeing Retreat** which opened in December 2020. The retreat has four aims which are to:-

- Support the improvement of access to mental health services for individuals residing in the Bridgend County Borough.
- Support the improvement of the people and carer experience, involvement and engagement.
- Support the improvement of the environment, physical, mental and social well-being outcomes for all individuals accessing the retreat.
- Signpost to other organisations, provide information, face to face support, telephone support and referral to services in the wider community.

The service is open on Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays between 5 and 11 p.m. Since the service opened there have been 730 referrals for people who have a range of difficulties including anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, alcohol and substance misuse and self harm. The partnership continues to work in the form of a management board which meets monthly to oversee the projects activities.

4.8 One of the most important principles on which community mental health services are based is the involvement of people who have or are using services and carers in decisions about their own support arrangements and in commenting on and contributing to service developments. On an individual level people are involved in formulating the outcomes set out in support plans and service response plans and in the review of these plans. In relation to service developments support for involvement comes from:-

- The Service User Network group which has recently started meeting again after activities being suspended because of the pandemic.
- The Carers Forum which meets regularly (in the last year meetings have been held online) and is attended by a range of professional staff from across the service.
- Mental health Forum which meets quarterly and is made up of people who use services, carers and representatives from the voluntary sector.
- The current review of operational policies and pathways has involved in depth interviews with 15 people who have or are using services and carers.

At a regional level there is the 'Together for Mental Health' group which has representatives from statutory services, the voluntary sector, people who have used services and carers.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

5.1 There is no effect upon the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.

6. Equality Act 2010 implications

6.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales, the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is not necessary to carry out an Equality Impact assessment in the production of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

7.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 provides the basis for driving a different kind of public service in Wales, with five ways of working to guide how the Authority should work to deliver wellbeing outcomes for people. The following is a summary to show how the five ways of working to achieve the well-being goals have been considered in this report.

Long Term. The plans for and operation of community mental health services is designed to be robust and sustainable with long term goals and objectives and service developments which enable the services to adapt and change according to changes in demand for services.

Prevention. As described above many of the community services have a strong emphasis on prevention and providing people with information, advice and support at an early point so as to help people avoid the need for secondary care services.

Integration. Community mental health services are founded on an ethos of partnership and integrated working between health, social care, voluntary sector and service user and carer organisations. All developments are made in partnership and on a multi agency basis.

Collaboration. All the services described in this report are provided on a collaborative basis with the Assisted Recovery in the Community delivered through a legally agreed collaboration, one of the few in Wales.

Involvement. One of the basic principles of the operation of community mental health services is the involvement of people who are using services and carers in the design and delivery of the services they receive at individual, service and strategic levels.

8. Financial implications

8.1 The services described in this report are delivered within existing Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate budgets.

9. Recommendation

9.1 It is recommended that the Committee consider the report and make any comments on the future direction of community mental health services across the County Borough of Bridgend.

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Background documents:

None