

# Council



Date of meeting 28 April 2022

<b>Title</b>	Mental Health Champion
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	To make a decision
<b>Report Author</b>	Sandy Muirhead Group Head Commissioning and Transformation
<b>Ward(s) Affected</b>	All Wards
<b>Exempt</b>	No
<b>Exemption Reason</b>	
<b>Corporate Priority</b>	This item is not in the current list of Corporate Priorities
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Council is asked to: Identify a Councillor who would take on the role of a member champion for mental health</b>
<b>Reason for Recommendation</b>	<i>Mental Health is an issue the Council has proactively engaged in both in terms of support for the Community and Council staff. A Member Champion role was put forward in a Council motion and there is a need to identify a member champion to support mental health in the Council and community</i>

## Key issues

1. In July 2021 a motion was put forward to appoint a member “Mental Health Champion” to: -
  - advocate for mental health issues in council meetings and policy development and reach out to the local community to raise awareness of mental health issues and challenge stigma.
  - listen to people with experience of mental health note their perspective on local needs and priorities.
  - scrutinise areas that have an impact on people's mental health.
  - foster local partnerships between agencies to support people with mental health problems more effectively.
  - identify at least one priority each year for focused work
  - have access to advice, support, and other member champions to share information, experience and ideas.

2. At the same Council meeting the following motion was also put forward in relation to appointing, when possible, an existing officer of the Council to act as a lead officer for mental health to: -
  - Advise the member Champion on current issues and priorities:
  - Support implementation of strategies initiated by the member champion
  - Raise awareness within the council's staff about mental health issues
  - Seek external support for activities led by the council to promote mental health and wellbeing
  - Liaise with mental health challenge national partners to secure information and advice
  - In conjunction with the member champion, look to support positive mental health in our community, including in local schools, neighbourhoods etc.
3. A member lead was proposed but no-one came forward. It was then suggested that the Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee act as the "member champion". However, it was considered that a whole Committee taking on the role was inappropriate and it really needed an individual.
4. It should be noted that the Council already have officers working on mental health and trained mental health first aiders in place but we have been unable to work with Councillors until a Councillor champion has been identified. Any member champion will also need to commit to training.
5. The Council already promotes mental health advice through both the internal mental health first aiders and via our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). Through the EAP we have introduced Care First who provide confidential information, advice, and counselling for Spelthorne employees. Care First Counsellors are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, to provide confidential support with work related or personal issues. This service is available to employees on temporary or permanent contracts. During the Covid 19 pandemic this service and the mental well-being of staff has been regularly promoted.
6. We also support our communities with providing information on a regular basis on mental health. We have provided a considerable amount of advice and signposting through the pandemic. In the last 6 months we have issued about 15-20 posts across Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Linked In (so about 5 on each platform). It has been a key talking point at many of the Covid Champion meetings. We will also be promoting the upcoming mental health awareness week 9-15 May 2022 which will have a theme of loneliness as its focus.
7. Therefore, many of the points outlined in the motions are already being undertaken and continue to be undertaken.

### **Options analysis and proposal**

Option 1 To ask Council to identify a Councillor who is prepared to be a member health champion. This is the recommended option.

Options 2 Not to do anything further beyond the current work undertaken by officers.

**Financial implications**

None at this stage

**Other considerations**

None

**Equality and Diversity**

All members of staff and society can suffer mental health so support can be provided equally to all.

**Sustainability/Climate Change Implications**

The Health and Wellbeing strategy identifies how open space and a green environment can help people with their mental health and so this aspect will form part of our sustainability and climate change actions.

**Timetable for implementation**

None at this stage

**Background papers:** There are none.

**Appendices:** None

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