

## Decision Report – Cabinet decision

19<sup>th</sup> November 2018

### Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2018: Emotional Health and Wellbeing – Looking through the lens of self-harm

Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Christine Lawrence – Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing

Division and Local Member(s): All

Lead Officer: Trudi Grant / Director of Public Health for Somerset

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	<b>Seen by:</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>
	County Solicitor	Honor Clarke	5/11/18
	Monitoring Officer	Scott Wooldridge	5/11/18
	Corporate Finance	Peter Lewis	5/11/18
	Human Resources	Chris Squire	5/11/18
	Property	Paula Hewitt / Claire Lovett	5/11/18
	Procurement / ICT	Simon Clifford	5/11/18
	Senior Manager	Trudi Grant	5/11/18
	Commissioning Development Team	Vikki Hearn	
	Local Member(s)	All	
	Cabinet Member	Christine Lawrence	November 2018
	Opposition Spokesperson	Amanda Broom	
	Relevant Scrutiny Chairman	Cllr Leigh Redman for Scrutiny Children & Families,	
<b>Forward Plan Reference:</b>	FP/18/10/01		
<b>Summary:</b>	<p>This year, the Director of Public Health has devoted her report to looking at self-harm, which is a significant health issue which impacts not only on the wellbeing of the individual, but also on friends, families and communities.</p> <p>The report aims to support a greater understanding of self-harm and should be viewed as the first chapter of a story and the beginning of a conversation about mental health and emotional resilience in Somerset.</p> <p>Analysis suggests that overdoses, particularly of paracetamol and especially by young women, lie behind both Somerset's higher rates and its recent increase. Most of the presentations are a single occurrence, and there is a smaller proportion of individuals who repeatedly harm themselves to the extent that they need to be admitted to hospital. Initial analysis suggests that the majority of this group are already known to and receiving help from services.</p>		

	<p>The relatively large number of young women who find themselves in such distress that they take an overdose is an issue of concern, and one which needs to be appropriately addressed. We must also not forget that this is an issue for all ages, for some boys and men.</p> <p>It is important to continue to listen to what children and young people are telling us about their experiences and to work with them in designing solutions.</p>
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<p><b>That the Cabinet:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Endorse this report</b></li> <li><b>2. Note and support the recommendations in the report</b></li> </ol>
<b>Reasons for Recommendations:</b>	<p>The emotional resilience of our population is important to us all. It is particularly important to the development of a young person progressing into adult life.</p> <p>In Somerset we have seen an increase in presentations for self-harm in our hospitals. We also know that levels of emotional distress and self-harm among young people are something which is of increasing concern, to parents, to schools and to young people themselves.</p> <p>The evidence around the case for prevention is clear. Prevention is cheaper, more effective and it is everyone's business. The impact is lifelong. Prevention is partly, but not all about services. It is also about working with communities, families and individuals to improve mental health and develop resilience for life.</p>
<b>Links to County Vision, Business Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy:</b>	<p>This report promotes 'better health' in Somerset.</p>
<b>Consultations and co-production undertaken:</b>	<p>The report has been produced after discussions and contributions from a range of people in Somerset who have responsibilities for young people who have harmed themselves, or who are at risk of doing so. Because of the sensitivity of the subject these opinions are generally anonymised in the text.</p>
<b>Financial Implications:</b>	<p>There are no direct financial implications.</p>
<b>Legal Implications:</b>	<p>The presentation of the Director of Public Health Annual Report is a statutory responsibility</p>
<b>HR Implications:</b>	<p>There are no direct HR implications.</p>

<b>Risk Implications:</b>	Not applicable				
	<b>Likelihood</b>		<b>Impact</b>		<b>Risk Score</b>
<b>Other Implications (including due regard implications):</b>	<p><b><u>Equalities Implications</u></b></p> <p>The risk of self-harm is greatest amongst young people, young women in particular. Although the patterns are complex, the risk of self-harm is generally higher in areas of deprivation.</p> <p>The report identifies inequalities in relation to self-harm and suggests how they can be reduced.</p> <p>The report does not require an Equalities Impact Assessment.</p> <p><b><u>Community Safety Implications</u></b></p> <p>The prevention of self-harm will contribute to the creation of safer and stronger communities. The actions proposed promote individual and hence community resilience.</p> <p><b><u>Sustainability Implications</u></b></p> <p>There are no environmental sustainability implications;</p> <p><b><u>Health and Safety Implications</u></b></p> <p>The report promotes health and safety for the public, especially for young women.</p> <p><b><u>Privacy Implications</u></b></p> <p>There are no direct privacy implications. The introduction of self-harm audit and better data sharing, as exists in some other local authority areas, would require a thorough exploration of privacy and data sharing implications.</p> <p><b><u>Health and Wellbeing Implications</u></b></p> <p>The report identifies action which will promote a positive impact on mental and physical health and wellbeing, especially through preventing harm. The identification of self-harm as an issue for young women, and the association with deprivation, in particular have a particular implications for reducing health inequality.</p> <p>The report focuses particularly on Priority 2 of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy: That families and communities are thriving and resilient.</p>				
<b>Scrutiny comments / recommendation (if any):</b>	Not applicable.				

## 1. Background

- 1.1. Self-harm is a significant health issue which impacts not only on the wellbeing of the individual, but also on friends, families and communities, together with an impact on health, education, social care and criminal justice services. This year, the Director of Public Health has devoted her report to looking at self-harm, and emotional wellbeing and mental health amongst children and young people because these are issues of importance in Somerset.
- 1.2. The report aims to support a greater understanding of self-harm; to raise the profile of this issue in order to help tackle the stigma associated with it; and to raise the importance of us all developing and maintaining our skills to cope appropriately with the stressors of everyday life.
- 1.3. The report should be viewed as the first chapter of a story and the beginning of a conversation about mental health and emotional resilience in Somerset.
- 1.4. Analysis undertaken for this report suggests that the majority of hospital presentations for self-harm are the result of overdoses, particularly of paracetamol and other painkillers, and are predominantly by young women. There appears to be a 'peak' of presentations by young women at the age of fifteen. The majority of these admissions appear to be single episodes. The smaller proportion of individuals who have one or more hospital presentations are generally known to and receiving support from services.
- 1.5. Although there are a range of resources available many people report that they do not know where to turn for help. Many, including GPs, feel frustrated and concerned about lack of access to appropriate support for young people experiencing personal emotional distress.
- 1.6. The Director of Public Health makes the following recommendations in her report:
  - 1.6.1 We need to bring the issue of emotional resilience and self-harm into the open to help reduce the stigma associated with it. Talking openly about the issue will help people to access the right support when they need it.
  - 1.6.2 There is a need to develop more accessible guidance and information about self-harm. This needs to be supported by increased knowledge, confidence and skills in responding to a situation of self-harm both for families, schools and health and care services.
  - 1.6.3 All schools should adopt the Somerset Wellbeing Framework to support and promote positive emotional health and wellbeing and, where appropriate, could consider developing school based self-harm policies.
  - 1.6.4 Health and care services need to ensure that the mental health of children and young people is given greater prominence, ensuring that prevention and early intervention is addressed as well as treatment.
  - 1.6.5 The importance of developing stronger individuals, families and communities has to be at the heart of developing resilience. A joined-up approach to this would provide a far greater impact than organisations operating independently. A more proportional approach will be needed, focusing particularly on

addressing the needs of individuals, families and communities living in more challenging circumstances.

- 1.6.6 Given increased national investment in mental health, Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group has a significant opportunity to invest in improving the emotional health and wellbeing. Working closely with local authorities and schools, investment in developing emotional resilience and early intervention is paramount.
- 1.6.7 There is a need for us to deepen our understanding of self-harm practices and understand more about the emotional resilience of children and young people in Somerset and what can be done to improve it.
- 1.6.8 Finally, and above all, we need to continue to listen to what children and young people are telling us about their experiences and to work with them in designing the solutions.

## **2. Options considered and reasons for rejecting them**

- 2.1. The production of an annual report is a statutory requirement for all Directors of Public Health and there is no option not to produce it. The contents of the report are entirely at the discretion of the Director of Public Health.

## **3. Background Papers**

- 3.1. The Annual Report of the Somerset Director of Public Health 2018, 'Emotional Health and Wellbeing', is appended.
- 3.2. Previous reports, along with the statistical annexes, are published at <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/organisation/departments/public-health/>
- 3.3. The Prevention Concordat for Mental Health is published at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/prevention-concordat-for-better-mental-health>
- 3.4. The Positive Mental Health for Somerset Strategy is published at: <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/somerset-health-and-wellbeing-board/>