

EXTERNAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:
STIGMA AND THE EFFECT ON RESIDENTS' MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH IN THE BOROUGH

Cabinet Members	Councillor Philip Corthorne Councillor David Simmonds
Cabinet Portfolios	Cabinet Member for Social Services, Health and Housing Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services
Officer Contact	Nikki O'Halloran, Administration Directorate
Papers with report	Appendix A - Stigma: The Effect on Residents' Mental and Physical Health in the Borough

HEADLINE INFORMATION

Purpose of report	To consider the External Services Scrutiny Committee's review into the mental and physical effects of stigma and the recommendations contained therein.
Contribution to our plans and strategies	To improve the quality of life of our residents.
Financial Cost	No direct financial cost. However, any potential financial implications contained within the attached report are subject to the budget planning process.
Relevant Policy Overview or Scrutiny Committee	External Services Scrutiny Committee
Ward(s) affected	All

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) In support of the Council's desire to become an exemplary employer, that Cabinet commends the work already being undertaken within the Council to support its staff and in conjunction with its partners to reduce stigma in our community and the impact it has on residents' mental and physical health.
- 2) That Cabinet acknowledges the new measures that are being put in place to recognise the importance and support the mental and physical health of Council staff and requests that officers report back to the relevant Cabinet Member and the External Services Scrutiny Committee on the effectiveness of these measures in September 2014.

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- 3) That the Cabinet Member for Education & Children's Services asks the Interim Head of Education, Policy and Standards to encourage primary schools in the Borough to include the raising of awareness of stigma and its effects as a permanent element of Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship lessons.
- 4) That the Cabinet Member for Social Services, Health & Housing asks the Interim Director of Public Health to investigate opportunities to raise awareness of stigma and its impact through existing wellbeing events and channels.
- 5) That Cabinet welcomes the roll out of the mental health first aid training provided by Hillingdon Mind to front line Council staff and local voluntary organisations and asks the Cabinet Member for Social Services, Health & Housing to give consideration to extending this to community and peer group leaders.

Reasons for recommendations

During the course of its investigations, the Committee elicited information from witnesses to establish what effect (if any) stigma has on residents' mental and physical health. The Committee then identified what help was already in place and then focussed on what further help could be offered to residents whose health was suffering as a result of being stigmatised.

These recommendations have been formulated to help improve the support offered to residents and Council staff and to raise awareness in schools and in the community of the effect that stigma can have.

Alternative options considered / risk management

The Cabinet could decide to reject some or all of the Committee's recommendations.

Supporting Information

1. The Terms of Reference of the review were as follows:
 1. To gain a complete picture of how Stigma affects people with mental and physical health problems;
 2. To fully understand the underlying reasons and attitudes associated with Stigma;
 3. To assess a wide spectrum of local policies, services and activities across the broadest range of local public and voluntary organisations; and to advise how they could adapt and evolve to challenge Stigma;
 4. To review the role of local NHS and social care providers in both diagnosis and their approach towards patients with mental and physical health problems;
 5. To investigate other local, national and international projects, campaigns and initiatives that have successfully challenged Stigma;
 6. To research and actively consult residents and service users; to seek valuable evidence and witness testimony to assist in developing the review's findings;
 7. To ensure the Committee's review, report and findings are sensitively approached to reach out most effectively to those affected by Stigma; and
 8. After due consideration of the above, to bring forward effective, practical and cost effective recommendations to the Cabinet for implementation across the Borough and partner organisations, monitoring progress as required.

3. The complexity of the review subject matter has led the Committee to formulate a range of recommendations. In considering their implementation, the following supporting information is provided for Cabinet to consider:
- a. **Recommendation 1:** It is clear that our community will never be free of stigma. During the course of the review, the Committee established that the Council and its partners have already undertaken a range of work to reduce the impact of stigma in our community. It is anticipated that this work and any additional measures that are put in place, not only helps the Council to be an exemplary employer but will also help to reduce the impact and effect of stigma in the community.
 - b. **Recommendation 2:** One of the effects of stigma is stress. Stress related illness was the highest recorded cause of sickness absence at the Council during 2012/2013. A number of support services have been put in place (or are planned) for Council staff to try to get them well and back to work as quickly as possible. These services include working with members of staff and their managers to provide reasonable adjustments and the provision of training for managers in relation to mental health issues. To ensure that the new provisions being put in place achieve the desired outcome, it is recommended that officers report back to the relevant Cabinet Member and the External Services Scrutiny Committee on the effectiveness of these measures in September 2014.
 - c. **Recommendation 3:** Whilst it is acknowledged that the Council cannot control the curriculum, the Interim Head of Education, Policy and Standards is able to forward appropriate information to primary schools in the Borough to request that they include awareness raising of stigma and its effects as part of Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship lessons.
 - d. **Recommendation 4:** There are a range of community wellbeing events that take place across the Borough each year. The Interim Director of Public Health is willing to investigate at which of these events it would be appropriate to raise awareness of stigma and its effects.
 - e. **Recommendation 5:** In addition to the mental health first aid training that has been organised for frontline Council employees, the Council is working with Hillingdon Mind to look at the provision of training for frontline staff on mental health related issues as part of a wider training programme. It has been suggested that there may be benefit in extending this to community and peer group leaders and, as such, the Cabinet Member for Social Services, Health & Housing be asked to give this consideration.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Additional funding will need to be secured in line with the budget planning process for any future events or training, should the need arise.

EFFECT ON RESIDENTS, SERVICE USERS & COMMUNITIES

What will be the effect of the recommendations?

The recommendations in this report are designed with the purpose of raising awareness of the effects of stigma in the community and at work. Consequently, it is intended that the improvements recommended in the report will have a positive impact on the lives of our residents and our staff.

Consultation Carried Out or Required

The Committee heard evidence from a range of witnesses during the course of the review.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance notes the recommendations in the report and concurs with the financial implications set out above.

Legal

There are no specific legal implications arising from this report

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL