



Lewisham public mental health and wellbeing strategy

2016-2019



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1. BACKGROUND

1.1 What is Public Mental Health and Wellbeing?

Public mental health is a term used to describe how a public health approach can be taken to improve population mental health. This is illustrated in the Faculty of Public Health (FPH) definition of *public mental health* as:

'An approach (that) is concerned with promoting mental wellbeing, preventing future mental health problems and with recovery from mental health problems'¹.

Within this, the term mental health is seen as capturing the spectrum of positive and negative states of mental health.

Mental wellbeing is defined as the positive end of this spectrum and describes both feeling good and functioning well.

Mental health problems or poor mental health represent the negative end including mental disorders that meet criteria for psychiatric diagnosis and those that do not¹.

These definitions for *public mental health*, *mental health* and *mental wellbeing* will be used throughout this strategy.

1.2 Public Mental Health and Wellbeing in national policy

The concept of public mental health has been supported nationally in a number of key policy documents (see box below). This illustrates the growing momentum behind taking a public health approach to improving mental health and the gathering of research and evidence to support doing this.

Box 1. National Policy for Public Mental Health

Faculty of Public Health: Mental Health for All (2016)

Mental Health Five Year Forward View (2016)

Closing the Gap: Priorities for Essential Change in Mental Health (2014)

No Health without Mental Health (2011)

Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Annual Report (2011)

Foresight Mental Capital and Wellbeing Project (2008)

1.3 Why does Lewisham need a Public Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy?

Lewisham is a wonderfully diverse and vibrant London borough with a wealth of strong community assets. These include (but are not limited to) an active and highly regarded voluntary and community sector, a large number of open green spaces and well-utilised community venues, and a strong sense of local identity that celebrates the diverse backgrounds of residents. All of these, in addition to many other assets, contribute positively to the mental health and wellbeing of residents.

Despite this rich community infrastructure there continues to be a high level of mental ill health among Lewisham residents relative to levels in London and England overall (demonstrated in section 2 below). There have been efforts locally to address this by improving early diagnosis and support for those with mental ill health. Through the NHS, mental health services are provided for all residents if they need them with rapid access to mental health specialists for those experiencing severe mental illness.

The Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Lewisham (2015-18) identifies mental health and wellbeing as a priority area and shows clear commitment through one of its key priority objectives which is: Improving mental health and wellbeing for local people. In June 2015, Lewisham Council also passed a motion highlighting the crucial role of the council in improving the mental health of everyone in our community and tackling some of the widest and most entrenched inequalities in health.

Physical and mental health are inextricably linked. It is often the case that those with the worst mental health experience poor physical health, and those with poor physical health experience higher rates of poor mental health such as anxiety, depression and social isolation.

Whilst most people are aware of measures they can take to improve their physical health, these are less well known amongst the public for mental health. The reality is that we can all take steps to protect and improve our mental health and wellbeing, regardless of where on the continuum of mental health we start.

Prevention of mental ill health and promotion of good mental health (i.e. mental wellbeing) can be achieved by ensuring that all residents, whether experiencing mental ill health or not, are aware of opportunities available to them to improve their mental wellbeing.

This strategy aims to raise the profile and provide a framework for mental ill health prevention and promotion of mental wellbeing in Lewisham. It aims to achieve this by building on the available local assets and resources, and using the evidence of what works. This strategy has

the overarching aim of improving mental wellbeing for all Lewisham residents across all stages of life.

1.4 Interactions with local policy

Mental ill health and mental wellbeing have a large range of determinants and can in turn affect many other health and social outcomes. This strategy therefore has several areas of overlap with existing local strategy and policy (listed in box 2 below). Although many of these policies/strategies may not make explicit mention of mental health and wellbeing, it is important to recognise the interconnecting work that exists locally in order to make the appropriate linkages and enable synergistic working.

Box 2. Local strategy and policy overlap with public mental health

Lewisham's Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2020: Three of the six priority areas of the sustainable community strategy have clear overlap with promoting mental health and wellbeing i.e. empowered and responsible, healthy, active and enjoyable, and dynamic and prosperous³.

Lewisham's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2015-2018: One of the nine priority areas for the current health and wellbeing strategy for the borough is 'to improve mental health and wellbeing' over the next 10 years⁴.

Our Healthier Southeast London Sustainability and Transformation Plan 2016-2021: The STP is the "umbrella" plan for south east which brings NHS organisations in south east London together with local councils together to establish a place-based leadership and decision-making structure to make plans and decisions that will ensure the sustainability of services into the future. A key component of the plan is prevention and this includes mental health⁴.

Lewisham Children and Young People's Plan 2015-2018: The plan establishes how partner agencies will continue to work together to improve those outcomes that will make significant improvements to the lives and life-chances of our children and young people.⁵

The Children and Young People's Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Strategy 2015-2020: The aims of this strategy have a direct link with public mental wellbeing and have a vision to ensure that young people in Lewisham are emotionally resilient and know when and where to seek help if they need it⁶.

Lewisham Clinical Commissioning Group (including Mental Health) Commissioning Intentions 2017-2018: In line with recommendations from the Mental Health Five Year Forward View Implementation Plan, the Lewisham CCG expressed a commitment to prevention of mental ill health in its 2017-18 commissioning intentions for mental health.

Lewisham Community Development Charter 2016: This has been agreed by the Stronger Communities Partnership Board as a way of building and maintaining strong communities through community development.

The Whole System Approach to Obesity: This new local policy will work to tackle obesity by taking a whole system approach including making changes that will impact on diet and physical activity in the population. There is good evidence available concerning the relationship between physical activity and mental wellbeing and a growing body of research examining the reciprocal association between food and mental health i.e. the psychosocial factors involved in making our food choices and impact of diet on mental health and wellbeing.

1.5 Strategy development and structure

To develop a locally relevant and coherent strategy it was important to: re-examine local epidemiological data concerning mental ill health and mental wellbeing in the borough; explore local needs and issues from the viewpoint of local stakeholders in the borough – this was achieved by holding a strategy development workshop; and review existing literature regarding population-based approaches to improving population mental health and wellbeing. The findings of these activities will be reported on in the first section of this document.

The second section will outline the aims, principles and recommendations of the strategy.

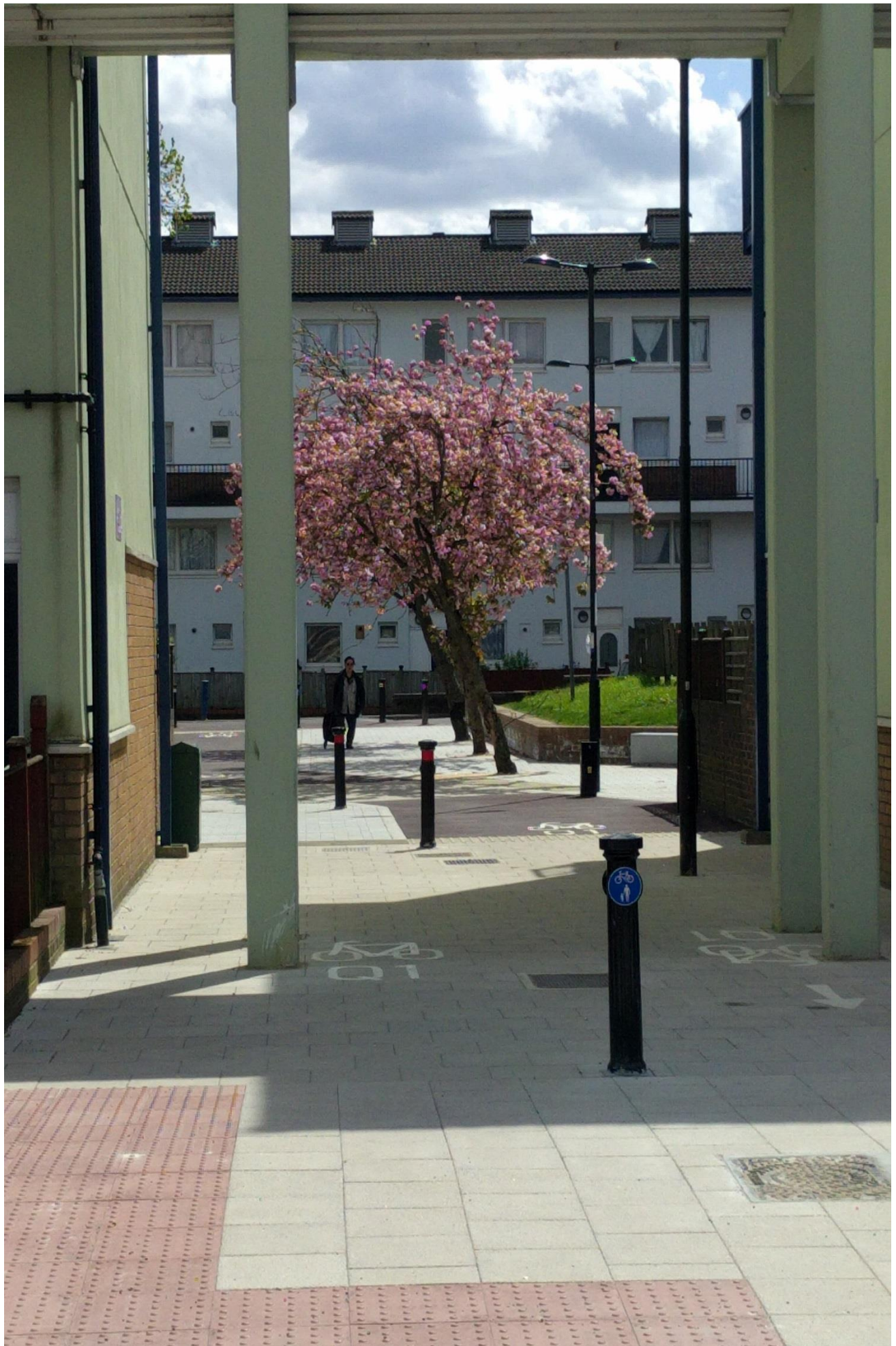
The closing section of the strategy will include a summary of what can be done at the organisation, community and individual level to improve wellbeing in the borough in addition to an outline of how the aims of the strategy will be monitored, evaluated and governed.

1.6 How will the strategy be resourced?

There is no additional resource for this strategy. However, there is potential to make better use of community assets, draw attention to the facilities available to all residents to support their mental health, (such as green spaces and adult learning opportunities) and to work in partnership across Lewisham to make the best use of current resources which may impact on mental health and wellbeing. A multi-agency partnership approach to deliver the strategy and the action plan will be key.

A 2 year multi agency action plan will be developed and agreed gaining commitment from key stakeholders using existing resources, but exploiting opportunities to attract new or external funding to take forward the strategy and together deliver on outcomes.

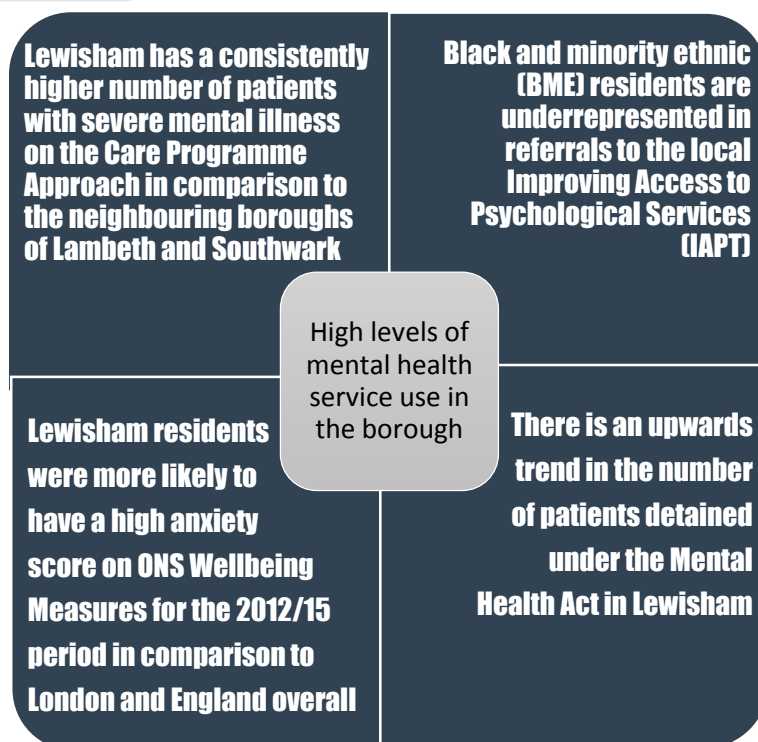
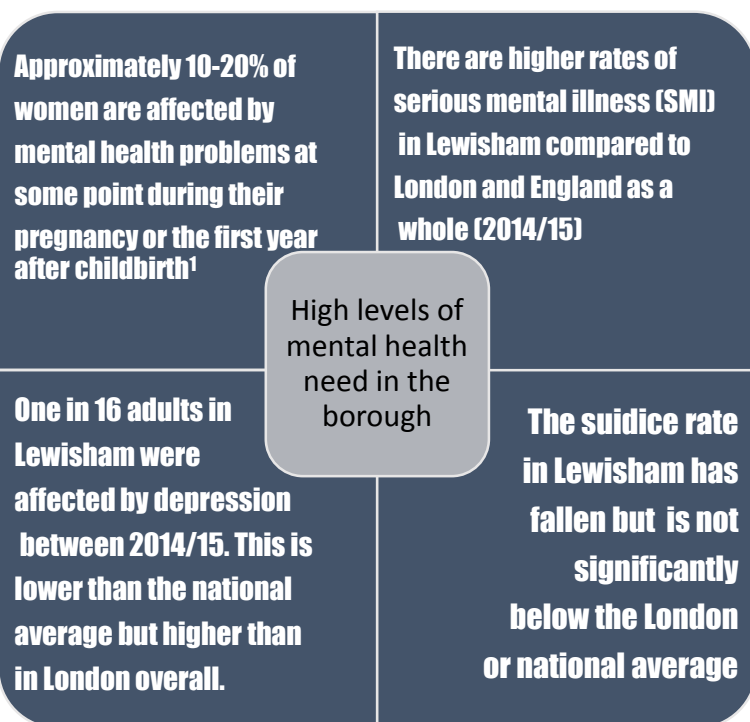
A Mental Health Prevention Concordat Programme is currently being developed by Public Health England. This will support all areas to have a prevention plan in place by the end of 2017. The London Mayor's Office is also working on a programme "Thrive London" to develop a mental health strategy for London. This may provide opportunities to work with other boroughs nationally or across London on some areas to improve mental health and wellbeing.



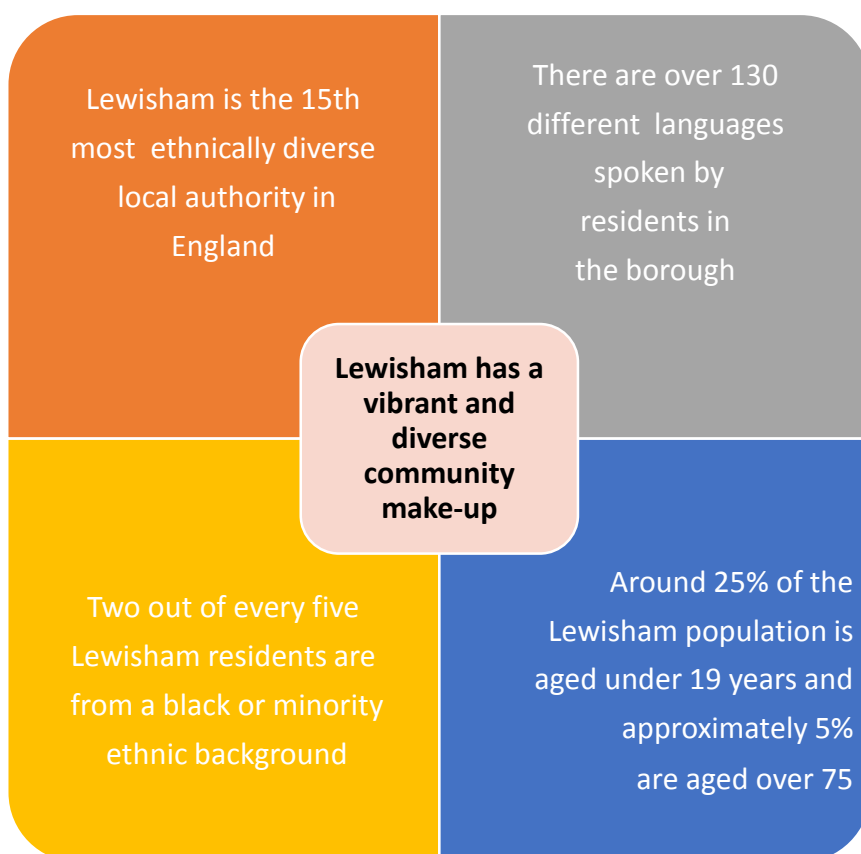
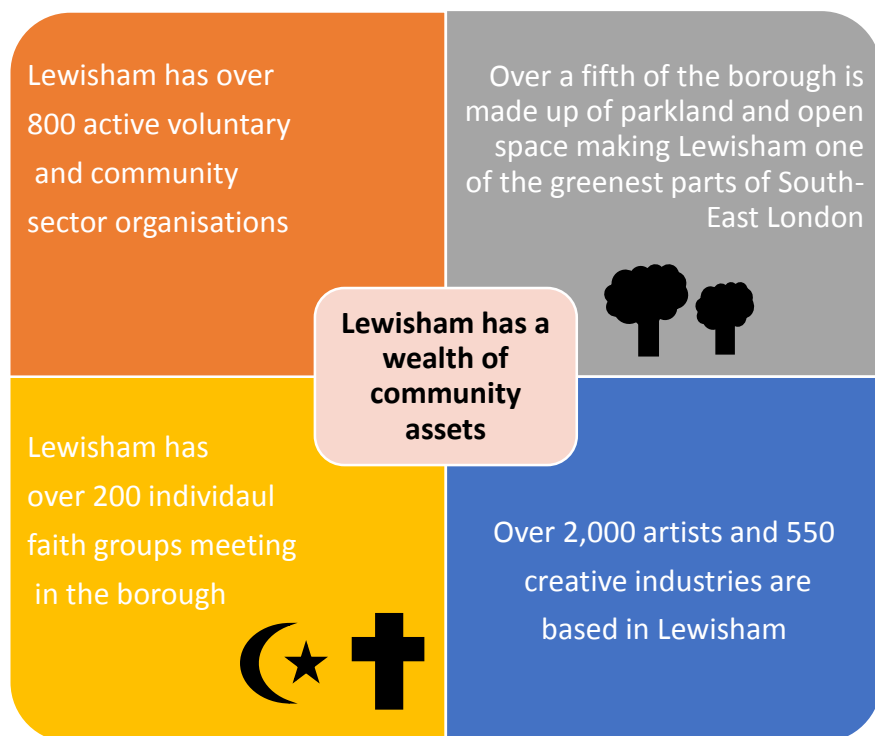
2. CURRENT SITUATION IN LEWISHAM

2.1 Epidemiological data

Data from the most recent Mental Health Data Dashboard (2016) collated by Lewisham Public Health reveals the following key facts and figures about mental ill health and mental wellbeing in Lewisham.

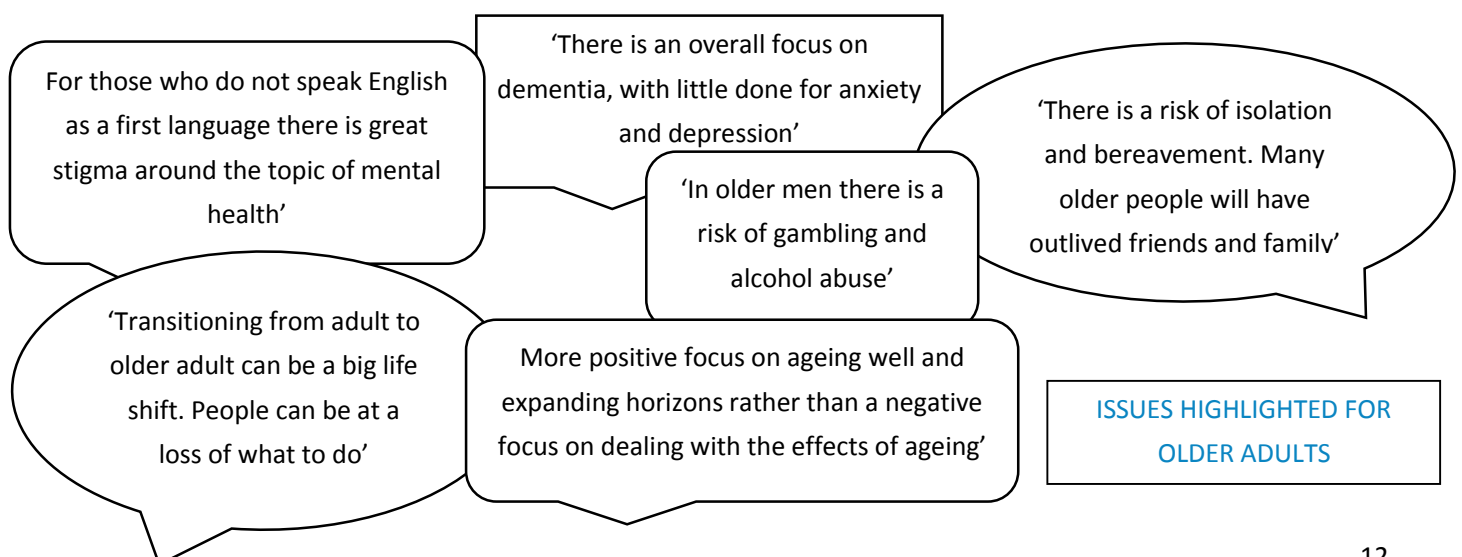
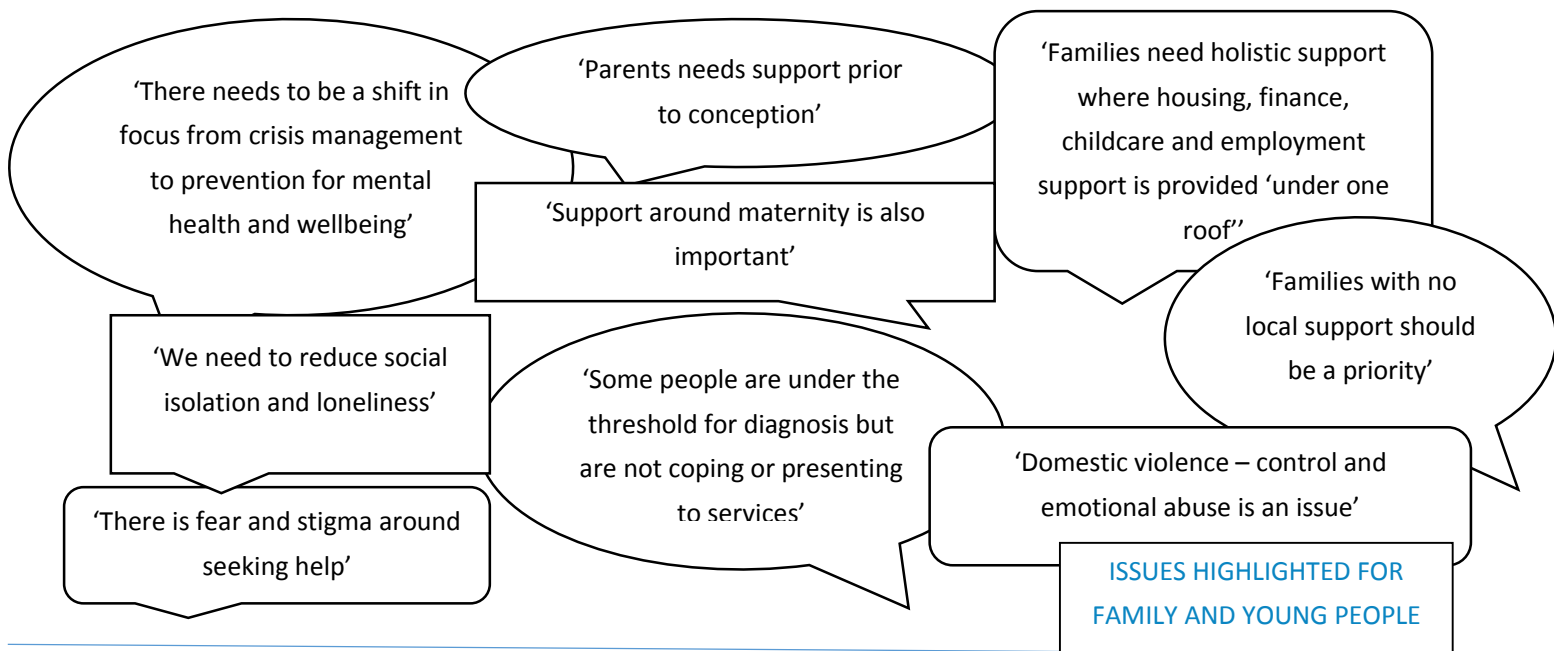


Lewisham has a range of community assets which contribute positively to mental wellbeing.



2.2 Local Stakeholder Views

At the strategy development workshop, local stakeholders also highlighted key issues concerning mental health and wellbeing in Lewisham:



3. WHAT DOES THE EVIDENCE SAY?

There is a growing evidence base for public mental health intervention and some examples of the most effective interventions have been outlined below:



Family and Early Years

- Universal infant programmes that are provided in the context of antenatal care and at the time of birth
- Perinatal health commissioning that complies with NICE guidance
- Suicide prevention plans that address the perinatal period



Children and Young People

- Comprehensive 'whole school approaches' for improving the mental wellbeing of children and young people
- Bullying prevention programmes



Working Age Adults

- Practising mindfulness, yoga or Tai Chi and involvement in volunteering
- Dissemination of universal public mental health messages such as those within the 'Five ways to Wellbeing'
- Promoting line management training to create mentally healthy workplaces as outlined in NICE guidance



Older Adults

- Community approaches such as befriending and mentoring, and social group schemes
- Peer support for people with early dementia
- Provision of Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training to services in contact with older people

4. STRATEGY AIMS AND PRINCIPLES

4.1 Main Strategy Aims

Bringing together the needs and stakeholder issues around mental health in Lewisham, local and national policy, and current available evidence for public mental health interventions this strategy aims to achieve the following ambitions:

- To improve mental health and wellbeing for all in Lewisham across the life course
- To attempt to bring together all initiatives in Lewisham that impact positively upon mental health and wellbeing under one strategic ambition
- To increase and optimise the use of community assets for mental health and wellbeing initiatives
- To reduce stigma and increase awareness amongst the public and professionals of factors which build resilience, protect and improve mental health and wellbeing

4.2 Strategic Principles

This strategy will take a pragmatic approach to achieving these aims by supporting and recommending the use of the best available approaches that:

1. Take a universal population based approach across each stage of the life course
2. Have an existing evidence base
3. Resonate with the needs of the borough as illustrated by current epidemiological data and feedback from community stakeholders
4. Using a community development approach to promote wellbeing maximising local assets.

4.3 Five Ways to Wellbeing

The Five Ways to Wellbeing draw on research from across the world to identify the factors which improve everyone's mental wellbeing through life. They were developed by the New Economics Foundation as part of the Foresight Project on Mental Capital and Wellbeing (2008). They provide a framework for all of us to improve and protect our mental health. They are an integral component of the strategy to support individuals to improve their wellbeing.

Five Ways to Wellbeing (NEF, 2008)*

CONNECT	Connect with people around you. With Family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. At home, work, school or in your local community. Think of these as the cornerstones of your life and invest time in developing them. Building these connections will support and enrich you every day.
BE ACTIVE	Go for a walk or run. Step outside. Cycle. Play a game. Garden. Dance. Exercising makes you feel good. Most importantly, discover a physical activity you enjoy and one that suits your level of mobility and fitness.
TAKE NOTICE	Be curious. Catch sight of the beautiful. Remark on the unusual. Notice the changing seasons. Savour the moment, whether you are walking to work, eating lunch or talking to friends. Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Reflecting on your experience will help you appreciate what matters to you.
KEEP LEARNING	Try something new. Rediscover an old interest. Sign up for that course. Take on a different responsibility at work. Fix a bike. Learn to play an instrument or how to cook your favourite food. Set a challenge you will enjoy achieving. Learning new things will make you more confident as well as being fun.
GIVE	Do something nice for a friend, or a stranger. Thank someone. Smile. Volunteer your time. Join a community group. Look out, as well as in. Seeing yourself and your happiness linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and creates connections with the people around you.

The concept of the Five Ways to wellbeing has been developed further by the South London and Maudsley NHS Trust to become the “Wheel of Wellbeing” and incorporates the idea of ‘planet’.



4.4 Life course approach

A life course approach has been adopted in this strategy in line with the Joint Commissioning Panel for Mental Health (JCPMH) guidance for Public Mental Health Services, which identifies that public mental health promotion interventions should focus on starting well, developing well, living well, working well and ageing well⁶.

4.5 Mental Wellbeing Impact Assessment

Mental Wellbeing Impact Assessment, may be recommended as a tool to use when any major plan, project or proposal is being developed. This assessment highlights important considerations and potential mitigations that could be made in relation to the impact of large projects on population mental wellbeing.

5. STRATEGY OVERVIEW

Family and Early Years	Children and Young People	Working Age Adults	Older Age
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote 'Five to Thrive' Initiative Action to address Perinatal Mental Health and Wellbeing: Support the Maternity Services and Liaison Committee campaign, 'It's ok not feel ok' Promotion of the Royal College of General Practitioners Online Toolkit for perinatal mental health Raise awareness amongst public and professionals of the impact of maternal stress during pregnancy Use breast feeding peer support network to support new mothers with feeding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four priorities in the CYP Plan are : Build Resilience, Be Healthy and Active, Stay Safe, and Raise Achievement and Attainment. A commitment to partnership working to improve outcomes and improve the life-chances of young people in the borough. Embedding resilience practice in community settings, promoting resilience, prevention and early intervention. Provide an alternative range of services to engage the most vulnerable cohorts of families. Developing the workforce to ensure earlier identification and improved support for those experiencing problems around mental health and resilience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote NICE guidance concerning 'Mental Wellbeing in the Workplace' with local businesses, workplaces and voluntary (VCS) organisations Encourage local businesses, workplaces and VCS organisations to become employer 'Time to Change' champions Encourage businesses, workplaces and VCS organisations to sign up to the GLA Healthy Workplace Charter Consider the use of the Mental Wellbeing Impact Assessment (MWIA) tool in the borough for all major policy and planning projects Work with the local parks and adult education to ensure that residents have good awareness of the award winning green spaces and broad adult education offer available to Lewisham residents and how this can support mental wellbeing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the work of the Lewisham Positive Ageing Council to make an application for Lewisham to become a WHO Age Friendly Community Raise awareness about ways to protect mental wellbeing and connect residents in with organisations/initiatives that seek to improve mental wellbeing e.g. "Meet me at the Albany" Support work of Lewisham Dementia Action Alliance to make Lewisham a dementia friendly place to live

6. FAMILY AND EARLY YEARS

Lewisham has a relatively young population in comparison to other boroughs in London and around the country, with approximately 25% of the population being under the age of 19 years. The family environment, within which these young people grow up, especially for children in their very early years, plays a crucial part in development and can be predictive of mental wellbeing in later life.



Adverse conditions or events within the family environment, including parental mental health concern, lack of parental boundary setting, domestic violence, divorce and parental bereavement can lead to long-term problems ranging from difficulties with learning and behaviour to diagnosed mental ill health¹. Specifically being exposed to “toxic stress” such as mental illness, substance misuse, and domestic violence during pregnancy can have a direct impact on the social and emotional development of children. Conversely, a positive family environment with secure attachment between parents and young children can lead to positive emotional and social development, and subsequent positive mental wellbeing.¹

6.1 Existing local work to support mental wellbeing for families and those in their early years

There are a variety of sources of support to help families and young children in Lewisham maintain and improve their mental wellbeing. These range from ‘stay and play sessions’ run by various organisations and community groups across the borough, support offered to parents and young children at one of the borough's children's centres through to support for individuals and their children experiencing domestic violence. At the stakeholder event, participants highlighted some examples

of the services and initiatives present within the borough that contribute to improving mental wellbeing for families and young children. A selection of these is in the box below.

Box 3. Local work to support families and those in their early years

- Development of an 'Early Help' strategy to support children and their families at an early stage where problems are identified to prevent escalation.
- The Lewisham Maternity Services and Liaison Committee (MSLC) working to highlight maternal and perinatal mental health
- The Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) Perinatal Mental Health Resource that is available for GPs
- The Athena service run by Refuge for victims of domestic violence
- Family Health Isis targets individuals and families from the African/African Caribbean community affected by mental illness
- Citizen's Advice Bureau and Advice Lewisham that provide holistic support and advice for families
- Social media network groups e.g. Mummy's Gin Fund, mumsnet local
- Mother and Baby Toddler Support Groups e.g. those provided by local children's centres
- Breast feeding cafes providing peer support for breast feeding mothers

6.2 What will this strategy add?

The strategy will build upon existing initiatives in the borough by supporting the following new areas of work:

- **Embedding the 'Five to Thrive' model in early years settings within the borough**

Five to Thrive is an approach that provides a simple universal framework to support parental interaction and engagement with their young children. The

approach draws from current neuroscience around baby and toddler brain development and presents five ways that parents can engage with their children. These five ways are to: **talk, play, relax, cuddle, and respond**. The use of this approach aims to support the development of secure attachment between parents and children, which in turn has an impact on mental wellbeing for both parent and child.

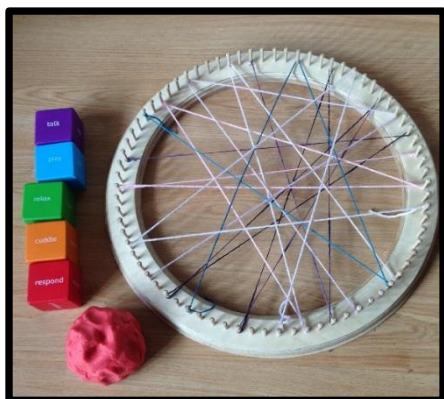
- **Improving pathways for perinatal mental health**

Support for mothers with mental health concerns during pregnancy and around the time of childbirth is of vital importance for both the mental health and wellbeing of mothers and developing children. This strategy will support the commissioning of high quality and timely services by the joint mental health commissioning team that is in line with NICE guidance and has appropriate public health input.

- **Development of a Local Suicide Prevention Plan/Strategy**

The Mental Health Joint Commissioning Team in Lewisham has prioritised developing a local all-age suicide prevention strategy. As suicide remains a significant cause of maternal death nationally, perinatal mental health and suicide will be given sufficient and necessary prominence within the strategy.

CASE STUDY - Beautiful Babies, Beautiful Brains course



Beautiful Babies, Beautiful Brains is a new course run by Clyde Early Childhood Centre in Lewisham. The course is based on '**Five to Thrive**' and focuses on the five simple things that parents can do with their babies and children in order to help their brains to grow - **respond, cuddle, relax, play and talk**.

The 8-week course is a mixture of training sessions and hands-on sessions for parents and carers wishing to learn more about how what they do with their babies and children has an impact on their child's brain development. The first course started in September 2016 and runs until December 2016. Parents can refer themselves for the course or professionals can refer parents whom they think might benefit.

Each week, those attending learn through a mixture of practical activities and a taught element. The practical sessions are open to all parents who will be supported by the course trainer to identify what their child is learning and what they are enjoying. As well as learning about the brain, parents are taking part in practical and fun activities that assist in their learning and provide them with ideas about activities with their children. Parents are encouraged to share their ideas and knowledge with the rest of the group. The importance of self-care for parents is also included. Parents have been interested to reflect on the fact that they are the most important toy for their child!

After the first two taught sessions, parents have been reflecting on their learning which has included how the brain develops, the importance of self-care, and the benefits of interactions with their child. Parents are given a "passport" which is signed by the trainer for each session that they attend. Once all sessions have been attended parents will receive a certificate. There is flexibility for parents to make up for any sessions that they miss, in order to assist with their learning and with gaining a certificate.

7. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

As children get older, influences outside of the home become increasingly important determinants of mental health and wellbeing e.g. school, relationships with peers and bullying. However 'the quality of the parent child relationship and parenting' remain the most important predictor of mental ill health in early childhood.¹ The period from childhood



to adolescence can also be a time of huge transition for young people and adverse experiences associated with this transition e.g. bereavement and parental separation can have a marked effect on mental wellbeing. Employing evidence-based interventions with families, schools and colleges can work to minimise any negative impacts and promote mental wellbeing.

7.1 Existing local work to support mental wellbeing for children and young people

Lewisham has a Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Strategy for children and young people in place running until the year 2020. The strategy aims to ensure that children and young people in Lewisham are 'emotionally resilient and know when and where to go for help if needed'. A key priority workstream of the strategy is "Promoting Resilience, prevention and early intervention". Additionally the strategy aims to equip parents, carers and the young people's workforce to identify and respond to low levels of emotional well-being in young people in Lewisham⁶. There is a programme of work that is being driven by these aims that will work in synergy with the work being proposed from this strategy.

Box 4: Examples of local work supporting wellbeing in children and young people

- Using Digital Technology to support young people: The 'Work it Out' website provides links to access to online counselling and support for young people
- Using peer support to help young people and parents affected by mental health issues
- Develop a workforce which can respond to the needs of individual young people through Academic Resilience Approach in schools and Youth Mental Health First Aid Training, available free to all front line staff working with young people in Lewisham
- Promoting being physically active to support better mental health and whole systems approach to obesity

7.2 What this strategy will add

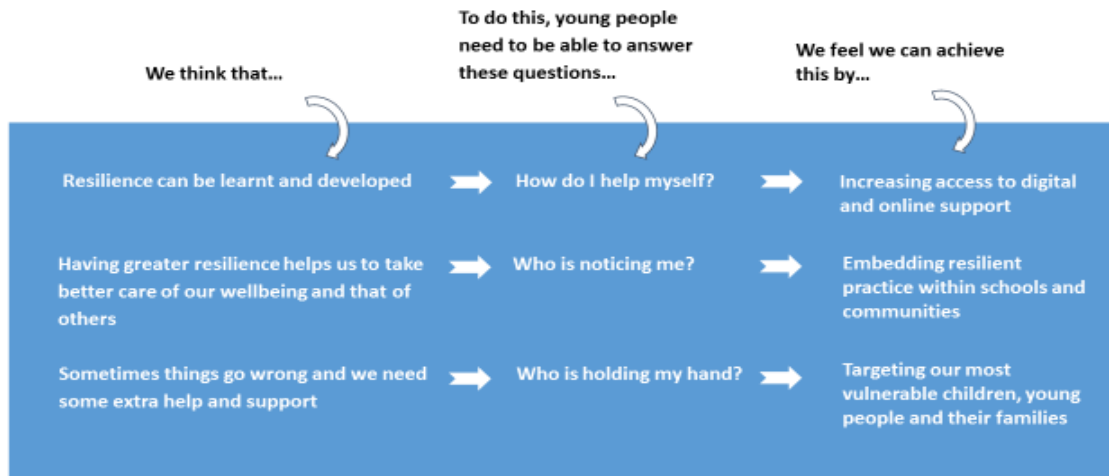


The strategy will build on the work over the last few years on “Headstart Lewisham” and continue to provide a platform to raise awareness amongst young people of mental health issues and how to maintain and improve mental wellbeing. It will also provide an interface between the work to improve wellbeing in children and young

people and adults.

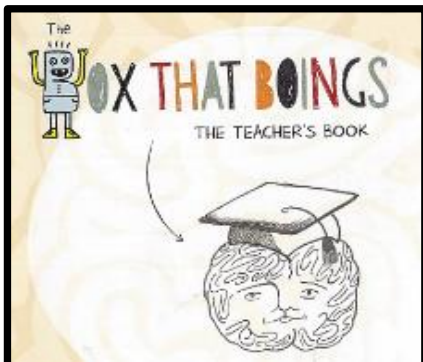
Resilience is a key component of good mental health and wellbeing. Building on the concepts of resilience developed as part of the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Transformation plan we will promote the concept of resilience across the population.

What Resilience Means To Us.....



Source: NHS Lewisham CCG- CAMHS transformation refresh 2016⁶

Case Study – The Box that Boings



The 'Box that Boings' has been developed by Lewisham children at Sandhurst Juniors and the Fruit Fly www.fruitflycollective.com

The Box that Boings is a set of activities, games and tools that schools can use in group sessions and in one to one work with children to support them with developing emotional literacy and understanding their

own and others resilience.

8. WORKING AGE ADULTS



A much broader range of influences on mental health and wellbeing become apparent in adulthood, which include the quality of family and peer relationship, the presence or absence of work and its quality, and the wider communities within which people live¹. Good mental health and wellbeing in adulthood is not only important for individuals themselves but can have important impacts on the mental health and wellbeing of their families, children, and others that they may provide care for.

8.1 Existing local work to support mental wellbeing for working age adults

Local stakeholders have also helped us to identify some of the local work that is already taking place to support the mental wellbeing of older adults in Lewisham. These existing initiatives can be seen in the Box below and cut across the statutory and voluntary sector:

Box 5: Support for working age adults

- Mind Kit – work with young adults to help them to look after their mental wellbeing and boost resilience
- Mental Health First aid training courses- are offered to people working or volunteering in the borough. The accredited two day course equips participants to offer basic first line advice on recognising signs and symptoms of mental health problems and provide appropriate first line support.
- Support for those with problematic use of drugs and/or alcohol is commissioned from specialist providers locally.
- Sydenham Gardens – enables people to improve their quality of life, social interaction and physical and mental health in a support community environment
- Talking therapy groups through “improving access to psychological therapies” (IAPT)
- North Lewisham Health Improvement Programme. Situated in Deptford and New Cross, this extensive community development programme, with numerous

projects aimed to reduce health inequalities in Evelyn and New Cross wards in comparison with Lewisham as a whole.

- Timebanks – volunteers exchanging skills and support for time credits (Rushey Green, Forest Hill and Crofton Park, Deptford and New Cross)
- Abbotshall Road Healthy Lifestyle Centre – providing a community centre and garden which provides opportunities for local residents to become more physically active and engage in a range of activities to promote social interaction.

Case study - Lee Green Lives Community Safety Net

Lee Green Lives Community Safety Net is a project based at Lee Green Community Centre working in partnership with local services, such as Lewisham Community Connections. It addresses social isolation and stigma around mental health through supporting community members and promoting local services.

The project involves weekly 'Get together' sessions to provide informal social opportunities for community members to discuss their individual situations. There is a large emphasis on Brief Solution therapy and active listening, to enable community members to prioritise the issues that are affecting their functioning and wellbeing.

Lee Green Community Centre also runs activities such as a food bank; bi-weekly form-filling sessions with Citizens Advice Bureau; weekly ESOL classes, as well as exercise classes for older people, sewing and knitting groups and IT sessions. New projects include pro bono legal advice to community members experiencing housing issues as well as representation at benefits tribunals.

Since February 2016, this project has successfully supported over 80 community members/ households. Key service users have been those with undiagnosed or chronic mental health, other health problems and disabilities, no or low income, and homelessness or insecure housing issues.

8.2 What this strategy will add

The strategy will build on existing work to improve mental wellbeing for working age adults by supporting the following initiatives:

- **We will work with local organisations, businesses and groups to promote the NICE guidance around mental wellbeing in the workplace.**

The NICE guidance provides local organisations with a comprehensive range of options for improving mental wellbeing for all of those working in or involved with the organisation. The guidance has five main recommendations that cover: 'strategy, assessing opportunities for promoting mental wellbeing and managing risk, flexible working, the role of line managers, and supporting micro, small and medium-sized businesses'

- **We will encourage local organisations, businesses and groups to become GLA Healthy Workplace Charter and/or Time to Change Champions.**

The Healthy Work Place Charter is a Greater London Authority initiative that provides clear and easy steps for places of work more healthy and enjoyable places to work in. Having more organisations in Lewisham signed up to the Charter will make a contribution to improving the mental wellbeing of adults in the borough.

Time to Change Champions are advocates of this national campaign which aims to reduce stigma around mental health. Stigma was highlighted as an important issue in the Borough by local stakeholders. Recruiting more Champions will help address this.

- **We will work with our communications teams to promote the use of local parks and adult education as a way of improving mental health and wellbeing.**

Case Study – Jess explains how being active has improved her mental health



'Since I have become more active, I have more energy, confidence and motivation' (Jess, Lewisham resident)

Growing up my weight had always been an issue. I have memories from primary school of remarks being made about my weight. This continued all the way through school until my later education years including college.

When I got my first job at 15 in catering I was my largest weight ever - 17 stone at such a young age and clinically obese. I was getting home from work and comfort eating until early hours of the morning, filling my gaps in confidence with food. This soon started to reflect in my behaviours as I got kicked out of college and had little motivation in life to be successful. I thought I was just destined to be fat and a failure essentially.

In 2012 I started my apprenticeship at Lewisham Public Health and slowly grew in confidence by surrounding myself with people that inspire me and by becoming more active in my job.

As this had given me the confidence within myself to change my life I started to change the way I looked at myself. The last attempt to combat was my weight was a new year's resolution in January 2015 when I cut out Coke. The impact of this encouraged me to join a spin class group in March 2015 (drinking sugary drinks on a regular basis reduces your motivation to be active!). Attending once a week, after 6 months I joined a local gym and gradually built up my fitness. Now 1 year later I go to the gym 5 times a week and I have lost almost 7 stone in weight.

I have had the best two years of my life since I have become more active, I have more energy, confidence and motivation.

Since I increased my activity I have achieved things that I never thought I could, including taking part in fitness events such as tough mudder and a 2 hour spin class and completing them. I have even bettered my career with job opportunities as a result of my boosted confidence!

9. OLDER ADULTS



Adults over the age of 65 make up approximately 9% of the Lewisham population. As mentioned by some of the stakeholders at the strategy development workshop the transition to older age and retirement can be a time filled with contrasting impacts on mental wellbeing.

The loss of partners, friends and family, stopping full-time work and the issues of loneliness and social isolation can have a clear negative impact on mental wellbeing. However, the transition can also present a great number of opportunities which can include travelling, taking up new hobbies and interests and meeting new people through volunteering or involvement in other community activities. Taking hold of these opportunities where available and possible can have a positive benefit on mental health and wellbeing.

9.1 Existing local work to support mental wellbeing for older adults

There are a variety of community initiatives already in place in Lewisham to provide vital support for the mental wellbeing of adults. Some examples identified by local stakeholders can be seen in the Box below:

Box 6. Local work supporting older people

- Advocacy services Bromley/Lewisham
- Lewisham MindCare – information and advice service for people affected by dementia
- “Techie parties” providing IT support at local venues (e.g. at the Phoenix)
- Intergenerational peer support offered by the African Advocacy Foundation
- Carers Lewisham, providing support to those with caring responsibilities

9.2 What this strategy will add

The strategy will build on existing work to improve mental wellbeing for older adults by supporting the following initiatives:

- **We will support the work of the Lewisham Positive Ageing Council for Lewisham to become a WHO Age Friendly Community**

The Lewisham Positive Ageing Council is preparing to make an application for Lewisham to become a WHO Age Friendly Community. The World Health Organisation (WHO) Age Friendly Cities initiative aims to support cities and communities around the world that want to make their local areas 'accessible and inclusive' to benefit their ageing populations. The initiative aims to promote the notion of healthy and active ageing and encourages participating communities to develop action plans that take steps to better adapt structures (e.g. transport and housing) and services to the needs of older adults.

- **We will promote the role of individuals and organisations in addressing social isolation in older age**

Through our commissioned services we will seek to raise the profile of mental health in older people and connect residents with organisations/initiatives that can improve mental wellbeing, in particular those that address the issues of social isolation and loneliness.

- **We will help to make Lewisham a dementia friendly place to live**

We will support the work of the Lewisham Dementia Action Alliance (DAA) to make Lewisham an easier place to live for people with Dementia. The Lewisham DAA is Lewisham's vehicle to become a dementia friendly community. The DAA envisages that people living and working in Lewisham are aware of and understand more about dementia; people with dementia and their carers will be encouraged to seek help and support; and people with dementia will feel included in their community, be more independent and have more choice and control over their lives.

Case Study – Community Connections

Community connections is a local community development project run by voluntary and community sector partners and Age UK Lewisham and Southwark. It aims to help residents in Lewisham to access local services and community groups that best meet their needs around the Five Ways to Wellbeing. It focuses on health and wellbeing and provides an important way for older people to be encouraged and supported to participate in appropriate community groups and activities..

10. WHAT WE CAN ALL DO TO IMPROVE MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN LEWISHAM

Working to improve mental health and wellbeing in Lewisham can involve us all as residents, community members or local organisations. As individuals, communities and organisations, we can all take simple evidence-based steps to make Lewisham a place where people of all ages and backgrounds can flourish in their mental health and wellbeing.

10.1 How do we improve our mental health as individuals?

Using the five ways to wellbeing as a guide we can all take small steps to improve our wellbeing.

CONNECT

Connect with people around you. With family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. At home, work, school or in your local community. Think of these as the cornerstones of your life and invest time in developing them. Building these connections will support and enrich you every day.

Connecting with other people is an important aspect of mental health and wellbeing, this can be achieved in many different ways and costs nothing. Examples include:

- Family meals and get togethers
- Meeting with friends
- Volunteering at a local group
- Being part of a faith group or community
- Start a "playing out" scheme for children in your road to bring neighbours together by closing a road for a couple of hours: <http://playingout.net/>

BE ACTIVE

Physical activities like walking, swimming, gardening and dancing can positively influence the way you think, feel and function. Practicing an activity you enjoy for 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week, can contribute for a long and happy life.

Being outdoors and enjoying parks and open spaces can have a positive impact on wellbeing. For information about local parks and open spaces go to: <http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/inmyarea/openspaces/activities/Pages/default.aspx>

For more information on what activities are available locally in Lewisham go to: <http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/inmyarea/Pages/default.aspx>

Get a bike and go cycling: <http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/myservices/transport/cycling/Pages/default.aspx>

Go swimming: <http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/inmyarea/sport/Swimming/Pages/default.aspx>

Dance: <http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/inmyarea/arts/Your-local-arts/Pages/dance.aspx>

TAKE NOTICE

Be curious. Catch sight of the beautiful. Remark on the unusual. Notice the changing seasons. Savour the moment, whether you are walking to work, eating lunch or talking to friends. Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Reflecting on your experience will help you appreciate what matters to you.

Taking a mindfulness approach can help you stop, observe and connect to the things and places around you.

You may wish to consider looking for a local course or workshop on 'Mindfulness' or find an app or website to get you started.

For more information on this go to:

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/pages/mindfulness.aspx>

KEEP LEARNING

Research shows that lifelong learners are some of the healthiest and happiest people around us. You can improve your wellbeing through active learning. Start now and have a look at what local facilities are on offer:

Make use of local libraries and their online resources:

<http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/myservices/libraries/Pages/default.aspx>

Take an adult learning class in Lewisham:

<http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/myservices/education/adult/Pages/default.aspx>

GIVE

Do something nice for a friend, or a stranger. Thank someone. Smile. Volunteer your time. Join a timebank. Look out, as well as in.

Volunteering opportunities in Lewisham:

<http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/getinvolved/Pages/default.aspx>

Find your nearest timebank: <http://www.timebanking.org/our-membership/find-your-nearest/>

10.2 How can we improve mental health as organisations?

Organisations with staff or volunteers that have face-to-face contact with the public can consider enrolling them on a Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Training course to help them to recognise and provide appropriate first line support to those with mental needs. MHFA training is currently being offered by Lewisham Council. More information about the training can be found at:

<https://www.lewisham.gov.uk/myservices/socialcare/health/improving-public-health/Documents/HealthImprovementTrainingBrochure2016%e2%80%932017.pdf>

- As an employer, prevent mental health problems by providing employees with accessible information and education about mental health and wellbeing in the workplace.
- Consider signing up to the 'Time to Change' initiative to help reduce any stigma associated with mental ill health in your organisation. For more details please see: <http://www.time-to-change.org.uk/get-involved>
- Become familiar with the NICE guidance around mental wellbeing in the workplace to understand what steps can be taken to help those working or volunteering in your organisation to maintain good mental wellbeing. The guidance also looks at managing stress in the workplace. A summary of the guidance can be seen at: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph22>
- Find out what is required to become signed up to the London Healthy Workplace Charter at: <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/health/healthy-workplace-charter>. Signing up to the charter will help you to support the health and wellbeing of volunteers or employees.
- Promote the Wheel of Wellbeing (WoW) for all attending or working/volunteering at your organisation as tool that they can use to improve their own mental wellbeing. More information about the Wheel of Wellbeing and resources that can be used at your organisation can be found at: <http://www.wheelofwellbeing.org/wow-your-community>
- Participate in either World Mental Health Day (10th October) or Mental Health Awareness week (8-14th May 2017) to help promote mental wellbeing in your organisation. For more information please see: http://www.who.int/mental_health/world-mental-health-day/en/ and <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/campaigns/mental-health-awareness-week>

10.3 How can we improve mental health as communities?

A community development approach is key to bringing communities together to improve mental health and wellbeing. Lewisham has a long history of community development to improve health and wellbeing. Some examples of this work are given below in case studies.

Case Study – Well Bellingham

Well Bellingham is a community development programme, based in Bellingham, which builds stronger communities by getting local people working together to improve their neighbourhood and their health and well-being. It has built individual and community capacity for well-being and resilience through a range of activities including mental well-being and physical activity (such as Cooking For Life and Soul , Downs Friends and Creativity Group, Intergenerational Arts, Beautiful Empowered and Me Confidence Building Classes for girls, DIY Happiness). These activities have been supported and developed through Participatory budgeting and trained local volunteers, community champions and apprentices.

‘I really enjoy volunteering and it has got me out of my shell and given me more confidence in approaching people. I’ve also learnt valuable skills too’

‘I love getting out and helping the community, helping them to be more active. There are so many simple things you can teach people to look after their bodies and their physical and mental health. It’s about giving something back to the community’

The programme has been evaluated as having a positive impact and has been internationally recognized.

Case study – North Lewisham Health Improvement Programme

Situated in Deptford and New Cross, the **North Lewisham Health Improvement Programme** is an extensive community development programme, with numerous projects aimed to reduce health inequalities in Evelyn and New Cross wards in comparison with Lewisham as a whole. The programme developed a rich knowledge base about how to reach communities, raise awareness, change behaviour and improve health outcomes.

This programme was effective at building social networks and social capital, with many training and volunteering opportunities. It improved mental wellbeing in many different ways among participants and their families, including increased awareness and understanding of and motivation to improve health and well-being.

Participants reported a number of outcomes which improved their sense of wellbeing including increased confidence and self-esteem; and a sense of achievement. These types of outcomes were particularly important for those who had lost confidence and self-esteem as a result of having been out of work due to caring responsibilities or health, as well as participants who had been socially isolated prior to involvement in activity. In addition to these outcomes, participants with mental health problems reported improvements in conditions including depression and anxiety resulting from participant in the projects.

Participants sometimes reported additional and unexpected outcomes including increased self-esteem, more energy, new friendships or social networks. The combination of the different outcomes experienced had a marked impact on the sense of health and wellbeing experienced by some, with particularly dramatic impacts on participants who had suffered from depression and social isolation.

The programme was identified as having the potential to positively affect 'enhancing control' by increasing a sense of control, belief in one own capability, opportunities to influence decisions and collective action.

10.4 How to get urgent help in a crisis

Many of us worry about our mental wellbeing at some point in our lives. GP's can help with many common mental health problems including anxiety and depressions by referring to "talking therapies", specialist mental health services, and/ or prescribing medication.

However if someone is experiencing a mental health crisis or acting and behaving in a way that is putting their health and or other people at risk, a 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, Mental Health Crisis Telephone Helpline is available in Lewisham 0800 731 2864.

11 STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION AND GOVERNANCE

Over the next 3-6 months an action plan will be developed for implementing the strategy. This action plan will be agreed and delivered by a multi-agency strategy working group that will be convened with representation from stakeholders in each of the life course areas. The action plan will be developed with reference to the work currently underway across London and England on the prevention of mental illness.

In addition to overseeing the implementation of the strategy, the multi-agency nature of the group will also support:

- Collaboration of partners across sectors and life course areas
- Innovation and creative working among partners who bring differing areas of expertise to the strategy implementation process
- The development of a robust monitoring and evaluation framework for the strategy

The strategy implementation will sit with the Mental Health Executive Group, (which includes joint commissioners, public health and GPs) who the strategy working group will report to. There will also be an annual report of progress to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

The strategy and action plan will be reviewed in 2019.

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