



Meeting: Torbay Council

Date: 25 September 2014

Wards Affected: All

Report Title: Proposal for Torbay Council to make the pledge as a Time To Change Mental Health Champion Organisation

Is the decision a key decision? No

When does the decision need to be implemented? After the call-in period has expired

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1. Purpose and Introduction

Mental Health is a key factor to overall health, and is 'a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises his or her potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community'. (World Health Organisation, 2013)

1 in 4 people will experience mental health problems in a year, and most people will have worked with someone experiencing mental health problems.

Stigma and discrimination towards mental health problems damages the individual, family, workplace and the community, and prevents people from discussing the issue, and increasing awareness.

Time to Change is a national mental health initiative supported by the Department of Health. It aims to tackle the stigma and discrimination around mental health. In January 2014, Dr Sarah Wollaston opened the Torbay Public Health Seminar by discussing her experience of mental health problems, and supported the Time to Change organisation in their fight to challenge and eliminate the stigma surrounding mental health issues. At the same event, the Director of Time To Change, Sue Baker, discussed how innovative Torbay was in picking up the challenge, and identified that should Torbay Council agree to sign up to the pledge, they would be amongst the first Local Authorities to join the variety of Government Departments (such as Home Office, DEFRA), HM Revenue and Excise, and businesses such as Marks and Spencer and John Lewis, to make the pledge to challenge the stigma of mental health.

The **Time to Change pledge** is a commitment that each Local Authority is asked to take, and many have already done so. (Birmingham City Council, Westminster Council, Dorset County Council, Liverpool City Council).

The **Time to Change pledge** requires a commitment to reducing stigma and discrimination around mental health. Stigma prevents people from discussing their problems, and can result in increased absence from work, relationship difficulties and even suicides. As one in four people nationally will experience mental health problems in any one year, providing a supportive approach to this may prevent more serious problems

The Time to Change pledge, in addition to changing attitudes to mental health, will require Torbay Council to develop a Mental Health Action Plan, which will benefit its staff, and the Torbay community. It provides a framework for the Torbay Emotional Health and Wellbeing Strategy which is currently being developed, and which intends to put Torbay at the forefront of initiatives supporting the emotional wellbeing of staff, and the community of Torbay.

2. **Proposed Decision**

- 2.1 That Council commits to agreeing to make a pledge which will benefit staff and the population of Torbay, by challenging the stigma and negative attitudes surrounding mental health. This commitment can then be fed up to the Time to Change initiative and Torbay Council will be seen as a forward-thinking organisation with a commitment to its staff and population.

Agreeing to take the Time To Change pledge means agreeing that people with mental health problems (and that is 1 in 4 within a year), should not be afraid to talk about their issues, just like anyone with asthma or diabetes.

2.2 **Reason for Decision**

Committing to signing up to this pledge will mean that the Council will support the development of an Mental Health Action Plan which aims to:

- Reduce the stigma surrounding mental health problems in the workplace;
- Support a positive model of mental health and wellbeing for all Adults, Young People and Children's Services.

Supporting Information

3. **Position**

- 3.1 Ensuring good mental health amongst the population is a great deal more than the absence of mental ill-health. Mental health impacts not only on an individual, but on families, workplaces, and communities.
- 3.2 Stigma and discrimination has a profound impact on the lives of people with mental health problems. It is unsurprising that people who do have a mental health problem are often unwilling to disclose it or talk about it.
- 3.3 In 2011, the Government published its mental health strategy, '*No health without mental health*'. Central to this is changing the attitudes around mental health which develop into stigma and discrimination, and prevent accepting that mental health problems are experienced by most people at some point in their life.

4. Possibilities and Options

- 4.1 Committing to this pledge, and achieving the support of the national 'Time To Change' team in doing so, will provide Torbay Council with the local and national status which will benefit it taking further action to support positive mental health in Torbay.

5. Fair Decision Making

- 5.1 The Torbay Health and Wellbeing Board members unanimously agreed to propose this action to the Council at the 12 February 2014 meeting.

6. Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012

Not applicable

7. Risks

Not agreeing to this proposal will impact on the credibility of the Council in terms of its visible commitment to mental health and wellbeing.

This will impact on the perception of the Council as an employer.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Equality Impact Assessment

Background Information

- 1 No Health without Mental Health: HM Government, 2011
- 2 Happiness: The Eternal Pursuit, 2012/13 Annual DPH report, Brighton and Hove City Council
- 3 Key Facts and Trends in Mental Health, NHS Confederation, January 2014
- 4 Closing the Gap,: Priorities for essential change in mental health. January 2014.