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**Cllr Simon Allen, Cabinet Member for Wellbeing  
Key Issues Briefing Note**

**Wellbeing Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel – November 2014**

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**Time to Change pledge - tackling mental health stigma**

A growing number of organisations are committing to end the stigma and discrimination against people who experience mental health problems and are agreeing to sign up to the 'Time to Change' pledge, established by the charities Mind and Rethink Mental Illness to promote a better understanding of mental health problems and create a positive shift in public attitude. At its November meeting, B&NES Health and Wellbeing Board signed the pledge, committing to work to reduce the stigma associated with mental health problems in Bath and North East Somerset. Work will include: a campaign through community pharmacies, running projects with local college students, working to complete the Workplace Wellbeing Charter and using local media to promote services more.

**Update on Wellbeing College Pilot**

The Council and Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) have agreed to fund the development of a Wellbeing College for two years. It is an idea led by a sub-group of the Mental Health Wellbeing Forum, made up of mental health commissioners, organisations providing services for people with mental health needs and service user and carer representative groups.

The emphasis of the Wellbeing College will be on early intervention, prevention and self-management of long term conditions across the wellbeing spectrum, involving both physical and mental health.

The funding will enable:

- The setting up of a small scale college as a pilot using existing and new courses provided by Sirona Care & Health, Avon & Wiltshire Mental Health NHS Partnership Trust (AWP) and Council funded community providers including Second Step, St Mungos and Creativity Works;
- Independent evaluation by an organisation called *Talking Health* of the effectiveness of the courses and the approach, citizen experience and outcomes against agreed criteria;
- Develop the business case for future development;

The idea of a wellbeing college is an expansion of the notion of (mental health) Recovery Colleges and seeks to shift care pathways to prevention, wellbeing, resilience and social

inclusion on a long term basis. The College will offer an educative, co-produced or peer-led supportive course led approach to early intervention and self-management. Subject to evaluation, evidence from mental health Recovery Colleges suggests that the following benefits are likely to be achieved: improved quality of life through improved support for people with long-term conditions; reduced rates of mental ill-health in the longer term; improved skills, education and employment; and increased resilience of people and communities, including reduced loneliness and social isolation.

The launch is planned to take place for January 2015, with several courses confirmed, and up to 15 in a stage of development.

### **Mental Health Respite Beds**

B&NES Better Care Fund Plan identifies funding for the development of Respite Beds (with a community and therapeutic approach) as an additional resource offered through the Sirona Care & Health Mental Health Reablement Service, to help avoid admission to hospital and to prevent crises from occurring.

B&NES has one of only two adult of working age mental health reablement services in the country and the addition of three beds in a community setting would enhance their ability to intervene early without escalation into secondary services.

Learning from other respite facilities has informed the development of the local service. Important factors that these existing facilities share are: peer support, a homely welcoming feel and approach, availability of reparative therapies and communal activities and a recovery focus. The recruitment and training of volunteers and peers to work within this facility is being progressed.

### **Social Prescribing Service**

Following a pilot in 3 GP practices in Keynsham, the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) have agreed to fund the development of a Social Prescribing Service across the whole of B&NES. This service has the potential to affect both health services usage and outcomes as well as social inclusion and social care outcomes and so the funding has been made available through the joint commissioning arrangements.

Briefly, the aim of the service is to enable clinicians and health workers to redirect suitable patients away from the NHS and towards opportunities in their local community which can support their needs. People referred to the service may have mental health problems, long term conditions, or other practical issues which affect their mental and physical wellbeing, and they may lack support mechanisms in their lives (e.g. friends, family etc). Priority will be given to people who are identified by GPs as frequent attendees, although non-medical support will also be provided to other people where it is assessed that the involvement of the service may reduce future GP / health service attendance.

The new authority-wide service is due to be in operation from January 2015.

## **Community Links Service**

Two Sirona Care & Health provided mental health social care services, the Floating Support and Building Bridges Services, have merged to form a Community Links Service. The aim of the remodelled service is to help establish and develop community networks across B&NES, which are linked by participants' geography or shared interests. These will be peer led networks of support for people with mental health issues living independently in the community, and will incorporate strong elements of social prescribing, peer support and mentoring, with skilled, paid Sirona staff acting as a resource at the heart of the networks, and to help prevent people's mental health deteriorating if this is seen to occur.

To complement the networks, and as a means of preventing crises and maintaining people's mental wellbeing, the Service is currently looking at establishing 'pop-up hubs' in a range of community venues across B&NES. These will provide a drop in facility for people who need advice, information and practical help on issues which may affect their mental wellbeing, without them having to enter a 'service'.

The main focus over the next few months will be the further development of the peer mentoring approach and establishment of peer led community groups and networks.