**Mental Health Telephone Helpline & Webchat (Coventry & Warwickshire)**

**Summary of the Engagement Report 2019**

# Background

Coventry and Warwickshire has a Mental Health Telephone Helpline and Webchat for adults aged 16 years and over, who live in Coventry or Warwickshire and/or who are registered with a GP in Coventry or Warwickshire. The current service is provided by Mental Health Matters ([www.mhm.org.uk/coventry-warwickshire-helpline](http://www.mhm.org.uk/coventry-warwickshire-helpline)). The service offers emotional support, guidance or information, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and is offered from a free-phone telephone helpline, with a webchat option. People can self–refer or be signposted to the service.

Warwickshire County Council, on behalf of the Coventry and Warwickshire Health and Care Partnership, led a review of the Mental Health Telephone Helpline and Webchat for Coventry and Warwickshire during May and June 2019. A wide range of people were asked about what they felt was important about the service, including what was working well and what could be improved. The review comprised of an on-line survey (with paper copies of the survey available) and a series of face-to-face engagement opportunities.

**Feedback**

***Professionals/practitioners and representatives of organisations***

* Two-thirds of respondents were aware of the Mental Health Telephone Helpline and Webchat service.
* Of those who were aware 75% had referred or signposted people to the service. These respondents found it very easy or quite easy to refer/signpost to the service.
* Respondents felt it was helpful to have a 24-hour service; that it supplemented mainstream mental health services; and had received positive feedback from people they had referred to the service. Respondents thought that the helpline was particularly important for users at times of change/crisis in their lives.
* Negative feedback centred on the slow response time or lack of response when people contacted the service, and the set amount of time allowed for the call.
* Respondents suggested more promotion of the service to professionals and potential users.
* 86% of respondents said that a 24/7 Mental Health Telephone Helpline and Webchat should be available in the future.

## *General public (including existing and past users of mental health services)*

* The most common place to go for information about mental health services and support was a general practitioner followed by local/national charity/organisations and online search engines.
* Almost two-thirds of respondents had managed to find the information they needed when they had looked for information about mental health services and support. Those who had experienced difficulties mentioned not being able to find specific information for a mental health condition and signposting to sources that didn’t meet their need.
* The most common way of hearing about the Mental Health Telephone Helpline and Webchat service was signposting by a mental health professional.
* Of respondents who had received support from the service, over half found it very difficult or quite difficult to access the service.
* When asked to rate the support received from the service, 40% answered Very Good or Good and 40% answered Poor or Very Poor. Sixty percent would recommend the service to others.
* The majority of respondents said that the support received from the service helped their mental health in the days and weeks following their call.
* Positive comments about the service mentioned the understanding and caring nature of the personnel talking to the caller. Respondents liked the fact that it was accessible out of hours and the signposting to other services.
* Negative comments included personnel talking to the caller not being compassionate, the time to respond to the call or webchat, lack of understanding/training and the feeling that the response was scripted. The time limit given to users of the service was disliked.
* Two-thirds of respondents using the service had been signposted to another service for support. The majority found the service they were signposted to helpful.
* Non-users of the service mainly said they hadn’t used the service as they didn’t know about it.
* The availability of 24/7 helpline and online support, 365 days per year was felt to be very important and respondents felt strongly that this should be maintained.
* 77% of respondents said that a 24/7 Mental Health Telephone Helpline and Webchat should be available in the future. Those suggesting another service mainly advocated a face-to face service or more information on the website.
* When respondents were asked about where they would like to find out information and advice about mental health services and support in the future, the most common response was a general practitioner. The main difference between where people go currently and where they want to find information in the future was more information in public places (leaflets, posters, radio, TV and newspapers) or sources where they can self-serve (internet).
* More promotion of the service is needed to ensure the public can directly find out about services and that practitioners and organisations know about services to enable them to signpost.

# Conclusion and next steps

The engagement showed that the availability of 24/7 support is very important and needs to be widely promoted to ensure the public and professionals are aware of it.

Based on the feedback from the engagement activities the following next steps have / will be actioned;

Key comments and feedback regarding the existing service have been shared with the current provider so that they are aware of the feedback that people have taken the time to provide.

The engagement report has been shared and discussed at Coventry and Warwickshire’s Mental Health Commissioners Group and will be shared with the Coventry and Warwickshire Health and Care Partnership - Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing Programme Board.

Promotion of the service, along with other Mental Health and Wellbeing Services will be communicated across Coventry and Warwickshire. This will include promotion of the service to members of the public, to other Mental Health and Wellbeing service providers and to professionals.

The engagement report will be used to inform a tender for future Mental Health service provision.

A broad range of feedback was collected as part of the survey for this engagement exercise however only a small number of people had actually used the Mental Health Helpline and Webchat service. For this reason, further engagement will be undertaken with people who use the Mental Health Helpline and Webchat service, to seek to find out more detailed and service specific information that will be used to help shape future service specifications.

Finally, the Council and partners thanks the many participants to this engagement for their honest and detailed feedback, which will be used to help shape current and future service provision.