Preventing mental ill health in Nottingham City

The size of the issue

Mental health problems are common and exist throughout the life course affecting children, adults and older people. One in four people in the UK will experience a mental health problem each year (1). Based on national estimates, over 110,000 adults aged 16+ and over 5,000 children aged 5-16 living in Nottingham City are experiencing mental health conditions.

Those with serious mental illness are experiencing inequality in life expectancy, dying on average 15-20 years younger than the general population.

Nottingham City has comparatively lower self-reported happiness, life satisfaction and worthwhile ratings but improved self-reported anxiety compared to the English Core Cities average (2), as is displayed in Figure 1 below.
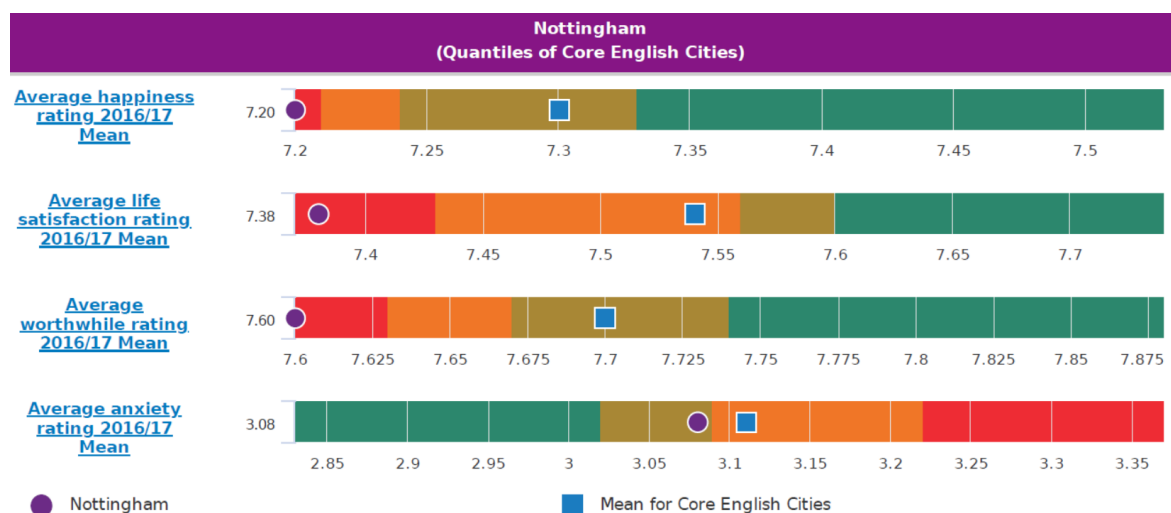

Figure 1: Personal wellbeing scores for Nottingham City, where a score of 0 is 'not at all' and a score of 10 is 'completely' (2)

Some of the inequalites in mental health that exist nationally are reflected in the local picture. Wellbeing tends to be lower in the wards where deprivation is highest and lower wellbeing scores are associated with people with physical health problems, disabilities and unemployment (3). Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups are generally considered to be at higher risk of developing mental ill health (4).

Local services

Services are commissioned by different organisations and the provision of universal services will include work around mental health. Mental health services, including primary and secondary services, are commissioned by Nottingham City Clinical Commissioning Group. Common mental health problems are primarily supported by primary care. Nottingham City Council provides mental health support for children and adolescents as well as through children and adult social care. NHS England funds specialist inpatient mental health services and services in secure settings, such as prisons.
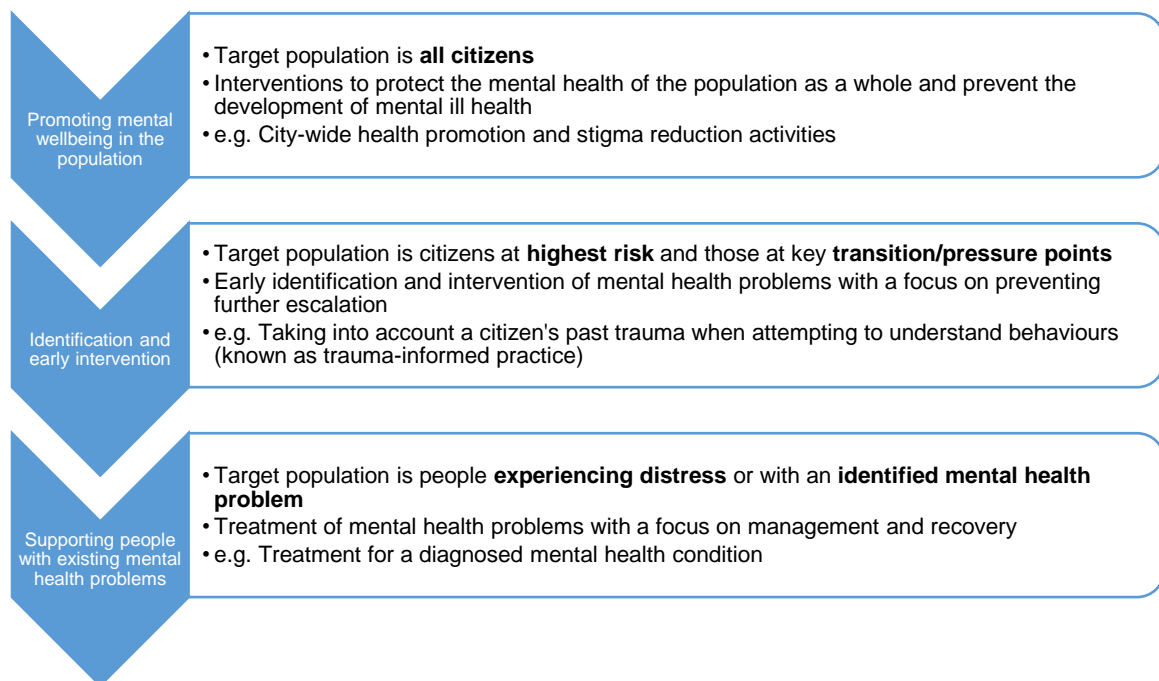
The case for prevention

Taking a system-wide prevention-focused approach to mental health can nurture a more equitable community in which the burden associated with mental health problems is reduced. A citizen's mental health plays a significant part in determining their health and social outcomes and the volume and complexity of public services they require.

There are three levels of prevention:

- Primary prevention involves intervening before the health effect;
- Secondary prevention aims to identify and intervene at the earliest signs of mental ill health; and
- Tertiary prevention is focused upon treatment, management and recovery (5).

All public services, voluntary organisations and indeed all organisations that come into contact with citizens have the opportunity to prevent mental ill health at at least one of these three levels, as is illustrated in Figure 2 below.

Promoting mental wellbeing in the population
- Target population is **all citizens**
- Interventions to protect the mental health of the population as a whole and prevent the development of mental ill health
- e.g. City-wide health promotion and stigma reduction activities

Identification and early intervention
- Target population is citizens at **highest risk** and those at key **transition/pressure points**
- Early identification and intervention of mental health problems with a focus on preventing further escalation
- e.g. Taking into account a citizen's past trauma when attempting to understand behaviours (known as trauma-informed practice)

Supporting people with existing mental health problems
- Target population is people **experiencing distress** or with an **identified mental health problem**
- Treatment of mental health problems with a focus on management and recovery
- e.g. Treatment for a diagnosed mental health condition

Figure 2: Types of mental ill health prevention

What are we doing?

Key areas of focus for mental ill health prevention are contained within overlapping local and national plans, strategies, policies and other publications. Some of the relevant local and national documents include:

- Happier Healthier Lives, Nottingham City's joint health and wellbeing strategy 2016-2020 (6);
- The refreshed Nottingham City Mental Health Strategy (currently in the final draft stages and due to be presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board in March 2019);

- Public Health England's Prevention Concordat for Better Mental Health (7);
- The NHS Five Year Forward View (8);
- The NHS Five Year Forward View for Mental Health (9)
- The Mental Health Foundation's Mental Health and Prevention: taking local action for better mental health (10); and
- The NHS Long Term Plan (11).

The following areas have been identified in the above listed publications as areas for focus in the prevention of mental ill health:

- Develop an adequately skilled workforce
- Promote mental health self-care
- Ensure mental health improvement is recognised and monitored as a priority outcome;
- Work together to reduce stigma and discrimination around mental health
- Develop a system that understands and mitigates the impact of adverse childhood experiences
- Consider the impact of wider influences on mental health, including:
  – Employment;
  – Financial vulnerability; and
  – Loneliness.
- Work jointly to prevent suicide.

Some examples of how progress in these areas is already being made are identified below.

Develop an adequately skilled workforce

Improving the capability of the system workforce to prevent mental health problems and support good mental health is a recognised means of improving the mental health of a population (7 and 10).

The **Nottingham City Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services** offer includes a practitioner who provides training to schools and other services. The Self-Harm Awareness and Resource Project also offers training to public services and the voluntary sector, including social workers, family support workers, healthcare workers and the education and voluntary sectors. Since the service was formed five years ago, 6,000 members of the workforce have been trained. (12)

The Practice Development Unit, a partnership between **Opportunity Nottingham** and **Nottingham Community and Voluntary Service**, also provides a learning and information resource to the local workforce around supporting people with complex needs including mental health problems.

Promote mental health self-care

Placing greater emphasis on system-wide social prescribing to improve health including mental health is encouraged in the NHS Five Year Forward View (8) and the very recently published NHS Long Term Plan (11). Evidence suggests this might be achieved in part through making evidence-based self-management resources readily accessible to all citizens (10).

Work is underway in the wider system to develop social prescribing. Plans are in place to include self-care advice and digital apps to encourage good mental health on Nottingham City Council's **AskLiON**, the local online service directory, as part of a wider healthy lifestyles presence. The healthy lifestyles site is currently in draft form undergoing consultation and will be finalised and made live in the spring of 2019.

Ensure mental health improvement is recognised and monitored as a priority outcome

Many local strategies already recognise mental health as a priority outcome. **Happier Healthier Lives**, Nottingham City's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-2020 (6) recognises mental wellbeing as

one of its four priority outcomes. The refreshed Nottingham City **mental health strategy** is in the final stages of drafting with a view to seeking endorsement from the Health and Wellbeing Board in the spring of 2019. The **Mental Health and Wellbeing Steering Group** coordinates the implementation of Happier Healthier Lives and other strategic developments on behalf of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Work together to reduce stigma and discrimination around mental health

Nottingham City Council hosts Nottingham **Time to Change**, which is coordinated by **Self Help Nottingham** and is having success in increasing public awareness and understanding of mental health, particularly in African and Caribbean communities and amongst local employers. Since March 2018, 70 community Time to Change champions have been recruited. On 23 February 2019, a champions' forum is being held on tackling stigma and discrimination from a black, Asian and minority ethnic perspective.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services are working hard to reduce discrimination around mental health including through a newsletter, which promotes mental health and wellbeing using an anti-stigmatising approach with articles from children and young people as well as professionals on various topics related to mental health. (12)

Develop a system that understands and mitigates the impact of adverse childhood experiences

Adverse childhood experiences are defined as potentially traumatic life events that can have lasting negative effects on a person's health and wellbeing.

The targeted **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services** offer includes a Universal Services Practitioner, who works directly with schools and universal services to offer training and gain confidence in working with mental health needs. The practitioner links with schools in a number of ways to offer support, including by offering support directly to secondary school aged children, a pilot project about the early identification of mental health needs in primary school aged children and monthly self-harm clinics. The offer also includes parent/carer psychoeducation workshops that cover anxiety, depression, attachment, self-harm awareness and transgender children. (12)

Working jointly with the MH2K project, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services are developing a co-designed poster detailing available support, which will be on the back of all school toilet doors in order to improve access to support for those who need it. (12)

The **Self-Harm Awareness and Resource Project** offers monthly self-harm clinics to 18 secondary schools, delivers school assemblies and exam stress workshops. The service has also trained 22 primary schools in a training package for professionals about recognising and supporting self-harm and provides SHARP4Parents, which supports parents and carers through awareness workshops. (12)

Consider the impacts of wider influences on mental health

Employment and financial vulnerability

Investment in mental health in the workplace has been shown to be cost-effective. Every £1 invested in workplace wellbeing results in an estimated saving of £2.37 over one year and every £1 spent on stress prevention in the workplace saves £2 over two years (13).

Nottingham City Council is working towards being an exemplar employer around mental health. It has made a public commitment to supporting staff by signing the **Time to Change Employer Pledge** and becoming a Mindful Employer. An employee mental health policy has been introduced and there is extensive training for both managers and colleagues. The council is working towards 'Disability Confident Leader' status.

The Nottingham **Time to Change Hub** commenced in March 2018 and has identified the workplace as one of its target areas to reduce stigma and discrimination and improve wellbeing. Time to Change workshops have been held for local employers, including a masterclass on embedding mental health across workplace policy. To date, nine local employers have completed Time to Change action plans and eight more are pending.

A cross-sector **health and employment strategic group** is enabling closer partnership working around supporting people with mental health problems to sustain or gain employment. The group is currently exploring how employment can be embedded as part of social prescribing and promoting uptake of Disability Confident.

Specific short-term funded, targeted initiatives include:

- Talking therapies combined with employment support and online access to **Silvercloud**, which is being delivered by Let's Talk Wellbeing, Insight Healthcare and Trent PTS (funded by the Department for Work and Pensions).

- The **Construction Industry Peer Support programme**, which involves close working with construction employers to improve the mental health of their employees (including contracted workers) through using different peer support techniques.

Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust is a centre of excellence for the **Individual Placement Support** programme, which supports people with severe mental health conditions into employment as part of their wider recovery.

Loneliness

A **loneliness partnership** has been established to explore how more cross-sector collaborative approaches, which build on current assets, might improve social wellbeing in the city. An all-age action plan is under development.

Social prescribing has been rolled out across the city - the pilot phase indicated that the majority of referrals being made were linked to people feeling lonely. However, demand for local community and voluntary sector provision, such as befriending opportunities, is outstripping what is currently available.

AskLiON was launched in 2017 to help citizens and cross-sector partners find information about a wide range of organisations and services that promote independence, connections and self-help. Specific web pages have been dedicated to signposting activities and support that will help reduce loneliness and social isolation. A wellbeing wheel is currently being added to the site.

Age Friendly Nottingham brings together a broad selection of community and voluntary groups who support older citizens to live independently in their homes. Age Friendly Nottingham action has included an annual 'Ageing Well Day' being established in the Old Market Square where citizens aged 50+ and carers are able to access a range of advice and guidance from cross sector partners (over 30 held stalls in 2018).

Older citizens are now able benefit from the Age Friendly Nottingham '**Take a Seat**' initiative, which has resulted in additional seating being made available for people who need to sit down and catch their breath whilst out and about. The initiative is offered at over 330 locations across the city.

The Age Friendly Nottingham Bulletin has a readership of 5,500+ and focuses on improving the lives of older citizens and signposting to opportunities and reliable advice. Forums have been held to explore how volunteering can be increased, promote peer support and address specific issues such as loneliness and scams. Age Friendly Nottingham supports initiatives that promote social wellbeing such as social dining and increasing the arts and culture offer to older citizens across the city.

The **Nottinghamshire Carers Hub** has been established to provide a single point of contact offering information, advice and support to carers of citizens with disability or long-term conditions.

Work jointly to prevent suicide

Nottingham City is part of a county-wide well established **multi-agency partnership** around suicide prevention and the strategy is presently being refreshed. Recent focus has been on high-risk groups including men and people with a history of self-harm.

Every £1 spent on suicide prevention saves society £2.93 over ten years (13). This might be through targeting high-risk locations and improving support for identified high-risk groups including young people, people who self-harm and people with substance misuse problems.

Recommendations

The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to:

a) use the contents of the report to inform the discussion around preventing mental ill health in Nottingham City; and

b) discuss and agree action that will be undertaken by the Health and Wellbeing Board or its members to prevent mental ill health, including the following questions:

1. How could **mental health champions** be identified and what role might they have within your organisation?

2. Could your organisation sign the **Time to Change Employer Pledge** to demonstrate its commitment to changing how people think and act about mental health in the workplace and ensure employees with mental health problems are supported?

3. How could your organisation ensure its workforce has access to **mental health training**?

4. In understanding the impact of **past traumatic experiences** on mental health, how might your organisation take this into account when reviewing its working practices and supporting its workforce?

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