



Equalities Committee
12 September 2016

**Report from the Director of
Human Resources and
Organisational Development**

Wards affected:
ALL

Mental Health in Brent

1.0 Summary

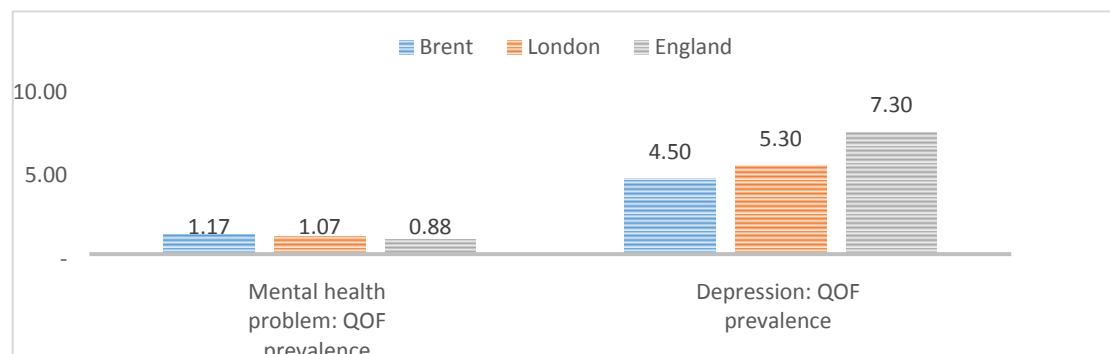
This report outlines Brent Council's internal support arrangements promoting a mental health friendly environment and good mental wellbeing of its employees. It also provides information on the services and programmes supporting residents and service users with mental health needs.

2.0 Recommendations

The Equalities Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.

3.0 Detail

One in four people will experience mental illness at some point in their lives. Mental health problems range from reactions to normal life events such as bereavement, relationship breakdowns and depression, to more complex conditions such as schizophrenia. Brent has a higher than average prevalence of serious mental health problems (1.17) but a lower prevalence of depression (4.50)¹ compared to London and England averages.



¹ Quality and Outcomes Framework, NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre (<http://fingertips.phe.org.uk/>)

In April 2016, of people in contact with mental health services: 26% were aged 0-18 years old, 61% were aged 19-64 years old and 14% were aged 65 and over years old. Around 60% of people accessing mental health services in Brent are from black, Asian and minority ethnic groups².

According to the latest [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#) for Brent, in September 2015 the recorded (on GP practice registers) prevalence of dementia in people aged 65 years and over was 4.83%. This was higher than the England average of 4.27%. Estimates show that around 730 people with dementia were undiagnosed in NHS Brent Clinical Commissioning Group and that of those with dementia in Brent 55.1% had mild dementia, 32.7% had dementia of moderate severity and 12.2% had severe dementia. Projections show that the number of people aged 65 and over with dementia will increase by 63% over the next 15 years in Brent.

Brent Council is committed to having a diverse workforce that is representative of the equalities profile of its communities, and has legal duties to advance equality of opportunity for disabled people and to make reasonable adjustments to its workplace practices and environment. The Council is working hard to promote a mental health friendly environment and inclusive recruitment, employment and customer service practices.

The 2015-16 Workforce Diversity profile shows that just over ten per cent of employees disclose a disability / long-term health condition (compared to 18% of the working age population in Brent). Of those who specified the type of their disability or long term health condition, only seven per cent have disclosed a mental health condition. We are aware that people are much less likely to disclose a mental health illness and that the mental health related conditions are under-reported due to cultural barriers, negative perceptions around mental health or people not identifying their needs as a disability.

3.1 Brent Council internal arrangements

Brent is a Disability Confident employer, however, the council recognises that there is still a lot to be done, particularly in reducing inequalities experienced by people with mental health needs. We work in partnership with organisations such as Brent Mind, Remploy and the Business Disability Forum (BDF) to raise awareness, minimise barriers facing people with mental health needs and promote good mental wellbeing in the workplace.

In line with best practice the council has implemented a comprehensive support package of policies, initiatives and programmes that are either directly or indirectly benefitting people with mental health needs. Some of these are listed below:

3.1.1 Mental Health Awareness and Emotional Resilience

Apart from the generic Equality and Diversity e-module, the Disability Confident training and the training on Unconscious Bias Brent employees

² <https://data.gov.uk/dataset/access-to-community-mental-health-services-by-people-from-black-and-minority-ethnic-bme-groups->

and managers are also offered Mental Health Awareness training and Stress Management & Emotional Resilience training.

To mark the Mental Health Awareness week (16 – 22 May), the council delivered a number of mental health awareness sessions for staff and managers in partnership Brent Mind. In total 73 officers attended the training, of whom two thirds were non-managers and the remaining one third were managers. The training was accepted very well and the feedback was extremely positive, both from managers and non-managers.

The Corporate Learning and Development Lead is currently liaising with training providers to commission monthly mental health awareness sessions for staff and managers starting from September 2016. The new corporate training offer will also be complemented by Stress Management training for staff and managers.

3.1.2 Attendance, stress management and supervision policies

The Attendance policy requires managers to complete return to work interviews for their employees, and clearly outlines the specific provisions around absences due to an employee's disability or long term health conditions to ensure that employees are treated fairly.

A revised Stress policy supported by relevant training was introduced in January 2015. The new policy clearly sets out the health risks to Brent staff in relation to stress, including workplace stress, and the roles and responsibilities of managers and staff in preventing and managing stress and its effects.

Additionally, the Supervision guidelines require managers to hold regular one-to-one meetings with their staff and proactively encourage discussions about their staff health and wellbeing.

3.1.3 Reasonable / workplace adjustments

The council's Guidance on workplace adjustments enable managers to effectively carry out their role in creating an open and supportive environment for staff with disabilities and those with long or short term health conditions.

The guidance provides managers with information on how to deal with reasonable adjustments requests and gives practical examples of types of reasonable adjustments. The guidance also contains an Access to Work factsheet and a Workplace Adjustments form, along with relevant contact details (e.g. Occupational Health, EAP service).

Brent is a member of the Business Disability Forum (BDF) and staff can register with their Brent email addresses to access useful BDF resources. Line managers can also contact the BDF free and confidential Advice Service to answer any queries about disability and workplace adjustments.

3.1.4 Flexible Working policy

The Flexible Working provision is highly praised by Brent staff and can also be applied as a reasonable adjustment for employees who require changes to their working patterns due to disability, long or short terms health conditions.

3.1.5 Employee Assistance Programme

The confidential Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is available to all staff and their families. The EAP provides a free 24/7 helpline for employees and their families to access advice on legal matters, counselling and practical support on emotional wellbeing. The service also offers health and wellbeing webinars and useful guidelines for employees to access online.

3.1.6 Occupational Health service

The in-house Occupational Health (OH) service is available to staff who have been referred to OH by their managers or by Human Resources. The OH Adviser provides support to staff with a wide range of health conditions and/or disabilities, including mental health and eating disorders.

3.1.7 Staff disability network

The network was established in November last year and is sponsored by Phil Porter, Strategic Director of Community and Wellbeing. Its role is to raise awareness of different types of disabilities / health conditions and to help remove barriers affecting disabled staff. Some of the priority areas identified by the staff disability network include: promoting the importance of staff disability self-disclosure, workplace adjustments and mental health in the workplace.

3.1.8 Council's Health and Wellbeing programme

There are a number of ways in which staff benefit from the Council's health and wellbeing programme, including:

- Inclusive health and fitness opportunities to encourage healthy lifestyles for staff
- Awareness raising campaigns on themes such as mental health, eating disorders, dementia, etc
- Regular health and wellbeing events throughout the year such as the Health and Wellbeing event in February, the Well Fair Day in July, International Day of People with Disabilities in December
- The annual health and wellbeing fair includes stalls from Brent Mind, Diabetes UK, Community Action on Dementia, Stroke Organisation, Occupational Health, Stop Smoking team.

The Council is currently working towards the Excellent level of the London Healthy Workplace Charter, a standardised assessment framework aimed at promoting employee health and wellbeing. We are also working with the staff Disability Equality Network and relevant services to renew the Council's Time to Change pledge for mental health.

3.1.9 Work-based experience policy

The council provides a variety of paid and unpaid opportunities that offer valuable and relevant work placement opportunities, including work experience opportunities, internships, volunteering, apprenticeships and graduate placements, for the community. The work-based experience policy is open to everyone but the council is particularly targeting people with disabilities such as learning disabilities and mental health needs.

Brent is part of the Mental Health and Employment Integration Trailblazer programme commissioned and delivered via the [West London Alliance](#). The programme aims to help ESA and JSA benefit claimants with common mental health conditions into sustainable employment, using an Individual Placement Support service model. There is a growing body of evidence to show that this is an effective model in both clinical mental health services and addictions services. The Trailblazer is a pilot project testing its success for people with common mental illness, and will be delivered across seven West London boroughs.

Subject to EU funding, it is anticipated the project will be rolled out in Brent in November 2016, working with 160 Brent residents from Tokyngton, Barnhill, Preston and Wembley.

3.1.10 Work placements for people with mental health and/or learning disabilities

This year we piloted a Work Placements scheme for local people with mental health and/or learning disabilities, in partnership with Remploy. The work placements are 13-week long and are paid at the London Living Wage rate (currently, £9.40 per hour). So far eight people have been selected for the available work placements in: HR, Finance, Digital Post Room, Employment and Skills, Housing Needs, Willesden Green Library and Brent Housing Partnership (two out of three available placements with BHP have been filled in). In addition, two of the candidates that have been interviewed for the work placements have been asked to apply for available vacancies with BHP.

In December as part of the International Day of People with Disabilities, we will also hold a jobs fair for local people with disabilities, including residents with mental health and learning disabilities when they will have to opportunity to meet with local and London-based employers.

3.2 Services available to Brent's residents and service users with mental health needs (non-exhaustive list)

Brent Council and Brent Clinical Commissioning Group is working in partnership with the Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust (CNWL) to deliver services for local residents with mental needs and illnesses. These also include support services targeted at specific groups such as women's only services, services targeted at ethnic minority groups, services for youth offenders, etc A full list of these services can be found on the [CNWL services directory](#) .

Some of the services available to Brent's residents and service users with mental health needs include:

3.2.1 Community Child and Adolescent mental health services

[Community child and adolescent mental health services](#) work with children and young people up to the age of 18 (and their families) with complex mental health difficulties, in a range of different ways depending on their needs. Treatment may include cognitive behavioural therapy, family therapy, play therapy, individual and group psychotherapy. Some of the centres providing child and adolescent services, including perinatal and postnatal support include: [Bell House](#), [Brent Adolescent Team](#), [Brent Child and Family Clinic](#), [Brent Early Intervention Service](#), [Coombe Mother and Baby Unit](#) .

3.2.2 Improving Access to Psychological Therapies programme (IAPT)

Brent IAPT (part of the national Improving Access to Psychological Therapies programme) is a free, confidential NHS service which provides psychological treatment for depression and anxiety disorders. People seeking help with difficulties other than depression or anxiety, or whose difficulties require more specialist or intensive treatment which cannot be provided in a primary care setting, can be directed to the appropriate specialist or secondary care mental health services.

3.2.3 Brent Talking Therapies and the Big White Wall

[Brent Talking Therapies](#) and counselling services are offered to people with low mood, anxiety, particular fears or problems coping with daily life and relationships.

[Big White Wall](#) is commissioned by Brent CCG and is free to all Brent residents with mental health needs over the age of 16. Big White Wall offers one-to-one online therapy sessions with trained counsellors available online 24 hours a day, seven days a week via webcam, audio and instant messaging.

3.2.4 Social Isolation in Brent Initiative

[Social Isolation in Brent Initiative \(SIBI\)](#) is a joint initiative funded by Brent Adult Social Care, Public Health and Brent CCG and is managed by Brent CVS. The project is targeted at individuals identified as being at risk of or experiencing, social isolation, a lack of social contact and low community involvement. Loneliness can lead to serious health

consequences, such as depression and anxiety, which affects emotional and mental wellbeing. The SIBI team is working with people to help them access the support they need, explore potential barriers such as transport, finance, housing and digital inclusion and signpost them to organisations that may be able to offer help and support.

3.2.5 Certitude's Brent Community project

[Certitude's Brent Community projects](#) are commissioned by NHS Brent Clinical Commissioning Group. The Development Work team works with the general public, local organisations and clinical teams to promote mental health and wellbeing among minority ethnic communities living in Brent. The services and support offered through the project include:

- mental health awareness: celebrating different communities, championing fairness and equal access to services, and reducing health inequalities
- clinical partnership: working with local GP surgeries, organisations and mental health services
- patient engagement: asking local communities what works well and what could be improved
- community peer support: being positive about recovery from mental health issues and helping service users to get involved in their local communities

Information and contact details about these services can be found [here](#).

3.2.6 Housing related support

One of the main areas of focus for Brent Adult Social Care and CNWL over the last few years has been on providing suitable accommodation for people using mental health services. They run a project aimed at improving the lives of mental health users by providing good quality accommodation meeting their needs and supporting independent living.

Housing related support enables vulnerable people to access appropriate support services to develop the necessary skills to sustain a tenancy and move on to live independently in the community. Housing related support is delivered via:

Accommodation based services – placements in hostels, supported housing for groups of people with similar support needs e.g. mental health issues, substance misuse problems, people with learning difficulties and those with offending histories.

Floating Support services - assisting individuals living across all tenures with practical skills e.g. accessing relevant benefits, budgeting, paying bills and linking clients with health, social, education and employment services. [Start Plus provides](#) a single point of access into housing related support, co-ordinating referrals for accommodation based support and floating support services. The team works with service users,

referral agencies and housing related support providers funded from the Housing Related Support programme.

Brent Council and CNWL continue to work in partnership to build on the success achieved so far. Further work is being undertaken to improve access to independent living both through supported and private rented accommodation.

3.2.7 Brent Mental Health User Group (BUG)

[Brent Mental Health User Group \(BUG\)](#) raises awareness on issues affecting general and specific aspects of mental health; support people with mental health needs and illnesses; participate in the planning, development, delivery and monitoring of mental health and other relevant services; develop alternatives to traditional models of health and social care services to meet the needs of a range of communities.

3.2.8 Brent Carers Centre

[Brent Carers Centre](#) offers carers living in or caring for a person living in Brent an extensive range of information and advice services on all aspects of their caring responsibilities.

3.2.9 Ashford Place

[Ashford place](#) is a community resource centre (previously known as Cricklewood Homeless Concern) based in Cricklewood that provides peer support and a variety of activities and outreach services within the community for people with mental health needs within Brent. Ashford place has also been commissioned by Brent CCG to deliver The Peer Support programme for people living with dementia, as part of the Community Action on Dementia project.

3.2.10 Community Action on Dementia (CAD)

The Committee is provided with a separate information item on the [Community Action on Dementia project \(CAD\)](#).

3.2.11 Dementia Café

The Dementia Café is a facilitated social event for people with dementia and their carers that offers a safe and secure environment, in which they can open up to discuss dementia and its impact on their daily lives. During these sessions attendees receive peer support and engage with professionals offering information and advice as well as the opportunity to participate in a range of activities. The Dementia Café is currently delivered from Ashford place, the Kingsbury resource centre and St Cuthbert's Church in North Wembley.

3.2.12 Brent Mind

[Brent Mind](#) is one of the leading charities in the borough that provide information and support for people with mental health needs. They also raise awareness around the stigma associated with mental health and deliver Mental Health Awareness training sessions for Brent employees.

Contact Officers:

David Veale, Director of HR and OD
Andreyana Ivanova, Head of Equality

DAVID VEALE
Director of Human Resources & Organisation Development