EMERGING FROM LOCKDOWN

Prepared by: JRG Date: 15/09/20 Agenda no: 6b

Purpose of the paper

For Information

Background and context

Lockdown restrictions in Calderdale – in some areas, at least – are being eased in line with national guidance. At the time of writing, areas within the Halifax constituency have additional restrictions.

Where are we now?

We have done remarkably well to adapt services so that support has continued to be available throughout the pandemic.

Service users are asking when face-to-face activities will resume: a reasonable question in light of lockdown easing.

Some outdoor activities, like walking groups, have been re-introduced subject to limited numbers and risk assessments approved by operational managers. We are not considering indoor activities for the foreseeable future.

Staff have been permitted – not required - to return to the office if they wish. Premises have been stocked with antibac supplies and numbers limited – this has not been problematic.

As there is much uncertainty about the future, team has discussed how we might exert control on the situation. Rather than a temporary "holding position", waiting for normality to resume, we are defining our "new normal". Redesigned services, such as online workshops and telephone conferencing for support groups, have proven successful in many cases.

What are the key issues?

Safety of staff, volunteers and service users is the primary concern. Until we can be confident that nobody is put in unnecessary risk, we will not push reintroduction of face to face services but instead focus on strengthening our remote offer.

Clear communication with public and service users is needed. We have been posting updates during the pandemic, and the latest statement is included at the end of this paper.

Time Out is a particular concern in service redesign: a significant element of its delivery model has been going physically into schools and this looks uncertain. In the coming weeks,

we will work with the team to develop a new offer that can be clearly communicated to schools.

We are conscious that not everyone has, or wants, access to digital technology and this is may be a barrier. The team has found alternatives to ensure that people get resources by post and we have subscribed to telephone conferencing services as well as two text platforms: a standalone service for Safespace and another for general use. We continue to consider digital exclusion when shaping delivery.

What is asked of trustees?

These are operational matters and the board should be aware of HM's response to ongoing challenges.

Finance

There has been some cost in subscriptions to new services to support delivery. Emergency funding from Lloyds Foundation has covered a significant proportion, with remaining costs covered from service budgets.

Additional equipment like laptops and mobile phones has had to be purchased – again, we have been able to cover mostly through emergency funding (temporary extension for Safespace, for example, included purchasing equipment).

Service redesign necessarily considers available resources. This is not a worry.

Recommendation

Board is asked to note information.

Public statement issued 04/09/20:

The latest official advice on coronavirus restrictions is here. At the moment, some areas in Calderdale have additional, local restrictions and we understand this is to be reviewed next week (from 7th September).

This is a fast-changing scenario and we will continue to issue updates as circumstances change. We have tried to answer the most-asked questions below:

How can I get support from Healthy Minds?

All our services are still running by telephone and online. If you usually attend a support group, workers will keep in touch with you.

Find out what activities are coming up on our website here.

You can contact us through the Halifax office on 01422 345154, email info@healthymindscalderdale.co.uk , via Facebook @healthymindscalderdale or our new text service on 07418 311736. You may have to leave a message and one of the team will call you back.

Safespace is available every evening from 6.30pm on 01422 345154 / text 07388 990227/ email safespace@healthymindscalderdale.co.uk.

If you are aged 10 – 19, our Time Out project is running a text / listening line which you can contact on 07418 311736. This is for general support and a listening ear (you can have a text conversation if chatting is not your thing). Time Out has good connections with other services and can help put you in touch with therapy and counselling services if that is what you need. You can also email timeout@healthymindscalderdale.co.uk

Why can I go to a pub or restaurant but not a support group?

We appreciate that some of the official guidance seems contradictory, even confusing, at the moment: depending on where you live in Calderdale, you might be able to be around a bunch of strangers in a pub but you cannot visit family or friends in their homes or gardens.

It may feel that some of the guidance is more about getting people to spend to boost the economy rather than public health. The economic situation is important but our main concern at Healthy Minds is your safety.

We have reintroduced some activities that can be safely held outdoors. We cannot yet bring back indoor activities: many venues remain closed and our own premises are not open to visitors. We miss seeing people in drop-ins and support groups as much as you do and

we look forward to being able to do that again – but we have to be confident that it is safe. As things stand, we are not planning to hold indoor activities for the foreseeable future.

What about the allotments?

We have allotments in Todmorden and Pye Nest. Importantly, allotments are not "public outdoor spaces" as they are on private land – it's the same as going into someone's garden. As some lockdown restrictions have been lifted in Todmorden, we can start to meet again there (maximum six people at a time).

Pye Nest is within the Halifax constituency where additional restrictions apply, so we cannot meet there at present.

Time Out workers have run workshops in schools. When will they be able to visit my school?

Now that schools are back, the Time Out team will be talking with school staff and other services to figure out the best and safest ways to offer workshops and support. The honest answer right now is that we don't have all the answers and it might be some time before details are worked out. We will post updates when we have them, and you can see what Time Out is offering on their website: www.timeoutcalderdale.co.uk . You can contact the team on timeout@healthymindscalderdale.co.uk to start conversations about your school's needs.

Is Healthy Minds going to have to stop any services?

We don't plan to close any services. Healthy Minds is funded through lots of different sources, and some of this ends at different times: most services are secure for another year at least, and some longer; some funding is due to end soon and we continue to seek ongoing support for the services affected.

We are confident that we are providing the right services in the right places and we achieve good results. That means we are in a good position to seek further funding.

The impact of coronavirus on the economy means that there are difficult times ahead, however, and nobody really knows what the future holds. There is likely to be less money available to keep services going, and some things may have to change – this is a future that all services will have to face, not just Healthy Minds.

You can help us by sharing your experiences: if support from Healthy Minds has made a difference, please tell us, as this is useful evidence to illustrate our work (we won't use details that would identify you). If you are able to make a donation or fundraise for Healthy Minds, that is also very welcome support. We hope soon to revive Healthy Minds membership and becoming a member is an easy and powerful way to show your support: if lots of people in Calderdale sign up as members, it shows that Healthy Minds is valued in the community.