

“Towards a Mentally Flourishing Scotland” The future of Mental Health Improvement in Scotland 2008-11

North Ayrshire Choose Life Steering Group

Points to be contributed towards the Ayrshire consultation process re the above document

1. The Steering group was in broad agreement with the approach of the document and the model of Mental Health illustrated. In particular the movement away from viewing mental health as an “illness” and moving towards the more general concept of “flourishing” was welcomed.
2. It was also felt that the main themes were positive and in keeping with the approaches adopted previously by Choose Life i.e. Promotion, Prevention and Support.
3. The target groups were also viewed as a statement of the current direction of both mental health improvement activity and Choose Life.
4. Particular emphasis on the early years and children and young people was also welcomed
5. Areas of clarity were needed over how Suicide prevention “fitted in” as it was mentioned as an area for action in its own right but also aspects were implicit within other areas of the paper.

In answer to the consultation questions posed within the paper there was an agreement that in order to sustain and consolidate suicide prevention activity there should be some shared objectives around :

- a) Targeting communities in a meaningful way and directly engaging with them e.g. bars and pubs poster campaign, delivery of suicidetalks directly to local communities, direct work with young people in schools,
- b) Training and awareness raising particularly outlined at 9.5, has to be multi-agency and with a strategic direction but on a whole population/neighbourhood/community basis. Training(especially Suicide Prevention training) is not simply about targets for staff (Commitment 7 of Delivering for Mental Health) but has been driven forward across local communities in North Ayrshire. Talking about suicide is a key to prevention. Co-ordination of capacity building activity should be clear and should be driven across all parts of our communities.
- c) Suicide Prevention should be part of the whole but there is still a need to provide separate forums with particular expertise and knowledge. We do not feel that locally we are in a position to lose this level of knowledge and this then links directly to the need for support at a National Level.
- d) There is a target of reducing suicides by 2013 and this needs to be reflected in any objectives and across all partner organisations. Defined actions relating to suicide prevention would help ensure activity beyond 2008 both nationally and locally.
- e) Self-Harm is included and mentioned but it would be helpful to be clearer about how we work to reduce self-harm and the many complex issues surrounding the issue. Whether there is a plan to develop a particular strategy or action plan in this area.

- f) “Keep Well” has been referred to under 8.4 (in relation to Prevention) although there are no real objectives within Keep Well that relate to suicide prevention so links will need to be explicit and clear.

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On behalf of the Choose Life Steering Group-North Ayrshire
January 2008