

WMCA Wellbeing Board

Date	17 th July 2020
Report title	Review of Thrive - #ThriveWM2031
Portfolio Lead	Cllr Izzi Seccombe -Wellbeing
Accountable Chief Executive	Deborah Cadman -WMCA
Accountable Employee	Sean Russell Head of Wellbeing Sean.russell@wmca.org.uk
Report has been considered by	Ed Cox PSR Director

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

1. To consider the report
2. Approve the approach going forward

1. Purpose

1.1. This report is to provide a high-level overview of the proposed review of the Mental Health Commission Thrive programme and the creation of a new strategic approach #ThriveWM2031. It seeks to set out the overarching ambition for a new focused work and health approach and the need to engage partners, stakeholders and the citizens of the West Midlands. The paper is being circulated through the board for early consultation with Wellbeing lead Members, Health and Public Health partners before establishing the final approach to the review.

2. Background

2.1. In January 2017, WMCA launched the Mental Health Commission chaired by Rt. Hon Sir Norman Lamb. The programme outlined twenty-one actions which have reported to the board over the last three years. The biggest outcomes achieved by the programme have been within the work and health arena, mental health awareness and citizen engagement projects.

2.2. The action plan initiated the implementation of a number of mental health programmes operating as a set of individual pilots. During the life of the programme a number have seen a level of positive effect i.e. Thrive at work recruiting 400 businesses and reaching

a possible 232,000 employees, Thrive into Work placing 520 employees into work and Mental Health First Aid training 43,000 people in the region.

2.3. However, the COVID 19 pandemic and the scale of the health inequalities in the region prior to this require a shift in activity to generate a layer of added value within the realms of the WMCA strategic objectives.

2.4. This report seeks to create a new narrative for generating action by reconvening and refreshing the Mental Health Commission Action Plan and creating a ten-year plan to tackle the challenges posed by poor mental health in the workplace. The proposed strategy seeks to align current work streams and approaches within Local Authorities, Public Health and wider health and business economy to enable the existing programmes to continue and ensure they are amplified across the region.

2.5. The ten-year plan will seek to operate in three waves:

2.5.1. **Wave 1** – *July 2020 to March 2021*. This period will seek to reconvene the Mental Health Commission and refresh the strategy. It will ensure all the existing programmes of work are reviewed through a Public Service Reform, Health Inequalities and Covid 19 Lens. It will seek to establish the agreed vision and strategy with the Cabinet lead and formally launch in April 2021.

2.5.2. **Wave 2** – *April 2021 to March 2023*. This period will identify new programmes of work in line with the proposed strategy. It will seek to develop Thrive at Work into a self-sustaining funded programme and integrate the IPS programme into the NHS Long Term Plan. It will also seek opportunities to amplify the mental health agenda through the Commonwealth Games as a sustainable legacy benefit.

2.5.3. **Wave 3** – *April 2023 – March 2031*. The Mental Health Commission will be reconvened, and the strategy reviewed. Delivery will continue or refresh to meet the overarching strategic objectives.

2.6. The overarching framework for wave 1 and 2 seeks to refresh the programme into 3 key pillars:

2.6.1. **Thrive into work** – driving improved employment opportunities for people living with poor physical and mental health through the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) programme – recognising that this approach is outlined in the NHS Long Term Plan and maximising the role that WMCA has in convening and supporting the productivity, skills and economic recovery of the citizens and businesses. Seeking to support 3000 people with poor physical and mental health into work.

2.6.2. **Thrive at work** – creating an environment which supports everyone to make better healthy lifestyle choices and improves the productivity of the region by reducing the number of work-related sickness days by 2% over ten years.

2.6.3. **Mental health Awareness** – supporting organisations to roll out of a number of mental health awareness programmes; Mental Health First Aid, Every Minds Matters and This is Me with the ambition that 500,000 people will be trained in mental health awareness. Linking mental health awareness to workplaces will seek to reduce the stigma attached to poor mental health and promote positive work places where people can thrive.

- 2.7. The aim of this approach is to align these three key work streams into a coherent programme which will create step change across the WMCA regional workspaces (appendix 1).
- 2.8. The Combined Authority is uniquely placed to drive and support activity at a regional level and create leverage and influence that is not available on a local place level.

3. Next Steps

- 3.1. The Mental Health Commission will be reconvened as a task and finish group and a new action plan will be developed in light of the Pandemic. The original members will be contacted, and it is proposed that a number of new participants are included to maximise the opportunities across the region. The group will consist of representative partners, stakeholders across the broader system and ensure the most up to date evidence and interventions are examined.
- 3.2. The existing staffing levels will be reviewed to align the grant funded posts; Thrive at Work (Midlands Engine funded) and IPS (Work and Health Unit funded) with the existing fee-based roles to create a more coherent team. The proposal is to establish a new Head of Thrive role to oversee the strategic development and reconfigure the existing vacant posts to include a Head of Partnership and Engagement to drive the awareness raising approach.
- 3.3. It is also proposed that the Thrive programmes will work more closely with the Productivity and Skills team and Transport for West Midlands and seek to create a portfolio offer of products that WMCA can offer businesses / employees across the region, reducing multiple contacts with businesses.
- 3.4. *Proposed Timeline –*
 - 3.4.1. The draft framework is being shared with the Wellbeing board on 17th July 2020
 - 3.4.2. The Mental Health Commission Task and Finish Group will commence in September and work through 4 meetings until December 2020.
 - 3.4.3. Final draft plan will to be presented to the Wellbeing Board in January 2021.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1. This draft proposal is intended to spark a debate and create a framework for action. It is intending to make the significant change in our region by reducing the burden that poor workplace wellbeing is causing.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1. The existing staffing budget for Thrive is £432,317.92 in year 2020/21 with an existing fee-based external consultancy budget funding of £131,000.
- 5.2. The proposed new model for #ThriveWM2031 going forward will see an increase in staffing resource and reshaping of the existing resource, creating a proposed uplift of £49,300. This will raise the programme staffing budget to £481,600.
- 5.3. It is proposed that the existing fee-based funding for external consultancy of £131,000 will reduce to £90,000 from 2021 to enable the programme to meet the core objectives.
- 5.4. The new staffing resource budget will be reconciled by using the reduction of £40,000 from the external advice budget and a review of new posts through the job evaluation

framework. Funding for the resources to construct the proposed framework and support the consultation are therefore to be met from the existing wellbeing budget.

5.5. Grant funded programmes (Individual Placement and Support (IPS) and Midlands Engine funding) have ring fenced budgets and will operate in line with their terms and conditions and work is ongoing to secure these programmes post their end dates.

6. Legal Implications

6.1. No issues at this stage. This will be reviewed post consultation

7. Equalities Implications

7.1. It is recognised that there are growing inequalities, with the prevalence of poor mental health in the workplace costing the UK economy £42bn per year through absenteeism and presenteeism. There are currently over 70,000 people out of work in the region with poor physical and mental health conditions and the pandemic has shown that between 30-36% of employees are feeling anxious. It is also recognised that the healthy life expectancy across the region is growing and employees are likely to be working with long term conditions for a significant number of years until they retire or leave the workplace through poor health. This refresh will seek to address these issues and focus on reducing the inequality gap.

8. Inclusive Growth Implications

8.1. There is an opportunity to test innovative interventions in the inclusive growth arena and work with the population intelligence hub and inclusive growth dashboard to tackle the rising inequalities. It is proposed that this framework supports the Inclusive Growth programme.

9. Geographical Area of Report's Implications

9.1. The framework is a whole system approach and any decision to test interventions or propose action will be considered within the Mental Health Commission proposed strategy and provide regular update to the Wellbeing Board.

8. Other Implications

None

10. Schedule of Background Papers

10.1. Appendix 1 - "PowerPoint #Thrive2031.