

Manchester City Council Report for Information

Report to: Health Scrutiny Committee – 22 May 2024

Subject: Mental Wellbeing Strategic Framework 2024-2029

Report of: Director of Public Health

Summary

This report provides the committee with an overview of the new Mental Wellbeing Strategic Framework for Manchester 2024-2029. The framework (full copy attached as an appendix) has been developed to provide a focus mental health and wellbeing as an essential component of overall health, and efforts to prevent ill-health and reduce health inequalities. It is intended to support the work of Making Manchester Fairer in reducing health inequalities. The framework reflects activity that is already underway across the Council and other organisations and identifies opportunities for further developing activities for improving mental health and wellbeing and preventing mental ill-health. Development of the framework has been guided by a multi-agency Mental Wellbeing Steering Group along with insights from trusted organisations that represent or work with people with lived experience of health inequalities who tend to be marginalised or seldom heard. Continual engagement of the workforce and services across the social determinants of health, and ongoing community and resident involvement will be critical to developing the detail and successful delivery of the framework.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the contents of the report;
 2. Consider the multiple factors that impact mental health and wellbeing; and
 3. Support the further development and delivery of the actions plans that will follow the framework with the involvement and engagement of local communities and partners across the population health system.
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Wards Affected: All

Environmental Impact Assessment -the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city	None
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in	The overall purpose of this plan is to improve mental health and wellbeing and prevent mental ill-health for all groups within the population, and

meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments	reduce inequalities in mental health and wellbeing.
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Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the Our Manchester Strategy/Contribution to the Strategy
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	Good quality work supports mental health and wellbeing. Good mental health enables people to be productive employees.
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	Good mental health enables people and communities to achieve their potential.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	

Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

Financial Consequences – Revenue

Not applicable

Financial Consequences – Capital

Not applicable

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

None.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 For many years, the health of people in Manchester has generally been worse than the England average across a range of outcome measures, with noticeable differences between the more and the less disadvantaged areas within the city. A worsening of health outcomes in Manchester was starting to become apparent in the years prior to the start of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in 2020 - improvements in all-cause mortality had stalled and had returned to the levels seen 10 years previously. The COVID-19 pandemic had the effect of accelerating and reinforcing pre-existing inequalities and trends, and since then national and international issues such as the cost-of-living crisis and economic uncertainty have increased poverty and worsened mental health and wellbeing.
- 1.2 The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines mental health as ‘a state of wellbeing in which the individual realises his or her abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.’ Mental health is inextricably linked with physical health, and both are influenced by a wide range of social, environmental and behavioural factors, inequalities, and access to services. Many UK and Manchester residents are currently experiencing circumstances that are far more challenging than the ‘normal stresses of life,’ and the impacts of those are far-reaching.
- 1.3 This report introduces Manchester’s first Strategic Framework for Mental Wellbeing, which has been developed to give a focus on the range of things that impact on mental health and wellbeing of Manchester’s residents and communities, and a framework for the actions that can be taken across our system to promote good mental health and wellbeing, prevent mental ill-health, and reduce inequalities in mental health. The report will summarise the key drivers of mental health and wellbeing, outline the work that has taken place to develop the strategic framework, and note the priority themes and action areas that will shape work to deliver it.
- 1.4 It is important to note and recognise the current severe challenges across the system that supports and cares for people with Severe and Enduring Mental Illness (SMI). People with SMI are at a greater risk of poor physical health and have a higher premature mortality than the general population. Local recent engagement has told us that they also experience multifaceted challenges including; barriers to accessing Community Mental Health Services, lack of continuity of care and support, difficulty securing stable affordable housing options, and managing complex mental illness and substance use (dual diagnosis). Although the actions needed to improve mental health care services specifically for people with SMI are out of scope for this report, the Framework will support the broader holistic approach needed to improve their outcomes more generally. The alignment will be explored further as part of the engagement and action planning process, to ensure we have a joined up, partnership and multiagency approach.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Mental health, like physical health, is determined by the interaction between social and economic factors (e.g. poverty, discrimination), our environment (e.g. housing, air quality), personal attributes (e.g. health behaviours), and availability and quality of healthcare and other support. It is estimated that 80% of the influences on mental health and wellbeing come from the first three of these factors.
- 2.2 Over recent years, a series of crises have worsened circumstances for many people, and reduced the resilience of people and communities and the services that support them, first stalling and then reversing healthy life expectancy (Marmot et al, 2020). This has led to worsening mental health in the UK, with higher levels of distress across the population, unsustainable demand on treatment and care services, and impacts on education and economic activity that affect productivity and growth. Mental and physical health are intertwined, and poor mental health can often lead to poor physical health. Healthy behaviours are more difficult to achieve if mental health is poor, and the life expectancy of a person with a severe mental illness is about 20 years shorter than someone without a diagnosis.
- 2.3 Evidence indicates that the risk factors that have the most substantial impact on population mental health and associated poor outcomes are: poverty, discrimination including racism, child neglect and abuse and insecure attachment, bullying and excessive exam and social media pressure, homelessness and poor quality and insecure housing, polluted (air, water, noise) and high traffic places, inactivity and poor diet, addictions, and unsafe and disconnected communities.
- 2.4 These risks and impacts are not distributed evenly within the population. People living in poverty, people with physical disabilities and illnesses, people with neurodevelopmental conditions, children in care, people from racialised communities, and LGBTQ+ people all experience much poorer mental health outcomes because of intersecting disadvantage and discrimination (Centre for Mental Health, 2021).
- 2.5 The solutions to these wide-ranging and complex issues lie in system-wide approaches to prevention, equity, and timely and accessible support (Faculty of Public Health and Mental Health Foundation, 2016; Centre for Mental Health, 2023):
 - Prevention: giving children the best start in life, improving people's security (including income and affordable housing), creating healthier physical environments, and boosting public health infrastructure
 - Equity: tackling systemic racism and discrimination, closing the health gap for people with mental ill-health, a fair social security system for people with mental ill-health, a rehabilitative justice system that does not discriminate people with mental ill-health
 - Support: fair funding for mental health services ('parity of esteem'), tackling long waits for mental health support, easy access to early mental health

support for children and young people, tackling racial disparities in the mental health system.

2.6 Until recently, public health in the UK has largely focused on improving physical health and wellbeing and preventing physical illness, and mental healthcare provision is largely focused on treating mental illness. This has meant that relatively little strategic attention has been paid to improving mental health and wellbeing and preventing mental illness, despite good mental health being a vital component of good overall health, quality of life, and the capacity to cope with life's difficulties.

2.7 The term 'mental health' is in common use, although often within the context of services to treat and care for people with mental illness and mental health disorders. More broadly, there are different states of mental health, ranging from healthy, through coping and struggling, to unwell. Mental ill-health includes 'common mental health problems' (e.g. anxiety and depression) or 'severe mental illness' (mental disorders defined by a psychiatric diagnosis, which may include severe states of common mental health problems).

The concept and term of 'mental wellbeing' is relatively new and is often used when discussing public health approaches to mental health, which focus not just on preventing illness, but also on promoting a holistic state of good health (including for people with mental ill-health). It encompasses a range of psychological attributes (confidence, agency, optimism, good relationships with others) and emotional states (happiness, life satisfaction), and is interlinked with other components of wellbeing (physical and social).

2.8 Mental wellbeing protects individuals against mental and physical health problems in several ways, and has wider benefits for families, communities, and society:

- Increasing resilience to stressors (emotional, financial, and social)
- Increasing protective factors (secure childhood, educational attainment, participation in community life, healthy behaviours, preventing disease)
- Reducing risk factors (sickness absence, poor productivity) and risk-taking behaviours (smoking, alcohol and drug use, gambling)
- Enhancing social wellbeing (social equality, social capital, social trust) and protecting against racism, stigma, violence, and crime
- Reducing societal costs (health and care services, employers, welfare budgets)

2.9 Greater Manchester Integrated Care Partnership's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2024-2029 was launched earlier this year. It sets out what we will do together as a city-region to improve the mental health of people in Greater Manchester, to better support those with mental ill health and to reduce mental health inequalities across our city region. The strategy sets out a vision for a mentally healthy city region where every child, adult, and place matters, and the five key missions for achieving this. The work we are developing in Manchester will complement this strategy.

3.0 Manchester Mental Wellbeing – A Framework for Action 2024-2029

- 3.1 The purpose of this first citywide Mental Wellbeing Strategic Framework is to bring a focus to the mental health and wellbeing approach that is integral to improving health outcomes and reducing health inequalities in our population, and to set out the foundations for developing our local activities over the coming years.
- 3.2 Development of the framework has been guided by a Mental Wellbeing Steering Group which was convened in September 2023. Membership of the group includes representatives of Manchester City Council (Public Health, Children’s and Adults’ Social Care, Reform and Innovation, Neighbourhoods), NHS (National Health Service) (School Health, Health Visiting, NHS GM mental health commissioners, Greater Manchester Mental Health, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service), voluntary and community sector representatives (Manchester Mind, 42nd Street, Big Life Group), and Manchester Local Care Organisation (MLCO).
- 3.3 Understanding the views, experiences and needs of Manchester residents and communities has been essential in developing the strategic plan. Several approaches were used to develop this understanding:
- Analysis of existing reports and consultations with groups with lived experience of health inequalities and the conditions that impact on mental health (e.g. Making Manchester Fairer, Manchester Anti-Poverty Strategy)
 - Analysis of other insights into experiences of mental health and wellbeing for people in Manchester (e.g. Child Friendly Cities and Start Well engagement)
 - 3 listening events targeted at services and groups supporting people with mental health and wellbeing in communities (including voluntary, community, faith, and social enterprise (VCFSE) organisations representing racially minoritised communities, disabled people, children and young people, older people, men’s and women’s groups, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender groups)
 - A workshop for services (VCFSE and others) aimed at identifying priority action areas for the strategic plan.
- 3.4 At the listening events, we asked people about the things that influence mental health and wellbeing for individuals, families, and communities in Manchester, whether everyone has the same opportunities for good mental health and wellbeing and the issues for different groups, and what more is needed to support mental wellbeing and prevent mental ill-health for people of all ages. Some of the key common themes across the three events were:
- The importance of connection and a sense of isolation for diverse groups because of poverty, discrimination, the after-effects of the pandemic, and feeling uncomfortable in some public spaces.
 - The stress from poor living and working conditions – overcrowded and poor-quality housing, having to move away from communities and social

networks to be able to access affordable housing, poorly paid and insecure employment, having to do multiple jobs to make ends meet.

- The pressure and anxiety from uncertain circumstances and not knowing how or when things will get better (cost of living, short term accommodation, short term work with uncertain hours, cost and availability of good quality childcare).
- Inequalities in access to services for diverse groups, compounded by stigma and poor cultural competence impacting on engagement for people who do access services.
- Stress, burnout and understaffing among public sector and VCSFE workforce impacting on service delivery.
- The need to tackle mental health and wellbeing at all levels of prevention: social and economic, environment, communities, support services.

People told us that there are groups who experience inequalities in relation to mental health and wellbeing, and the strategic plan will focus on addressing those issues and ensuring that actions are tailored to meet the needs of these groups and other people impacted by inequalities:

- People with learning difficulties, physical disabilities, and neurodivergent people
- People with long term health conditions
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer (LGBTQ) people
- Racially minoritised communities
- Young people
- People who have experienced trauma (including refugees and asylum seekers)
- Older people

3.5 Engagement on the draft plan is currently underway with strategic partnership groups including VCSE (Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise) Health Leaders, Community Health Equity Manchester, Age Friendly Manchester Board, Children's Board, NHS GM Manchester Locality, MLCO (Manchester Local Care Organisation) and others.

3.6 The framework sets out the range of prevention activity that is needed system-wide to address the social determinants of mental health and wellbeing and the needs of specific population groups. Much of this activity is already taking place, and the purpose of this approach is to reflect that, but not to duplicate. The framework is underpinned by a set of principles that will guide delivery, and reflect those of Making Manchester Fairer:

- Connection and equity as our core themes
- Focus on inequity: understanding and addressing the needs and experiences of our residents and communities.
- Proportionate universalism: universal actions, at increasing scale and intensity to target groups at higher risk.
- Life-course approach: this is a plan for people of all ages.
- Collaboration and creativity: seeking opportunities to work together across our system, to innovate, and to continually reflect and learn.

- 3.7 The framework is organised into four themes, each representing a different stage of system-wide prevention activity. Each theme includes several action areas, which will shape the development of delivery and action plans.

Create (creating the conditions for good mental health and wellbeing to thrive)

This theme focuses on system-wide actions that will be delivered through the Making Manchester Fairer programme and associated strategies, plans and workstreams. This includes delivery of the Anti-Poverty Strategy, improving availability affordability and quality of housing, increasing access to good quality living wage employment and opportunities for people with health conditions to work, early help and support through family hubs and inclusive early years and schools offer, access to green spaces public transport and active travel, addressing systemic and structural racism and discrimination, and strengthening community power and social connection.

Protect (mitigating the impact of poor conditions on vulnerable groups).

This theme focuses on system-wide actions that are delivered through existing strategies and plans focusing on specific population groups e.g. children and young people, older people. This includes actions to prevent and mitigate child poverty, supporting positive social and emotional development of children through parenting support, school settings that promote mental and emotional health and wellbeing and development, supporting children and teenagers through transitions and becoming more independent, preventing and mitigating adverse childhood experiences, supporting adults and families experiencing poverty through access to advice and practical support, increasing access to education training and skills for adults of working age, creating healthy workplaces, mitigating and preventing homelessness, developing understanding of 'at risk' groups to inform 'proportionate universal' approaches, and suicide prevention.

Support (supporting people to live well and improve their mental health and wellbeing).

This theme focuses on what is needed at various levels to support individuals' wellbeing and resilience, using the Manchester Wellbeing Model as a framework. This includes universal and targeted awareness-raising and self-help information, community-led initiatives to identify and enable local solutions and peer support, social prescribing and wellbeing support for people with multiple or more complex needs, increasing access to mental health support for people of all ages and ensuring these are accessible and meet the needs of different communities, providing timely and accessible support for people in mental health crisis (including suicide risk), ensuring that the wellbeing social and community context of people with mental ill-health is addressed, and increasing collaborative working for people with multiple and complex needs (e.g. mental ill-health, substance misuse, homelessness)

Strengthen (strengthening how we work together and with our communities)

This theme focuses on the actions that will be needed to support delivery of the mental wellbeing strategic plan in line with its overarching principles. This includes developing delivery plans and governance and accountability

structures, identifying and using opportunities to increase focus on mental health promotion and prevention, continuing to build understanding of lived experiences and needs of different groups and engagement and coproduction approaches, linking with existing workstreams to increase focus on mental health and wellbeing, supporting workforce wellbeing and knowledge and skills to deliver person-centred care, developing opportunities for working collaboratively to address shared issues, use knowledge and intelligence to inform delivery, identify opportunities to contribute to the evidence base for 'public mental health'.

- 3.8 As this is Manchester's first mental wellbeing strategic framework, it will take time to embed and develop. The next steps will be to agree arrangements for governance and accountability and agree short-, medium- and longer-term priority actions and delivery plans, carry out communications activity to raise awareness of the plan, and develop a framework for understanding and evidencing outcomes.

4.0 Recommendations

- 4.1 The Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the contents of the report;
2. Consider the multiple factors that impact mental health and wellbeing; and
3. Support the further development and delivery of the actions plans that will follow the framework with the involvement and engagement of local communities and partners across the population health system.

5.0 Appendices

- 5.1 Draft Manchester Mental Wellbeing – A Framework for Action 2024-2029