



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Council

16 July 2020

Notice of Motion

Councillor Annie Mason



Local authorities' mental health challenge – motion to South Kesteven District Council

As we move into the recovery phase of the COVID-19 crisis it is essential that the Council puts the Mental Health and Wellbeing of residents, staff and Councillors at the forefront of our agenda. Therefore, we ask the Council to sign the Mental Health Challenge, set out below:

This Council notes:

- 1 in 4 people will experience a mental health problem in any given year.
- The World Health Organisation predicts that depression will be the second most common health condition worldwide by 2020.
- Mental ill health costs some £105 billion each year in England alone.
- People with a severe mental illness die up to 20 years younger than their peers in the UK.
- There is often a circular relationship between mental health and issues such as housing, employment, family problems or debt.

This council believes:

- As a local authority we have a crucial role to play in improving the mental health of everyone in our community and tackling some of the widest and most entrenched inequalities in health.
- Mental health should be a priority across all the local authority's areas of responsibility, including housing, community safety and planning.
- All councillors, whether members of the Executive or Scrutiny and in our community and casework roles, can play a positive role in championing mental health on an individual and strategic basis.

This council resolves:

- To sign the Local Authorities' Mental Health Challenge run by Centre for Mental Health, Mental Health Foundation, Mental Health Providers Forum, Mind, Rethink Mental Illness, Royal College of Psychiatrists and YoungMinds.
- We commit to appoint two elected Members as the Council's joint 'mental health champion' (role details set out below).
- We will identify a member of staff within the council to act as 'lead officer' for mental health (role details set out below)
- The Council will also:
 1. Support positive mental health in our community, including in local schools, neighbourhoods and workplaces
 2. Work to reduce inequalities in mental health in our community
 3. Work with local partners to offer effective support for people with mental health needs

4. Tackle discrimination on the grounds of mental health in our community
5. Proactively listen to people of all ages and backgrounds about what they need for better mental health.

Member champion role description

The role of Member champion for mental health may include, but not be limited by:

- Advocating for mental health issues in Council meetings and policy development.
- Reaching out to the local community (eg via schools, businesses, faith groups) to raise awareness and challenge stigma.
- Listening to people with personal experience of mental ill health to get their perspectives on local needs and priorities
- Scrutinising the work of local services that have an impact on mental health (eg health, social care, housing, police).
- Fostering local partnerships between agencies to support people with mental health problems more effectively
- Encouraging the Council to support the mental health of its own workforce and those of its contractors.

The Member champion will have access to the following *benefits* to help them in these roles:

- Advice and support from the mental health challenge national partners (usually by phone or email).
- Access to resources on the challenge website members' area.
- A monthly update on relevant news, events and key policy developments.
- An annual meeting with other Member champions to share intelligence, experiences and ideas.

As local leaders for better mental health, we expect *all* member champions to:

- Provide a vocal presence for mental health within their council where this is necessary.
- Identify at least one priority each year for focused work.
- Seek the views of people with lived experiences of mental ill health when identifying priorities and concerns.
- Work respectfully, sensitively and empathically with people with mental health problems at all times.
- Respond to occasional requests from the challenge coordinator for updates on activities undertaken in the role of member champion.

We are aware that Member champions are elected Members of councils who have a number of competing priorities and limited time to put into the role of Member champion.

The national partners reserve the right to raise concerns where Member champions whose conduct falls below the expectations set out above. Where steps are not taken to address concerns expressed by the national partners, Councils may be removed from the challenge membership.

Lead officer role description

The role of *lead officer* can be taken by any staff member in the Council. Their role may include, but not be limited by:

- Providing information to the Member champion to support their work.
- Advising the Member champion on current issues and priorities.
- Supporting implementation of strategies initiated by the Member champion.
- Raising awareness within the Council's staff about mental health issues.
- Seeking external support for activities led by the Council to promote mental health and wellbeing.
- Liaising with the mental health challenge national partners to secure information and advice.

The lead officer will also have access to the benefits described above for Member champions.