

Brighter Berkshire “*Wellbeing in Wokingham*” event
December 2017

Take Away message

The “Wellbeing in Wokingham” event really highlighted the importance of holistic health care when it comes to mental health. The whole person needs to be taken into consideration including the emotional, physical, social and spiritual states of wellbeing. Unlike traditional medicine which addresses the symptoms of a condition, holistic medical practitioners look at all aspects of a person’s life before determining a plan.

Wokingham Borough Council and Clinical Commissioning Group, over the past few years, have been exploring the possibility of setting up a Recovery College in Wokingham, which takes much more of an educational approach to addressing mental health and equips individuals with the knowledge and skills to get on with life, despite mental illness.

This event adds huge weight to alternative more holistic, person centred, integrated models of mental health care being considered by Wokingham Borough commissioners and providers.

This event also highlighted the need for regular similar events and events on certain aspects - such as Art or Children’s mental health and wellbeing.

Introduction

Brighter Berkshire is a community led and organised year long initiative which aims to help reduce stigma about mental health & improve local opportunities. We were awarded £400 for our Wellbeing in Wokingham event in November 2017 by Healthwatch Wokingham Borough. There was a great deal of interest in the event from people who wanted a stall and from people wanting to attend.

Approximately 80 people attended and heard from our speakers and were able to discuss making changes with the people on the stalls.

We had great feedback from many people which is captured below. Since the event there have been requests for more, and we were able to identify some areas where we felt we could focus next.

Summary of the Event

We had around 20 stall holders – some of whom have never done anything like this before – which was good as sometimes it is the same organisations or groups at events. This was a mixture of different groups who provide activities which support people’s wellbeing – for instance music, yoga, counselling, crochet, sport, mindfulness, skincare.

We had the following speakers

- Darrel Gale Public Health Consultant, Wokingham Borough Council
- Anne-Marie Gawen, Brighter Berkshire Wokingham
- We then had two speakers who spoke about their mental health challenges and how they had recovered - Nick Winter and Chris Downes. They were extremely well received – the applause after their speeches went on and on!
- A musical/singing interlude from Victoria BeeBee
- Time for people to have those important conversations around mental illness and mental health.

How the Healthwatch grant helped

We were able to get publicity for the event, provide everyone attending with an information sheet about the stall holders, speakers etc. Our plan had been to produce a trio of leaflets for the event written by service users who chose what they wanted to write about. Unfortunately, those wanting to do this have become unwell with a variety of conditions – both physical and mental health related, but this will happen when they are well enough to complete them. We will produce and print these booklets in the New Year.

Having the support of Healthwatch meant that the event was also given that credibility and authority, and gave people confidence to sign up.

Future Plans

1. Following the event there were many requests for further similar events as this was unlike anything that had happened before.
2. We were mindful that some people were not able to exhibit due to limitations of space. Some were unable to make it on the day.
3. We based this one on adult wellbeing and there is a need for something for children and younger people.
4. It would also be good to have some half day sessions around Art for example, where people could “dabble” – and other Artistic people could be involved and have a great story to tell about art and mental health.

Feedback from the Event



From Post It Notes (Relating To What's Good & What's Missing In Mental Health Services)

"Mental Health Training is needed in all teams, services"

"It appears that too many services are losing funding in real terms. Need a local mother and baby unit. Need to see evidence of more money in all mental health services"

"I understand that I should have a care plan and co-ordinator from CMHT (Community Mental Health Team) as I have enduring mental health condition, but I don't have either of those things"

"When I was told I would get a CPN (Community Psychiatric Nurse) I thought things would get a lot better in fact they got worse. My CPN has now left, however my support worker is excellent but 2 hours support a week is just not enough"

"The crisis team just don't give me the consistent support I need, they are not fit for purpose"

"Access to psychological therapies is very, very difficult. There a very long wait times"

"More people across the community and statutory and voluntary service providers need mental health first aid training"



Your feedback

From Healthwatch #MakeYourVoiceCount Feedback

"Found it hard to get support when my father died I needed help to cope but couldn't get help at The Council's Old Forge"

"My experience of mental health service has not been a positive one sadly, all related to GP. Father suffered severe depression and anxiety, I have suffered depression from grief, only offered drugs and talking therapies. My GP didn't mention anything about Community Navigators which I heard about separately"

"I have been my husband's carer for 16 years, at today's event is the first time I have heard of any of these areas of help/services that are available. There is not enough information or signposting to these services by GPs etc"

"GP unable to listen for long enough to understand mental health issues and advise/suggest available treatments and find one that suits me"

"My daughter had to wait a very long time (about 2 years) to get help with her anxiety/depression, finally getting help via talking therapies. There are still too many delays in the mental health services"

"Once I was able to access the service I had a good experience of Talking Therapies"

"I had horrendous lack of support from GP. I ended up having to get private counselling"

“When I had PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) I was eventually contacted by Talking Therapies and then went on to do a Mindfulness course all of which were excellent, only issue is that some experience delays to get the treatment”

“In terms of joined up working between health professionals and social care professionals, this is not very good in my experience, in fact it is not often good between different health professionals. There also appears to be too few social care professionals”



From Suggestion Box

“Fantastic afternoon getting to know the services available. Thank you so much. Enjoyed the singing session”

“More publicity so more younger people attend. Local newspapers present – Thank you for a great day”

“Really great event. Hope you are able to put on more of these periodically”

“Suicide spoken of very well. Difficult but needed”

“Great event. Informative, Inspirational”

“Room request – When’s the next one... It Was AWESOME”

“Very helpful. Friendly and comforting. Experienced compassion”

“Next time should live stream it or video it”



From LinkedIn

A real pleasure to be a part of and so inspired by the work you do Anne-Marie and the 2 speakers and all the exhibitors and the music duo! People make a positive difference by just being themselves and saying how they really feel....then change comes. Thank you so much for your work and passion xx

Great event, brave, moving speakers who inspired and made us think more about the impact of living with mental health issues and how to overcome the barriers and stigma Well done Nick and Chris 👍



From Facebook

An absolutely amazing and inspiring event - well done [Anne-Marie](#) for organising. and thank you Victoria for the sing song - just so uplifting.x

Just brilliant. Well done [Anne-Marie Gawen](#), you must be so proud to deliver something so positive for people

Thanks [Anne-Marie Gawen](#) for doing all this. Completely understand what you say too - how important it is to get very varied but similar messages out there and yes hopefully more and more people will find hobbies, activities and techniques that can help with their relaxation skills and self confidence. Delighted to be a part of the day absolutely Brilliant

Congratulations Anne-Marie you should feel really proud of what you have put together

Your speech was absolutely incredible Nick. It was incredibly honest and you did amazing job with it too. Its quite tough as sure you can relate opening up so much about dreadful experiences but yes got lots of positive feedback from people also. You did an amazing thing there

I would say, informing, empowering and uplifting is what you and others achieved yesterday! Which is very impressive.

Thank you so much for inviting me to be there I went to deliver and help inspire finding peace and hope, I came away with so much more. [Anne-Marie](#) you are right, together and individually we can make a difference and that is a difference that could save lives and make futures happier and healthier, thank you very much ❤️<3

Awesome event Anne-Marie, very inspiring and informative

Had such a wonderful experience at Brighter Berkshires Mental health and wellbeing event with Fun2sing Choir who rocked their very first performance! Well done everyone who got up and spoke about their personal experiences with mental health

..so brave and inspirational. I'd like to thank [Anne-Marie Gawen](#) and [Alison Kerins Foster](#) for pushing this needed facility forward. Also well done to all who had stands for alternative therapies as coping mechanisms

Well what a fab afternoon! Firstly the very special thank You's, [Anne-Marie](#) thank you for inviting us and for putting on such an excellent event for Brighter Berkshire Mental Health.

It was seriously enlightening and to be honest I am feeling more positive about the resources and support that is out there. Today has enabled me to not only gain some insights but also puts me in a stronger position to signpost things that may help people I know who are trying to cope with a mental wellbeing issue/ condition or are being severely stressed due to coping helping/caring for a family member struggling with a mental illness

Proud to be involved in this amazing event, raising awareness of how you can improve your mental health and help to prevent suicide. Well done [Anne-Marie Gawen](#) [Brighter Berkshire - Wellbeing in Wokingham Event](#)



Twitter

What an amazing afternoon. Thank you [@uywellbeing1](#) [@BrightBerks2017](#) moved to tears by the speakers & cheeks hurt from smiling after singing



Text

“I thought yesterday was so enlightening. Thank you”



Emails

Fantastic event Anne-Marie!

I wanted to thank you so much for organising yesterday's event. Unfortunately, I never had a chance to thank you personally & nor was I able to stay to the very end, as I had to leave about 2.50pm to collect my son from School.

I was fortunate enough to be able to hear the 2 speakers, who were incredible & you could hear the appreciation by how long the clapping went on for !!

This is the 1st time I have ever attended an event like this, having lived in Bracknell & suffered with Mental Health problems for approx 15 years. I found the speakers incredible, as many things they said, I could relate to. I think more events like this can only help sufferers from Mental Health more & more because you suddenly don't feel so isolated, knowing that you are in a room of people who may have suffered/or who are suffering & that on it's own can feel comforting.

I think the Mental Health First Aid Training is an excellent idea & could really help employers/employees who may be suffering in some way in the future. I will pass on your details to our HR Department & I hope we can work with you in the future.

Yes please, I would like a similar event in the future, maybe doing 2 per year may work well.

Anyway, I thank you once again, for such an informative day, that I am sure was appreciated by so many attendees yesterday.

I look forward to hearing of any future events that you may hold.

Contact

Call 0118 418 1418 for more information or e mail enquiries@healthwatchwokingham.co.uk

