

Disability and Mental Health Champion

Update – March 2016

Since being selected as Disability Champion earlier in the year, then the Mental Health Champion in December 2015, I've been working hard to speak with a number of organisations, including Burnley Pendle and Rossendale Council for Volunteer Services, (BPRCVS), Community Restart, Lancashire Wellbeing, East Lancs CCG, Lancashire Mind and others, looking to gain information, advice as well as their views on disability and mental health in Pendle. I thank them all for their willingness to engage and their openness.

I'd like to once again put on record my thanks to Gill Dickson, Wayne Forrest and all the other Officers in the Council who provide invaluable assistance to us all, and have been a huge help to me in these roles.

Disability Champion

A review of the services and support provided by the Council has been carried out, which has included looking at previous Scrutiny reviews and surveys. This has included the bi-annual Review of Equalities which is carried out, as well as looking at the Equality Objectives of the Council. This work continues with Officers.

As Members will no doubt be aware, the Council already provides financial support for disabled people where appropriate, including reductions in Council Tax through the band reduction scheme, and the Discretionary Housing Payment which are judged on a case by case basis. I would be happy to compile and provide details for these are other facilities if Members would find this useful.

Pendle Borough Council is a Two Tick organisation as well as a Mindful Employer.

I am working to identify the partners that Pendle Borough Council work with on disability issues with a view to look at our signposting options. Discussions as part of the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Panel have identified the potential for us to work with CCGs, community groups and other partners to ensure that residents have the best possible information readily available.

Mental Health Champion

As Members may be aware, Pendle Borough Council is the first in Lancashire to adopt a Mental Health Champion role, and I'm pleased to hold this role. I'm keen to try and persuade other Councils in the North West to adopt the challenge, and I'll be working with Lancashire Mind to try and do this. I've also had requests for information from other Councils outside the area which I've been more than happy to provide.

This Council has already worked hard to raise awareness and knowledge of the plight of those dealing with dementia, and I commend the work of our Dementia Champion, Cllr Whalley. I believe that the Council can do the same for a broader awareness and knowledge of mental health issues, and the organisations within Pendle who are working so hard to provide the vital support that is needed.

The Council has held two training courses on mental health awareness in December 2015 and January 2016 for staff and members alike which were well attended and, from subsequent reports, well received. I thank all those who were involved.

The Health and Social Care Scrutiny Panel is looking at mental health in the community, and we have had speakers from the CCG and others who have given their thoughts and expertise on mental health in Pendle. This work continues.

I'm hoping to meet with Lancashire Mind in the next few weeks to discuss the next steps of the Mental Health Challenge. I'm hoping to look at working with other Champions, and Members from all parties, in progressing this work and ensuring that mental health is focussed on in Pendle. I think in particular a focus on young mental health and mental health for former armed forces personnel could be well worth investigating. I would welcome thoughts and comments on the work going forward.

Cllr Wayne Blackburn

March 2016