

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 24TH MAY 2018

**Question to Philip Atkins OBE
Leader of the Council**

By Susan Woodward

Question

A year ago, this Council agreed unanimously to join the Local Authority Mental Health Challenge and Staffordshire County Council is now one of the 199 local authorities which have committed to promoting mental health in our communities and in our Council. Can the Leader please outline to Members what aspects of the Challenge have been met during this past year?

Reply

The County Council signed up to the Local Authority Mental Health Challenge in November 2017. We have appointed Councillor Ann Edgeller to be our Mental Health Champion. Ann has been as a strong advocate, striving to promote the importance of mental health amongst her peers and others in the community, and supporting commissioners to deliver better outcomes for our population. During the last six months we have been developing and implementing a range of strategies and plans to improve mental health:

- We continue to work to deliver the Suicide Prevention Strategy. This includes suicide prevention awareness training for GPs and primary care staff; a pilot project in a local school to introduce mental health training for staff; and working with Network Rail and others to develop an artwork project at Tamworth Train station which has seen a high number of incidents.
- A new Children and Adolescent Mental Wellbeing strategy is under development along with an application for the County Council to be a 'trailblazer site' in response to the recently published Green Paper (*Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision, 2017*). Being a Trailblazer site will provide us with the opportunity to have designated Senior Leads for mental health in schools, create Mental Health Support Teams and reduce waiting times for support. Successful trailblazer sites will commence in 2019 and will be supported by robust evaluation.
- A new Public Mental Health Plan is in development. This will include actions to influence the environments we live in and the communities that we share, to promote positive mental and emotional wellbeing. For example working with District and Borough Councils on their Health in all Policies approach to housing, delivering models of social prescribing via our local libraries and engaging with employers across the county to raise

awareness about the importance of good mental health amongst their workforce.

- We have also developed a Mental Health Strategy for our own workforce, which includes Mental Health First Aid training across the organisation.