

Committee(s) Education Board	Dated: 25 May 2017
Subject: Mental Health in City Schools	Public
Report of: Director of Community and Children's Services	For Information
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Summary

This report updates Members on the work being done by the Education Unit regarding mental health in City schools. A full audit of mental health-related activity at the City schools has been completed, and is attached as Appendix 1. Common themes in the audit included anxiety, depression, eating disorders and self-harm.

Since the audit has been completed, officers have been in contact with schools to discuss how the City can further support schools' mental health offerings. The City schools identified mental health first aid training for staff as a useful contribution to its mental health offering. Officers will be looking at different providers for mental health first aid training for the City's schools, with the aim of securing a discount for the schools.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note that the audit of mental health related activity at the City's schools has been completed.
- Note that since the audit has been completed, the City schools have identified the provision of mental health first aid training to staff as a key way the City can support mental health related activity.
- Note that officers will be looking into providers of mental health first aid training for the City's school, with the aim of securing a discounted service to the schools.

Main Report

Background

1. The mental health of students and staff has been identified as a growing concern in all the City schools (Trust, Co-sponsored and Independent) and discussions around the Mental Health have arisen in a number of meetings with City school staff and governors. However, a full audit of what Mental Health issues exist in City schools and what is being done to address them has never been undertaken. At Education Board on 15 September 2016 Members requested that a full audit of Mental Health related activity is undertaken to ensure this issue is being addressed and determine how the City of London Education Board support the schools in this area.

Current Position

2. An audit of all the mental health related activity at the current City schools has been completed, and is attached as Appendix 1. Common themes were identified, with the following issues identified as having a notable effect on students and/or staff:
 - Anxiety – reported by most schools, spread over all year groups and also an issue for staff.
 - Depression – reported by most schools, spread over all year groups and also an issue for staff.
 - Eating disorders – reported by two thirds of schools and affecting students, mostly in older year groups.
 - Self-harm – reported by half of schools, affecting both students and staff.
3. Other issues reported by at least one school which can be considered particularly detrimental include panic disorders, suicidal thoughts, low self-esteem and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Some schools reported that some mental health issues students experienced, particularly stress and panic disorders, were a result of examinations and performance.
4. The audit identifies the provisions schools have in place to support students with mental health and well-being. Widely used systems include:
 - Counselling – all schools indicate that they make referrals to internal or external counselling services so students can receive counselling sessions.
 - Mindfulness – two thirds of schools provide mindfulness sessions to assist with stress.
 - Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) – more than half of schools make referrals to CAMHS to help with students' behavioural and emotional wellbeing.
 - Focus groups and pastoral support – all schools indicated that they provide focus groups in a number of different capacities and across year groups for students to engage in discussions with their peers and teachers.
5. Schools also noted provisions in place to support staff with mental health and well-being. Examples include:
 - Counselling – half of schools indicated they have counselling services available to staff.
 - Yoga – half of schools hold yoga classes for staff.
 - Wellbeing/Mental Health committee – half of schools have a committee which oversees staff wellbeing and holds regular meetings where staff can attend and discuss any issues.
6. In addition, at least one school indicated they have an employee assistance programme, and at least one school indicated they have dedicated work spaces for staff.

Next steps

7. Since the audit was completed, officers have been in contact with schools to discuss how the City can further support schools' mental health offerings. Schools identified mental health first aid training for staff as a top priority. Mental health first aid training is usually an educational course which teaches people how to identify, understand and help a person who may be developing a mental health issue. Many training providers can also train one staff member, who in turn can train other staff at their schools in mental health first aid.
8. Officers will be looking into which providers can offer the best service, in consultation with the schools.

Conclusion

9. This report updates Members on the work being done by the Education Unit regarding mental health in City schools. A full audit of mental health-related activity at the City schools has been completed, and is attached as Appendix 1..
10. Since the audit has been completed, officers have been in contact with schools to discuss how the City can further support schools' mental health offerings. The City schools identified mental health first aid training for staff as a useful contribution to its mental health offering. Officers will be looking at different providers for mental health first aid training for the City's schools, with the aim of securing a discount for the schools.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – City schools mental health audit

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