

# Sevenoaks District Council Mental Health Strategy





“ It’s been a really positive experience being a Mental Health First Aider. I’ve developed an understanding of how I can help people and make them aware of the support that can help them.

*Sevenoaks District Council Mental Health First Aider*



## Overview

Sevenoaks District Council is committed to promoting good mental health and wellbeing.

A quarter of us will experience a mental health problem at some time in our lives. This can have far-reaching consequences. Having a mental health condition can affect our physical health, our relationships, our education, training and work, and our ability to reach our full potential.

Our Mental Health Strategy has been developed to bring together work across the Council with a specific focus on mental health and wellbeing associated with the Council's role as an employer; the Council's role with its communities; supporting young people; raising awareness with Members; and activities with partners and the wider community.

## The facts

- At least one in 10 children has a diagnosable mental health condition. This figure is likely to be higher and growing.
- Over half of all mental ill health starts before the age of 14 and 75% has developed by the age of 24.
- Around one in five of the working age population has a mental health condition.
- Depression affects around 22% of men and 28% women aged 65 years and older.
- People with learning disabilities have six times the risk of developing mental health problems.

## What is good mental health?

- We all know that having good mental health is important. Mental health is about how we think, feel and behave.
- Good mental health is about more than just happiness - it is about our physical, emotional and social wellbeing. This includes having good self-esteem and self-confidence, so we accept ourselves and believe in our own worth and that of others around us.
- It is about feeling that we are able to both enjoy life and cope with life, especially when difficulties arise.

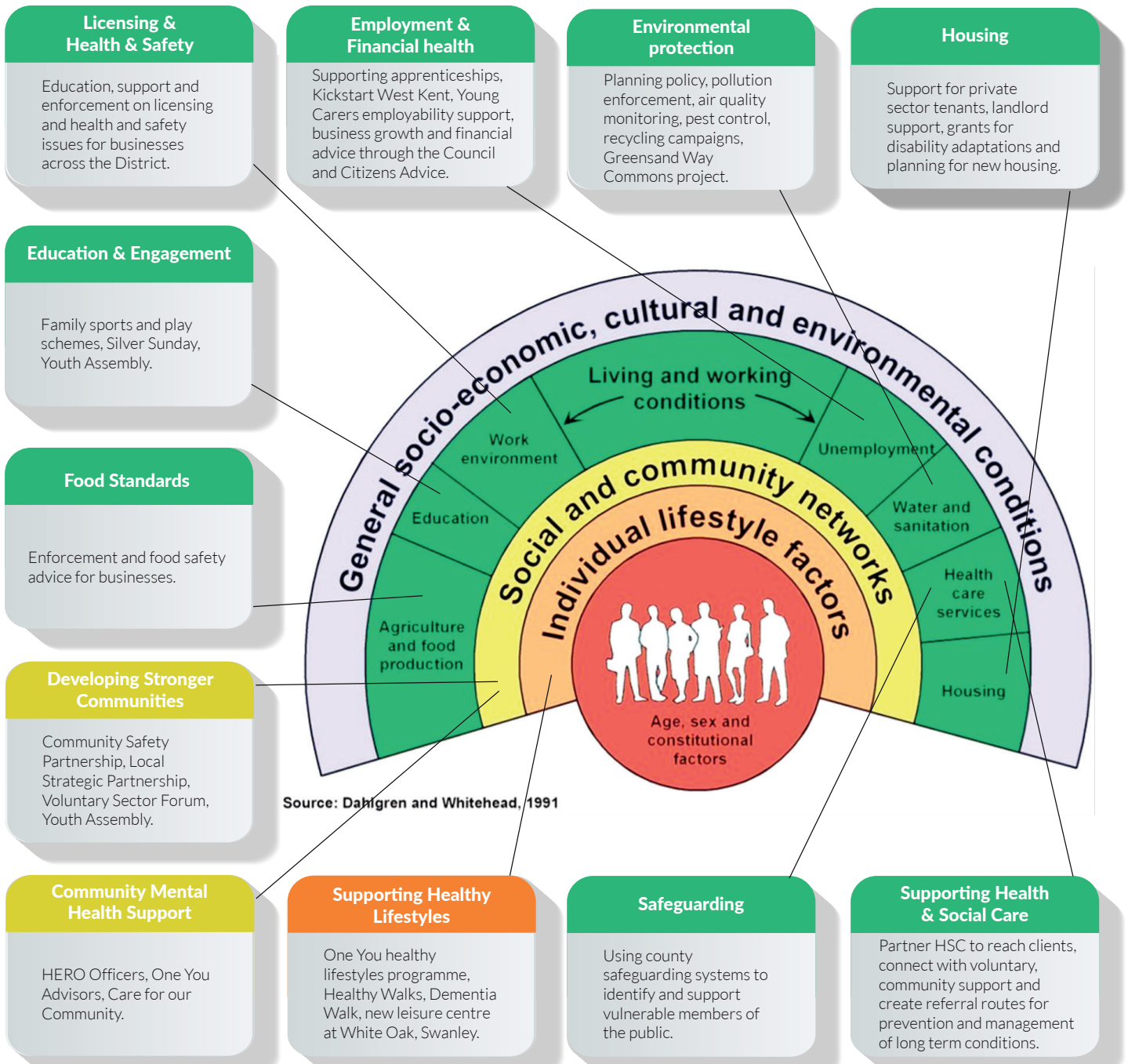
Lack of knowledge and support can create barriers to an individual's recovery. Better mental health awareness is essential. Everyone should be informed.  
*Sevenoaks District Council Mental Health First Aider*

# Mental Health Strategy

## What can be done to prevent mental ill health?

The major risk factors for the development of mental health problems are; poverty, poor education, unemployment, social isolation and major life events. Whilst not exclusively determined, those living in areas of deprivation are more likely to experience greater challenges and are at a higher risk of developing mental health problems.

It is widely recognised that our health is (in some part) determined by a much wider range of factors other than just health care. These include how and if people can access employment, social support, housing and other environmental factors of where they live. Sevenoaks District Council makes a vital contribution to promoting health and wellbeing in individuals and communities, as shown in the chart below.



Certain populations have higher rates of common mental illness (i.e. depression or anxiety) including prisoners, offenders and ex-offenders, individuals with a drug or alcohol dependency issue, individuals with a disability, travellers, students, economic migrants, people experiencing domestic violence and members of the LGBTQ+ community.

## Our commitment to improving mental health

Good mental health underpins all health and wellbeing. We are committed to improve mental health by building and creating resilient communities and support preventative activity. To achieve this, our Mental Health Strategy will support the following priorities to ensure that:

1. More people will have good mental health
2. More people with mental health problems will have good physical health
3. More people will have a positive experience of care and support
4. Fewer people will suffer avoidable harm
5. Fewer people will experience stigma and discrimination

## How we will achieve our priorities

### 1. More people will have good mental health

The wider determinants of health such as; poverty, poor education, unemployment, social isolation increase the likelihood of someone experiencing poor mental wellbeing and mental ill health. Sevenoaks District Council's community safety, economic development, HERO, homelessness prevention and private sector housing services are on hand to help residents with these lifestyle stressors. Our priority is to increase the uptake and awareness of these services and ensure that these cases are resolved promptly and efficiently for residents. Our aim is to limit the potential negative impact of excessive exposure to lifestyle stress.

### 2. More people with mental health problems will have good physical health

As a district council, we are not equipped to treat mental ill health, however there is a wide range of community and voluntary sector organisations that are and do support the recovery of mental ill health. We want to work with these organisations to help wrap support services around patients with poor mental health by involving the Council's communities and leisure, homelessness prevention and One You health services. Our aim will be to improve the communication and awareness of our services and increase the opportunity for multi-disciplinary client support services for clients recovering from mental ill health.

## Mental health in our district



# 11.2%

Of adults recorded by their GP as having depression.



# 162

in 2018/19

Emergency hospital admissions for serious mental health conditions.

## Our Partners



## ONE YOU KENT



One You Team, Sevenoaks

### 3. More people will have a positive experience of care and support

To ensure the district's residents get access to the best care and support, we need to first understand the needs of our residents. We will work with Kent Public Health and the district's Voluntary Sector Forum to gather evidence and better understand the mental health needs for the Sevenoaks District. This will inform our Mental Health Needs Assessment. We want to use this assessment to identify any gaps in service provision locally and identify strategies to alleviate these gaps.

We intend to work with community organisations to map the local mental health support services available to residents and promote these services via the Council's website so that residents are able to gain access to information quickly and easily.

### 4. Fewer people will suffer avoidable harm

Mental Health First Aid training is a useful tool that empowers a trained individual to respond to someone experiencing a mental health crisis. Sevenoaks District Council has already taken action to train members of staff in Mental Health First Aid and we want to encourage other organisations in Sevenoaks District to adopt a similar approach including schools, voluntary and private sector organisations. We aim to work with training providers and the Kent & Medway Healthy Workplace Programme to ensure that Mental Health First Aid is an accessible action for participating organisations to engage with, we hope this will help individuals experiencing a mental health crisis to get faster access to support locally and reduce the preventable harm caused.

### 5. Fewer people will experience stigma and discrimination

As an organisation, we want our staff to receive Mental Health Awareness training as a standard training requirement. This training will provide staff with a better understanding of mental ill health and how we can support our customers. Most importantly, it helps remove the stigma surrounding mental health. We will actively encourage local business and community partners to adopt a similar approach so that we can ensure that the Sevenoaks district becomes a community that supports persons experiencing mental ill health.

## One You Lifestyle Improvement service

The Council is working in partnership with Kent County Council's Public

# Mental Health Strategy

Health Team to deliver the One You Lifestyle Improvement Service for Sevenoaks district residents aged 18+ who are looking for some help and motivation to change their lifestyle.

Our One You advisors will work with you for up to one year to support you to make meaningful changes to your lifestyle, including:

- Eating healthily and losing weight
- Getting more exercise
- Drinking less alcohol
- Quitting smoking
- Having a better mental wellbeing

Visit [www.sevenoaks.gov.uk](http://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk) to register.

Need some help to complete the registration form? Call us today on **0300 020 0636** and a member of the team will help you to register.



“ Being listened to and heard is so important. It can provide hope and positivity.  
*Sevenoaks District Council Mental Health First Aider* ”

## For more information

t 01732 227000

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w [www.sevenoaks.gov.uk](http://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk)

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