

LEICESTER CITY HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD
DATE: 18th April 2024

Subject:	Healthy Conversation Skills (MECC)
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Having a strong prevention programme and prevention-focussed workforce across Leicester is critical in addressing the increasing burden of preventable disease, and preventative approaches are increasingly featured as a cornerstone of the strategic direction of health and care services. To achieve this, it is vital that Leicester's workforce, both within and external to health services, and wider voluntary sector staff and volunteers are equipped with the tools and skills which empower them to feel confident and competent in engaging people in conversations about their health and wellbeing in a positive way which motivates behaviour change.

Making Every Contact Count (MECC) is a low-cost intervention which is underpinned by the evidence-base for behaviour change approaches to prevention. In its original iteration, MECC focussed on the following key pillars of preventable ill-health: not smoking tobacco, not drinking alcohol problematically, maintaining a healthy weight, being physically active, and looking after mental health and wellbeing. In Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) a broader approach (called MECC 'plus') has been adopted, which in addition to the factors already outlined also encompasses the wider determinants of health, such as conversations which help people to think about addressing debt or social isolation. In LLR this programme is called Healthy Conversation Skills, and has been developed through a multi-agency partnership led by the Leicester and Leicestershire local authority public health teams

Healthy Conversation Skills is a bespoke suite of training packages which focus on using the thousands of everyday interactions which are had across all sectors to provide brief or very brief interventions to people whose health and wellbeing may be at risk. The HCS training packages support trainees to develop their conversation skills to make these interactions meaningful and

impactful through the use of, for example, practicing using open discovery questions to help an individual explore an issue.

The Healthy Conversation Skills programme was set up across LLR with an initial non-recurrent fund of £50k, provided by East Midlands Cancer Alliance. This has enabled the following elements of the programme to be developed and delivered:

- Development of a multi-level training programme (e-learning, 3-hour HCS 'lite' face-to-face training, 6-hour full face-to-face training)
- Expansion of the pool of trainers through a Train the Trainer approach, thus enabling the model of delivery to be sustainable.
- Creation of the Healthy Conversation Skills website which hosts the e-learning package and a range of other resources and signposting materials
- Training delivery across a range of organisations and departments
- Development of a bespoke vaccine-hesitancy conversation tool and targeted engagement and training with staff providing vaccinations (funded by the Integrated Care Board as an additional one-off fund)
- Development of resources to promote the training opportunity

To date more than 1400 people have completed the e-learning package, and more than 700 people have completed the HCS 'lite' training across LLR. Training has been provided across a wide range of organisations and departments including Adult Social Care, Housing, Live Well, Active Leicester, the food network, and the Open Hands charity. Pilot programmes have also been developed within health services, including a bespoke webinar session for Primary Care Network staff. The trainer network currently comprises around 45 trainers, of which 11 are based in Leicester city.

This initial funding has now been used and in order to enable longer-term continuation of the programme it is necessary to secure future funding. In Leicester City, public health are able to fund the programme to continue to be rolled-out across relevant internal local authority departments as well as voluntary sector organisations and other relevant workforces, but this will not be adequate to enable roll-out of training across the NHS due to the volume of staff groups this would entail. If additional funding could be provided by the ICB, it would enable the public health team another avenue to support strategic prevention ambitions at system level, such as those which have been set out in the ICB 5-year forward plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Health and Wellbeing Board is requested to:

- Note the content of the presentation
- Support identification of funding which would enable wider roll-out of the MECC approaches outlined within the presentation across NHS and health services.

- Endorse delivery of the programme, including support from senior leadership to enable staff within relevant staff groups to attend training sessions, and for designated staff to become 'Train the Trainers' to support sustainability of the model.