



## READING HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

DATE OF MEETING:	15 July 2022		
REPORT TITLE:	Compass Recovery College Update		
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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on Compass Recovery College and its mental health and wellbeing activities, outcomes and impact during the pandemic. It includes an overview of performance and progress towards achieving goals which contribute to Priority 5 for the Berkshire West Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-2030 and key successes to date.

#### 1.1 Appendices:

- A: Indicators to which Compass contributes per Public Health Outcomes Framework and Care Act duties which Compass Recovery College supports
- B: Attendance figures for 2021-22
- C: Reflection tool feedback for 2021 - 22
- D: Clinically Extremely Vulnerable Fund (CEV) and Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) delivery
- E: Quotes and case studies

### 2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

#### 2.1 To note the Mental Health and Wellbeing delivery by Compass Recovery College

### 3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 We know that some people's mental health has taken a harder, longer-lasting hit during the pandemic. As reported in the government's *Covid-19 Mental Health and Wellbeing Surveillance report*, self-reported mental health and wellbeing has worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic and for some, the impacts of the pandemic will lead to more persistent and acute difficulties<sup>1</sup>. Not everyone has been affected in the same way throughout the pandemic, with some groups reporting higher levels of anxiety and distress. As we emerge from this period it is likely that these differences in mental health outcomes will persist and may well increase<sup>2</sup>.

3.2 Compass is a core part of the Mental Wellbeing Group, which delivers on Reading's Priority 5: Promote Good Mental Health and Wellbeing for All Adults for the Berkshire West Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-2030. As the strategy encapsulates, mental health problems in adults represent the largest single cause of disability in the UK. Adults could be affected by mental health issues at any time-point. It impacts all aspects of our lives, and both influences and is

<sup>1</sup> [COVID-19: mental health and wellbeing surveillance report](#)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

influenced by physical health. Adult mental illnesses also have a ripple effect on their family, unpaid carers and wider society, since it could affect their role functioning as parents, employees and so on. In 2019/20, an estimated 17.9 million working days were lost due to work-related stress, depression or anxiety in Great Britain<sup>3</sup>.

Key strategy challenges which Compass addresses:

- Early intervention with mental health problems
- Development of social networks which have a significant impact on people's health and wellbeing
- Tackling social factors that create risks to mental health and wellbeing, such as debt, social isolation and loneliness
- Working with local communities and grassroots organisations to re-build mental resilience and tackle stigma of mental health

3.3 Relevant past decisions taken by the Council include awarding Clinically Extremely Vulnerable Fund (CEV) (£40,000) and Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) (£25,000 and then £12,790) in 21/22

## 4. THE PROPOSAL

### 4.1 Current Position

Compass Recovery College was launched in September 2016. It was originally part of the (joint NHS and social care) Community Mental Health Team. Since that team was disaggregated in 2018, Compass has been part of the Public Health & Wellbeing team. It has its own website at: <https://www.compassrecoverycollege.uk/>

Recovery Colleges take an educational rather than a clinical or rehabilitation approach to improving mental health. Recovery Colleges start from a place of hope, with the belief that learning about mental health and wellbeing with the right tools can give people more control for the future. We provide free workshops and social groups for anyone in the area aged 18 or over who may be affected directly or indirectly by mental health or wellbeing challenges. Everyone is welcome and everyone is a participant.

A small core permanent team (one Manager and one Recovery Worker with access to Business Support) has been supplemented by short term contracted staff, casual peer support workers, sessional tutors and volunteers with lived experience. This gives Compass a rich and diverse experience base to draw on and a strong social inclusion focus.

Compass participants self-refer, with their choice to attend being crucial to engagement. Partners such as Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust, Drug & Alcohol Services, Probation services, Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) partners and many other organisations regularly signpost and support applicants to register. Participants vary from people who have been discharged from Prospect Park hospital and want to embed coping mechanisms to keep well, to people looking after their wellbeing due to working from home more during the pandemic, to long term carers, to healthcare professionals looking to learn from lived experience.

In September 2021 we implemented a new co-produced registration form and reflection tool. Compass Recovery College had a total of **575 registration forms completed** from September 2021 to June 2022. Participants were asked to re-register each term, so **426 were unique registrations**. This is a significant growth from just 278 registrations in 2020/21.

\* Further detail on attendance and reflection figures and can be found in Appendix B

### Funding and resources

- The main source of funding for Compass in 2021-22 was a Public Health Grant contribution of £118,700

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<sup>3</sup> Berkshire West Health and Wellbeing Strategy

- Contain Outbreak Management Fund covered a one-year peer Recovery Worker post at £25k for 21/22, with an additional £12k for outreach project costs and grants to the voluntary sector.
- Clinically Extremely Vulnerable Fund covered a one-year peer Recovery Worker post at £30k for 21/22, with an additional £10k for outreach project costs and grants to the voluntary sector.
- New Directions contributes funding of £50 /learner, subject to residency criteria, via Education and Skills Funding Agency funding, totalling up to £12,000 per academic year.
- Compass has been successful for £8,000 from Arts Council England to work with local partners to deliver art for mental health workshops.
- Compass also receives contributions in kind from partners in the form of rooms, tutor time and promotional support.

\* The indicators to which Compass contributes per the Public Health Outcomes Framework and Care Act duties which Compass supports are set out at Appendix A.

## Key Partners

- Public Health & Wellbeing Team
- RBC Occupational Therapy, Social Care and Front Door Services
- Change Grow Live Drug and Alcohol Service
- Department for Work and Pensions
- Brighter Futures for Children
- Reading Voluntary Action
- The Weller Centre
- New Directions
- Reading Libraries
- Reading Counsellors
- Association for Cohesion and Racial Equality
- The Mustard Tree
- Reading Parks & Gardens
- University of Reading
- Reading College (Activate Learning)
- RBC Housing (Financial Advice Team)
- Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust
- Reading Rep Theatre
- Reading Community Learning Centre
- Royal Berkshire Foundation Trust
- Museum of English Rural Life
- Sport in Mind
- Launchpad
- Berkshire West Your Way

### 4.1.2 Key Compass Outcomes and Impacts

Over the past year, with support from RBC's Clinically Extremely Vulnerable Fund and Contain Outbreak Management Fund, Compass have been working more closely with vulnerable and disadvantaged communities. This includes ethnic minority groups, areas of high deprivation, refugees and asylum seekers, people experiencing homelessness, and older people.

#### Highlights include:

- Offering mental health and wellbeing training to 52 individual participants across 36 unique organisations from the VCS.
- Increased partnerships to reach groups and individuals who are less likely to address mental health and wellbeing challenges before crisis point.
- Providing grants to and working with 5 VCS organisations to co-produce community-specific workshops which respond to local need for vulnerable communities
- Working with 39 refugees and asylum seekers across 2 bridging hotels over 23 sessions.

\*See Appendix D for more information about these programmes.

### 4.1.3 Plans for the future

Despite both COMF and CEV funding drawing to a close, Compass is keen to continue outreach and engagement with vulnerable communities.

We will continue to run our open access offer on a termly basis, working alongside community partners to reach and engage new participants. We will work across Reading; going to communities, rather than simply expecting them to come to us.

We will continue to actively apply for funding to meet the increased need we have witnessed throughout 2021/22.

## **5. CONTRIBUTION TO READING'S HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGIC AIMS**

- 5.1 This report contributes to Reading's strategic aims for health and wellbeing by promoting good mental health and wellbeing for all adults.
- 5.2 This report supports the core principles of the Berkshire West Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-2030. Primarily; recovery from Covid-19, prevention and early intervention, empowerment and self-care, social cohesion, engagement and continuous learning.

## **6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Compass acknowledges the importance of climate risks and whilst there are no environmental or climate implications arising from this report, we do encourage the use of public transport and deliver workshops outdoors wherever possible.

## **7. COMMUNITY & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

- 7.1 Compass Recovery College prides itself on co-production at every level. Recovery workers, Peer Support workers and volunteers have lived experience of mental health challenges and are involved in all decision making. The Compass manager also runs an open access quarterly Feedback Forum, where all participants and volunteers are invited to engage with decision making; from shaping the Compass offer for upcoming terms, developing reflection tools, and deciding on language used to describe our offer.

## **8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1 Not applicable

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Not applicable

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 Not applicable