

Mental Health and Wellbeing Contact (MHWBC)

Introduction

Together in Sussex, a joint venture between the Diocese of Chichester and the Church Urban Fund has responded to the need to improve mental health awareness in our church communities by developing a new role - Mental Health and Wellbeing Contacts (MHWBC)

Role of MHWBC

The aim is that all churches become and stay a welcoming church to anyone experiencing mental health and wellbeing concerns.

This requires all church members to understand something about mental health and for any issues of stigma or discrimination to be sensitively addressed. The MHWBC will work with the church leadership team to ensure Mental Health is kept on the radar.

The MHWBC is not expected to address mental health issues themselves but to offer a listening ear, support the person and signpost them to other sources of help. The role of MHWBC does not include individual pastoral care, counselling and prayer ministry.

To fulfil the role the MHWBC should:

- Attend training events for MHWBCs
- Attend meetings of MHWBCs to learn from each other and help develop the role of MHWBCs across the Diocese
- Ideally, to be part of an email network to exchange ideas.
- Be aware of their own limits and to be able to manage any unreasonable expectations and demands of others
- Be aware of their own personal safety and that of others when experiencing mental health challenges. They should know who to turn to for advice regarding safeguarding and vulnerable adults.
- Have an understanding of the issues of confidentiality and apply them.

Skills required of MHWBC

MHWBCs should be a committed church member who:

- has an interest in mental health and may have lived experience of mental health issues themselves or as a carer.
- is able to work well with the church leadership to bring about change and so must have the support of, and be accountable to, the Incumbent and PCC.
- has skills in working with others.
- is approachable, encouraging, able to both listen and communicate clearly and offer practical signposting.

Responsibilities

1. In discussion with others, to identify ways of improving mental health and wellbeing awareness and support, primarily within the church community. This should include worship leaders and, where they exist, the welcome, pastoral care and prayer ministry teams
2. Provide a report at least annually and report to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting
3. To ensure that information is available for signposting to other services.
4. To offer, or involve others, in providing training to the church community.
5. To identify issues for discussion with other MHWBCs and Together in Sussex

Safer Recruitment requirement for MHWBC

Requirement to follow Church of England Safer Recruitment guidance in discussion with your Church Safeguarding Team

Please let Elle Weaver, Head of Wellbeing and Mental Health know when you have a contact in post.

Elle.weaver@togetherinsussex.org.uk

08/10/2020