

Member Champion for Mental Health Report for Annual Council 2022

Some 18 months ago members decided sign up to the Local Government Mental Health Challenge. This included a decision to appoint an officer as Mental Health Challenge Coordinator and a Member Champion.

The main role of the Member Champion for Mental Health with regard to members is to raise awareness of mental health issues. Since then I have sent out regular email alerts on topics such as information and training provided by the LGA, mindfulness training provided by DCC, and other courses provided by charitable organisations such as MIND and Every Mind Matters. This has often been in liaison with Helen Wharam who raises awareness of health issues through the Staff Newsletter. The scope of issues has been wide covering addictions, burnout and resilience, Samaritans and farmers.

The period has been covered by the pandemic and there has been little opportunity for face to face meetings. However I did catch up with Councillor Alan Dent on his topic of veterans and also Tony Siddall of the Woodbury, Exmouth & Budleigh Salterton (WEB) Community Health and Wellbeing Board in October 21 to discuss his work in supporting those with dementia.

It took some time to find a suitable officer as the Challenge Coordinator. Eventually an appointment took effect from January this year. We had contact with the other Councils who have signed up to the Challenge and also met with our own Housing MH officer and local mental health charities such as 'Open Door' in Exmouth. Unfortunately the Officer resigned at the beginning of March for personal reasons. The position of MH Challenge Coordinator is therefore now under review.

Tony Woodward
Member Champion for Mental Health