

<b>4 March 2021</b>		<b>ITEM: 7</b>
<b>Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>		
<b>Worklessness and Health Joint Strategic Needs Assessment</b>		
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> Non-key	
<b>Report of:</b> Andrea Clement, Assistant Director and Consultant in Public Health		
<b>Accountable Assistant Director:</b> Andrea Clement, Assistant Director and Consultant in Public Health		
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Ian Wake, Director of Public Health		
<b>This report is</b> Public		

### **Executive Summary**

The Worklessness and Health Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) has been developed to gain an understanding of the relationship between worklessness and health and the scale of this issue in Thurrock. The focus of the JSNA is Employment Support Allowance (ESA) claimants with mental health and/or musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions. The JSNA aims to understand the barriers to employment in this group and to identify support to overcome these. The importance of assisting people to return to work has benefits from both a wellbeing and economic perspective.

The JSNA describes that some types of MSK conditions in Thurrock are on the rise, which is in line with national trends, and there is a significantly higher prevalence of common mental health conditions in Thurrock compared to the East of England. There is variation across the borough in numbers of ESA claimants for these conditions, with areas of higher deprivation having larger claimant numbers.

The JSNA found that key barriers to work for this group can include: stigma, pain, low expectations, and lack of understanding / education of employers.

The local specialist offer is reasonably comprehensive for people with mental health conditions, ranging from services such as Individual Placement Support (IPS), which supports people with severe mental health conditions to access and sustain work, to Signpost, which helps all unemployed people with training and work readiness. There is also community support around volunteering and shadowing, which can have a large impact on confidence and self-esteem as well as skills development.

For MSK, the local offer is more limited. There is a new Community MSK service, commissioned by the CCG, now in place, however further analysis is required when data is available for this service to assess whether any gaps remain.

The JSNA identified several key gaps; notably that there appears to be no overall strategic approach to worklessness and health. Additionally, whilst there are a variety of local services for worklessness in general, access to support can be unclear and disjointed and services were not always identified to be person centred or flexible in their approach.

The JSNA report makes recommendations for addressing the gaps identified in the JSNA. These can be broadly categorised into three overarching high level recommendations. These are:

- Development of a worklessness and health strategy with a framework of actions which encompasses both prevention and assisting timely return to work.
- The development of a clear pathway that joins up all services and allows claimants to be signposted to the most relevant services in a timely and appropriate process.
- Development of a healthy workplace accreditation scheme for Thurrock that ensures good practice in relation to health at work and promotion of good health.

## **1. Recommendation(s)**

### **1.1 That the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee note and comment on the content and recommendations contained within the report.**

## **2. Introduction and Background**

2.1 The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) is an assessment of the current and future health and social care needs of the local community. It is intended to provide a shared, evidence-based consensus about key local priorities and support commissioning to improve health and well-being outcomes and reduce inequalities. It brings together detailed information on local health and wellbeing needs and looks ahead at emerging challenges and projected future needs.

2.2 The Worklessness and Health JSNA aims to establish a shared understanding and demonstrate the different considerations relevant to the workless population in Thurrock aged 18-67 with musculoskeletal and/or mental health conditions by providing a comprehensive evidence and data analysis of the health and wellbeing needs of this population group.

2.3 This JSNA provides an evidence based consensus on the needs of the workless population with MSK and/or mental health conditions, identifies key local priorities, and identifies the gaps in support available for this group to either keep them in work, or assist them in returning to work.

2.4 This JSNA will support the Thurrock Health and Wellbeing Strategy goals of creating 'Opportunity for All' and "Healthier for Longer" for the working age population of Thurrock by providing an evidence base upon which to build a worklessness and health strategy.

### **3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options**

3.1 These are set out in detail in the JSNA report itself.

### **4. Reasons for Recommendation**

4.1 To update the Committee and seek their views and input prior to developing a Worklessness and Health Strategy and taking forward the outlined recommendations for implementation.

### **5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)**

5.1 A number of stakeholders from Thurrock Council, the Economic Development and Skills Partnership, and ESA claimants themselves were consulted with and were invited to support in the development of this JSNA report. Input from these stakeholders was vital in ensuring a holistic picture of the landscape in Thurrock was captured and accurately reflected within the report, and the recommendations developed from this. Stakeholders will also be consulted with as the worklessness and health strategy is developed for the reason outlined above.

### **6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact**

6.1 This JSNA report will support in delivering the Council's vision and priorities in terms of health and wellbeing Goal A "Opportunity for all" and Goal E "Healthier for Longer". It will also indirectly support Goals B "Healthier Environments", C "Better emotional health and wellbeing" and D "Quality care centred around the individual".

### **7. Implications**

#### **7.1 Financial**

Implications verified by: **Rosie Hurst**  
**Interim Senior Management Accountant**

The report details a series of opportunities for improving access to employment for people with mental health conditions and musculoskeletal conditions. Modelling from Public Health England suggests that there may be considerable savings to be made, shared across the NHS, Local Authority and Central Government for each workless adult who returns to employment. Decisions arising from recommendations of the JSNA that may have a future

financial impact for the council would be subject to the full consideration of the relevant boards before implementation.

## 7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Tim Hallam**  
**Deputy Head of Law and Deputy Monitoring Officer**

There are no immediate, direct legal implications arising from this report; this report and the attached JSNA document have been compiled to help support and inform local planning and commissioning. Relevant national policy is outlined in the attached JSNA document. Legal Services will be able to advise on any legal implications arising as necessary in due course.

## 7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Lee**  
**Team Manager – Community Development and Equalities**

The analysis and evidence base in this report seeks to understand inequalities in health in the borough and makes recommendations to further understand and take action to tackle these.

## 7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

None.

## 8. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

Detailed references are given in the full report.

## 9. Appendices to the report

Appendix 1 - Worklessness and Health Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

## Report Author:

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