

Briefing Paper

'Making Every Contact Count' (MECC) in Oxfordshire

To: Oxfordshire Health Improvement Board Partnership

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Overview of Making Every Contact Count (MECC)

Making Every Contact Count is a programme which originally developed in the NHS. MECC utilises opportunistic conversations in everyday life to talk about health and wellbeing. It involves responding appropriately to cues from others to encourage them to think about behaviour change and steps that they could take to improve their health and wellbeing. The recognition of the value of MECC in prevention is its inclusion in the prevention framework.

MECC is an 'upstream' intervention that can apply to a range of settings within the community, beyond the NHS. Conversations are based on a 'peer to peer' approach to encourage people to be more comfortable to talk about health as part of everyday conversations. More general information about MECC can be found here:

<http://www.makingeverycontactcount.co.uk/>

MECC in Oxfordshire

In Oxfordshire there is a MECC Systems Implementation Group (SIG) which is part of a wider MECC system in the region. The Oxfordshire MECC SIG reports into the BOB (Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire West) MECC Oversight Group and into the South East MECC Network. The local group shares learning with other MECC groups which enables a consistent approach to MECC within the BOB region. A key strength of the Oxfordshire SIG is seen in the partnership working between the various organisations involved.

A range of organisations within Oxfordshire are already engaging with MECC but there is potential to scale this up and increase the reach to other organisations that have contact with public. The level and stage of engagement varies, but some examples of organisations engaged with so far include; the Oxfordshire Library Service, Carers Oxfordshire, Homestart, Restore, Refugee Resource, Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, and colleagues from some of the District Councils and Primary Care. There has also been recent engagement with the Active Reach programme in Banbury.

There is an opportunity to develop the MECC approach with a deeper community focus, helping to contribute to addressing health inequalities, and developing community resilience by enabling a number of people who are skilled in engaging with local residents to be having conversations about wellbeing and health.

MECC Training

Training is available to enable people to gain the skills and confidence to have MECC conversations about health and wellbeing with others and to then to be able to follow up with signposting to support available. In Oxfordshire the BOB MECC training programme is available and we encourage people to signpost to the Oxfordshire Live Well website for further information and support.

<https://livewell.oxfordshire.gov.uk/> A virtual training model was developed and piloted in 2020. This virtual training can be delivered as a stand-alone training session with groups or for more sustainability, as a cascade training approach embedded within organisations.

Support for MECC

The SIG group has been considering priorities for 2021, which includes developing MECC as an approach to support reducing health inequalities through training and engagement within the Voluntary and Community Sector. Following the findings from the pilot, a sub-group of partners from the SIG has been formed to work on this, consisting of Carers Oxfordshire, Cherwell District Council, Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group and Oxfordshire County Council Public Health.

The subgroup is scoping how a more community focussed MECC can be resourced and scaled up. To achieve an increased reach into communities, consideration of a more localised community approach to MECC is required. An essential element of this will be the continued support and endorsement from the Oxfordshire Health Improvement Board Partnership.

Recommendation

The Health Improvement Board are asked to discuss how partners could support the MECC approach. Issues that the Board are asked to reflect on include:

- How could the Board members take the MECC message back to their organisations and encourage the support of MECC?
- How can MECC become a prevention element to contribute to reducing inequalities?
- Could members identify champions to join the Systems Implementation Group to help drive this forward and be ambassadors for the approach?
- What opportunities can be capitalised upon as a result of the new ways of working and relationships that have developed, arising from the response to the COVID-19 pandemic?