

The week 27th February to 5th March marks Eating Disorders Awareness Week (EDAW) in the UK, a time marked annually to increase awareness of the more than 1.25 million people who suffer from eating disorders in the United Kingdom (according to Beat, the UK eating disorder charity) and the millions of people who are indirectly affected as family, friends and loved ones. For 2023, the theme of EDAW is raising awareness about male sufferers of eating disorders who often go ignored or overlooked. One in four sufferers of eating disorders are men, yet harmful stereotypes about eating disorders only affecting girls and women, that they are about attention-seeking, that male sufferers just enjoy ‘working out’, or they are ‘fussy eaters’, persist. Research from Beat suggests that 1 in 5 male sufferers have never spoken out, 3 in 5 were disappointed with the support available, and 4 in 5 believed greater awareness would help men to access treatment sooner.

Therefore, this motion calls on the council to acknowledge the importance of Eating Disorders Awareness Week and raising the profile of male sufferers. This motion encourages the council’s Lead Member for Health Services and the Champion for Mental Health Awareness to raise the importance of improving NHS eating disorders services for both children and adults wherever possible, and to highlight these issues in their work with community groups and partner organisations. This motion calls on the council to establish an eating disorders support page on its website in the residents section, alongside the current pages on alcohol, drugs, smoking and adult mental health, to signpost members of the public to the support available from Beat and the Lancashire & South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust. The council should have available the range of digital and print resources published by Beat which provide useful information on eating disorders, how sufferers can access treatment, and advice to family and friends who support loved ones suffering from eating disorders.

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