



CABINET – 9th JANUARY 2018

**SUICIDE PREVENTION – STRATEGY WORK AND STOP SUICIDE
CAMPAIGN AND PLEDGE**

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH

PART A

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to advise the Cabinet of the current strategic approach of the County Council and its partners to prevent suicide, and to seek approval to develop a broader STOP Suicide Campaign and pledge as has been adopted in Peterborough and Cambridgeshire to help reduce deaths from suicide across the County.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that:
 - (a) The existing work and initiatives undertaken by the County Council and its partners in line with its Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan be noted;
 - (b) The development of a STOP Suicide Campaign and Pledge similar to that operated in Peterborough and Cambridgeshire, be approved.

Reasons for Recommendation

3. The National Suicide Prevention Strategy for England calls for upper tier local authorities to lead the development and implementation of a local response to the national strategy as part of their public health responsibilities.
4. Around 60 deaths a year in Leicestershire are from suicide, making it a significant cause of death, particularly amongst younger people.
5. Suicides are not inevitable and are often the end point of a complex history of risk factors and distressing events. The prevention of suicide has to address this complexity through concerted action and collaboration amongst services, communities, individuals and across society as a whole.
6. The existing Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Suicide Audit and Prevention Group leads on and co-ordinates strategies and actions to reduce the risks and burden of suicide locally. The approach of the STOP campaign in Peterborough and Cambridgeshire, if replicated in Leicestershire, would add significant extra delivery and profile to the existing work the Authority undertakes.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

7. Subject to approval by the Cabinet, it is intended that progress be made on a project plan, partner engagement and delivery of the STOP campaign in 2018.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

8. The National Suicide Prevention Strategy for England was published in 2012 and was refreshed in January 2017. This highlighted a number of key areas for action as set out below:
 - Reducing the risk of suicide in high risk groups;
 - Tailoring approaches to improve mental health in specific groups;
 - Reducing access to means of suicide;
 - Providing better information and support to those bereaved or affected by suicide;
 - Supporting the media in delivering sensitive approaches to suicide and suicidal behaviour;
 - Supporting research, data collection and monitoring; and
 - Reducing rates of self-harm as a key indicator of suicide risk.
9. Following the transition of Public Health back into local government, suicide prevention became a local authority led initiative working closely with the police, clinical commissioning groups (CCGs), NHS England, coroners and the voluntary sectors.
10. The NHS Operational Planning and Contracting Guidance 2017-2019 requires local areas to reduce suicide rates by 10% against the 2016/17 baseline.
11. The Leicestershire Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2017-20) includes a key outcome on giving equal priority to mental health and wellbeing and access to the right support for mental health issues across the life course.

Resource Implications

12. The existing work of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Suicide Audit and Prevention Group is resourced from within partner organisations budgets. This includes an element of the Public Health Grant spend on mental health and mental health promotion. Initial development and delivery of the STOP campaign and the employment of a part time member of staff by the Authority to work on this will be met through existing resources from within Public Health. Further development and expansion of the Campaign would require additional resources of around £100,000. To support this, funding bids to the Department of Health will be made where possible and appropriate, and partner contributions will be sought.
13. The Director of Corporate Resources has been consulted on the content of this report.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

14. None.

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PART B

Background

15. Suicide is a devastating and tragic event which, though comparatively rare, affects a large number of people each time it occurs, sending ripples through families and communities.
16. Between 2001 and 2008 suicide rates in England had been steadily falling, but there has been a small upward trend since 2008. The most recent local rate for 2013-15 was 9.3 suicides per 100,000 population which roughly equates to 60 people per year across Leicestershire.
17. Around three quarters of all suicides occur in men, but rates are rising in women. It remains the biggest killer of men under 50 and the leading cause of death in people aged 15–24.
18. Specific groups at increased risk of suicide include: looked after children, care leavers and offenders; survivors of abuse or violence, including sexual abuse; veterans; people living with long-term physical health conditions; lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people; and people from black and minority ethnic groups and asylum seekers.

Current approach

19. Leicestershire County Council plays a leading role in the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Suicide Audit and Prevention Group (LLR SAPG). This Group exists to bring together key partners across the health and care systems with the purpose of tackling the causes and effects of suicide locally.
20. The LLR SAPG reports to the Unified Prevention Board of the Leicestershire Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB) and the corresponding HWBBs in Leicester City and Rutland.
21. The Group work to a Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan (attached as an appendix to this report) which sets out a number of intended key outcomes. These include:
 - Promote better mental health in LLR
 - Support people bereaved by suicide
 - Offer suicide prevention training
 - Prevent suicide in care settings
 - Raise awareness of suicide prevention through use of improved data
 - Support people in prison and in contact with the criminal justice system
 - Protect people with a history of self-harm
 - Target support at key high risk groups
22. Initiatives as part of the above Group, led by Public Health and the Samaritans and involving other partners from local schools, universities, prisons, Youth Offending Teams and Victim First, raise awareness of suicide, tackling risks, and highlighting support for people who are struggling. This work has included:
 - Specific joint working and support for people bereaved by suicide working with the LLR Suicide of Bereavement by Suicide (SOBS) Group.

- Working with local coroners offices to learn lessons from suicides and to support those who have been bereaved by suicide.
 - Close working with local CCGs to support their management of Serious Incidents involving suicides in patients.
 - Co-development of 'Stay Alive': Grassroots Suicide Prevention App with the Leicestershire Partnership Trust.
23. The Group has also delivered suicide prevention awareness events within the County Council as part of International Men's Day, and wider work on health, wellbeing and resilience in the workplace and across Leicestershire, as part of the World Suicide Prevention Day event. It has also organised wider mental health awareness events and activities such as the Leicestershire Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Training programme which was aimed at front line staff on a multi-partnership basis and the 'RU OK today?' events to mark World Mental Health Week which involves reaching out to those members of the public who would not normally think that mental health issues affect them.

The Peterborough and Cambridgeshire 'STOP Suicide' Campaign and Pledge

24. Leicestershire is better placed than a lot of authorities in having a strategy and action plan in place, and is delivering some notable success in joint working and initiatives. However, more could be achieved if it followed the lead shown by the Peterborough and Cambridgeshire STOP suicide campaign and pledge.
25. STOP is a suicide prevention campaign/programme which reaches across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. It started in 2014 as one of four different NHS England-funded pilot campaigns across the East of England and is now continuing via other funding streams, led by the charities Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and South Lincolnshire Mind (CPSL Mind) and Lifecraft, and supported by local NHS and Public Health teams.
26. It seeks to alert communities across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to the warning signs of suicidal behaviour and reassure them that an open and honest approach to suicide is the best way to prevention. The Campaign also aims to challenge the stigma and myths around suicide and the high profile media campaign is crucial to achieving this. Overall, the campaign hopes to achieve a 'Suicide Safer Community'.
27. The concept of "building a Suicide Safer Community" was first introduced by LivingWorks (a public service corporation aimed at improving understanding and preventing suicide in Canada), who developed an internationally renowned ASIST programme (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training). A Suicide Safer Community is "one built on honesty, where conversations about suicide are encouraged and will be met with compassionate, non-judging and informed responses".
28. STOP is delivered across Peterborough and Cambridgeshire by and through:
- Three part time staff working to support delivery of the programme.
 - A website containing materials, resources and information to help increase awareness of mental health, wellbeing, and suicide risk which include posters, leaflets, digital applications (Apps), and broader signposting.
 - Specific support for people who are struggling with mental illness and/or suicidal ideas, including counselling and crisis support (via 111).

- Specific crisis support - 'Help Now' Helplines. The NHS First Response Service (FRS) across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough provides 24-hour access, seven days a week, 365 days a year, to mental health care, advice, support and treatment. By calling 111 and selecting option 2, patients will be put through to a member of the FRS who will speak to people and discuss their current mental health needs.
- Apps - Crisis Card Smartphone App and the Stay Alive App.
- Specific support for high risk groups e.g. LGBT Mental Health.

29. Additionally, individuals and organisations can get involved in the Campaign by:

- Signing up to the organisational and/or individual pledge in person or through the website and encouraging others to do so.
- Downloading the free resources, or picking them up in person, including self-help leaflets giving guidance for those at risk, or those who want to help.
- Wearing the "I'd Ask" badge.
- Embedding the STOP Suicide email tag alongside email signatures.
- Becoming a Campaign Maker and distributing resources within communities, either by social media or by placing leaflets, posters and badges in key community buildings.

Next Steps

30. The current local approach in comparison with STOP shows that there are gaps in relation to:

- No dedicated staff working exclusively on suicide prevention in Leicestershire.
- No website/single repository for work on suicide prevention across the County or Leicester City and Rutland.
- No clear 'branding' around mental health and wellbeing or for suicide prevention across the local area e.g. no pledge.
- Limited dedicated funding to invest in suicide prevention initiatives.
- Limited voluntary sector involvement in specific suicide prevention initiatives apart from the Samaritans.
- Limited suicide awareness training – whilst some is available this could be developed further.
- Limited crisis support – whilst this exists it could be strengthened to mimic 'Stop Suicide' using the 111 service and suicide prevention/crisis apps.

31. Subject to the Cabinet's approval, the Leicestershire Public Health programme will be further developed, subject to resources, in line with that of the STOP campaign to fill the above gaps identified.

32. Within Public Health, by re-profiling the structure of the Department and the spend of the Public Health Grant on mental health promotion, it will be possible to dedicate a part time member of staff to lead this work and develop a website approach and pledge similar to STOP, for Leicestershire. In addition partner engagement will continue with a view to expanding the current scope of work and broaden the STOP campaign across Leicestershire, Leicester City and Rutland.

33. The NHS nationally have announced a bidding round for money to deliver enhanced activity on suicide prevention. The existing work, and the intention to develop a STOP programme, leaves Leicestershire well placed to bid for this money which would enable the other identified gaps to be filled.

Appendix

LLR Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan (2017-20)

Relevant Impact Assessments

Equality and Human Rights Implications

Suicide disproportionately impacts on socially excluded groups and overall approaches to suicide prevention must ensure that this health inequality is targeted and addressed.

Partnership Working and Associated Issues

Tackling suicide requires concerted action and collaboration amongst services, communities, individuals and across society.

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