



HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: 5 SEPTEMBER 2018

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH

SUICIDE PREVENTION CAMPAIGN

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the committee with updates on:
 - (i) the 'STOP suicide Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland' campaign and website and
 - (ii) the 'RUOKToday?' programme.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. At the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting in November 2018, the Director of Public Health appraised the committee of actions carried out by Public Health and wider partners in Leicestershire aimed at preventing and reducing the burden of suicide. These actions sit under the 2017-20 Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan.
3. The actions included the development of a programme of suicide prevention called 'STOP Suicide' Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland which was initiated in the autumn of 2017. Today's report provides an update on that programme.
4. The report also briefly covers a separate local programme aimed at improving general mental health and wellbeing and helping people who are struggling with mental health issues: called 'RUOKToday?'

Background

5. The background is as follows:
 - (i) **The 'STOP Suicide Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland' campaign and website (now referred to as 'Start a Conversation'. 'Suicide is Preventable')**

The evidence

- Over the last decade there has been a steady rise in the number of suicides in Leicestershire and across the UK;
- Suicide is the biggest killer of men under 50 as well as being the leading cause of death in young people;
- Three-quarters of suicides are among men, with those aged 45-49 most at risk

- People living in the most deprived areas are at higher risk of suicide;
 - The effects of suicide can reach into every community and have a devastating impact on families, friends, colleagues and others;
 - For each suicide approximately 135 people suffer intense grief or are otherwise affected.
6. After Public Health came back to local government in 2013, suicide prevention became a local authority led initiative working closely with the police, clinical commissioning groups (CCGs), NHS England, coroners and the voluntary sectors.
 7. The Council Leader in Leicestershire identified suicide prevention as a high priority action area for Leicestershire in autumn, 2017 and tasked Public Health with developing a concerted suicide prevention programme across Leicestershire.
 8. The Public Health team has since worked with key partners in the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Suicide Audit and Prevention Group and across our local communities to develop the 'STOP Suicide Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland' programme, campaign and website (now called 'Start a Conversation'. 'Suicide is Preventable).
 9. Due to potential overlap and confusion with a similar programme in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, the campaign's title has been changed to 'Start a Conversation', 'Suicide is Preventable'. This title has been chosen to capture the essential ethos behind the campaign i.e. that people in distress and with mental health problems benefit from a listening ear and from getting the right support in times of crisis. The campaign also aims to tackle stigma around mental illness and suicide by stimulating open and honest conversations about these issues more widely in our local population.

Key Developments

10. As described above, the campaign is now called 'Start a Conversation', 'Suicide is Preventable'.
11. The campaign has been overseen by a Task and Finish Group which is a sub-group of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Suicide Audit and Prevention Group. The group meets monthly to offer expert advice and guidance to the development of the campaign (see **Appendix A** for membership and partners).
12. Initial focus has been on developing a website to anchor the campaign. Cuttlefish Multimedia has been commissioned to build a website for the campaign.
13. The Task and Finish group has worked alongside the Leicestershire County Council design and digital team on website content and a name for the campaign. The main areas of content for the website include:
 - Maintaining mental health and wellbeing;
 - In crisis support and response;
 - Training and resources;
 - Bereavement support;
 - A suicide prevention pledge for individuals and organisations.

14. Following a soft launch, the website has been finalised and is due to be officially launched on 10th September to coincide with World Suicide Prevention Day. The launch event takes place in the Council Chamber, Leicestershire County Council, County Hall, 12-2 pm on 10th September.
15. Funding has been secured for a 0.5.FTW suicide prevention coordinator post within the public health team. This will provide sustainability for the delivery of the campaign (and will include day to day maintenance of the website).
16. Additional support has been sourced using a grant arrangement for joint working with the Rural Communities Council (RCC). This also helps provide sustainability in terms of delivery of the campaign into our communities. RCC will also help co-ordinate and deliver relevant training
17. Joint working with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Leicester City Council is taking place to develop a support service for those bereaved or affected by suicide. It is hoped to have the service in place by 1st April, 2019

(ii) RUOKToday? programme

18. Launched in 2015, the RUOKToday? programme is a multi-agency programme and campaign of events to raise awareness of how a kind word or quick conversation can help lift the mood of someone who might be feeling low. The campaign is supported by NHS, police, rail services, local government, voluntary and third sector and other organisations. Details on membership of the partnership can be found in **Appendix B**
19. Events are organised at public venues during which scores of volunteers help by mingling with e.g. passengers at a designated railway station or individuals at a range of other locations. The aim is to engage people in 30-second conversations.
20. The campaign has already engaged with more than 7,000 people over the course of five events at Leicester railway station and in the city centre. More than 40 people have received specific one-to-one support on the day and many individuals have made a personal pledge on the pledge wall to help support mental wellbeing. The most recent event took place on 10th of March 2018 in Leicester Haymarket Shopping Centre. Further events are planned.
21. Information on the campaign can be found on the RUOKToday? Website: <http://ruoktoday.co.uk/>

Proposals/Options

22. The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and to recognise the important role of the committee in supporting and championing both the 'Start a Conversation' and 'RUOKToday? programmes.

23. The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to note and support the launch of the 'Start a Conversation' website on 10th September.

Resource Implications

24. Partners involved in 'Start a Conversation' and 'RUOKToday?' campaigns invest their professional time and expertise into the programmes. Additional funding for specific aspects of 'Start a Conversation' has already been identified and committed as indicated earlier in the report.

Conclusions

25. Both the 'Start a Conversation' and RUOK?Today programmes are important developments in our efforts to both improve mental health and wellbeing and to reduce the burden of suicide across Leicestershire, and Leicester City and Rutland.
26. The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee has an important role in overseeing and
27. supporting efforts to improve general mental health wellbeing and with reducing the burden of suicide in Leicestershire.

Background papers

Suicide Prevention, a report from the Director of Public Health, Leicestershire County Council Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee, 8th November, 2017

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

None. The issue is County wide.

Officer to Contact

Mike Sandys, Director of Public Health
Leicestershire County Council
0116 305 4239
Email Mike.Sandys@leics.gov.uk

Dr Mike McHugh
Consultant in Public Health
Telephone: 0116 3054236
Email: mike.mchugh@leics.gov.uk

List of Appendices

Appendix A: Partners in the 'Start a Conversation'. 'Suicide is Preventable' campaign

Appendix B: Partners in the RUOKToday? Campaign

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.

Crime and Disorder Implications

People and groups who experience social disadvantage are more likely to be victims of suicide and of crime. This reinforces the need to address social inequality across society.

Environmental Implications

None of significance

Partnership Working and associated issues

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

Appendix A

Partners in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Suicide Audit and Prevention Group

- Leicestershire County Council
- Leicester City Council
- Rutland County Council
- Blaby District Council
- Charnwood Borough Council
- Harborough District Council
- Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council
- Melton Borough Council
- North West Leicestershire District Council
- Oadby and Wigston Borough Council
- Leicestershire Police (including Office of police and crime commissioner)
- West Leicestershire CCG
- East Leicestershire and Rutland CCG
- Leicester City CCG
- University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust
- Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust
- Rural Community Council
- Turning Point
- Samaritans
- East Midland Ambulance Service
- Public Health England (representing Leicestershire Prisons and Leicestershire Probation Services)

Appendix B

Organisations working together for the RUOK Today? programme

- Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust
- Leicestershire Police, Network Rail
- British Transport Police
- Railway Mission
- Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service
- Samaritans
- LAMP
- Leicester City Council
- Leicestershire County Council
- Richmond Fellowship
- R2care
- NHS England,
- CLASP
- Healthwatch Leicester
- Support for Carers and 2Care

This page is intentionally left blank