
REPORT FOR: HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

Date of Meeting:	14 th January 2020
Subject:	Draft Suicide Prevention Action Plan for Brent and Harrow Council
Responsible Officer:	Sally Cartwright, Consultant in Public Health, Harrow Council
Public:	Yes
Wards affected:	All Wards
Enclosures:	Draft Suicide Prevention Action Plan Dec 2019

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out the public health approach taken to develop a borough wide Suicide Prevention Action Plan with partners, in line with the national strategy *'Preventing suicide in England. A cross-government outcomes strategy to save lives'*

Recommendations:

The Board is requested to:

1. Support the development of a Suicide Prevention Plan
2. Support the process of developing the Action Plan
3. Agree to review the final Plan and its implementation once developed

Section 2 – Report

Background

In 2012, the Government made a commitment to tackle suicide by publishing a new national all-age suicide prevention strategy for England¹. The purpose of the national strategy is to bring together knowledge about groups who are at higher risk of suicide, applying the evidence of effective interventions and highlighting resources available to help support suicide prevention and those affected by suicide.

The strategy committed to seven key areas of focus. These are:

1. Reducing the risk of suicide in high risk groups;
2. Tailoring approaches to improve mental health in specific groups;
3. Reducing access to means of suicide;
4. Providing better information and support to those bereaved or affected by suicide;
5. Supporting the media in delivering sensitive approaches to suicide and suicidal behaviour;
6. Supporting research, data collection and monitoring; and
7. Reducing rates of self-harm as a key indicator of suicide risk.

The Government recognises that outcome strategies will have the greatest impact, if partners such as local government, local organisations, employers, service users and professional groups work together. As a result, taking a public health approach, councils have been given the responsibility of developing local suicide action plans through their work with health and wellbeing boards (HWBs).

National feedback progress reports are published regularly to demonstrate the effectiveness of actions undertaken to reduce suicide rates and improve support for people affected by suicide. The latest fourth report, *Preventing suicide in England: Fourth progress report (2019)*, shows some reduction in suicide rates in England and activities taken in the seven key areas highlighted in the updated strategy.

Current situation

In 2015, 735 Londoners took their own lives this equates to more than 14 people every week². Rates of suicide vary across London and Harrow's suicide rate is currently among the lowest in London and England. Data produced from Public Health England (PHE) show that suicide rates for all persons during 2016-2018 in Harrow, is 6.4 per 100,000 compared with England's rate of 9.6 and London's rate of 8.1 per 100,000. The data also shows that the suicide rate for men in Harrow mirrors the national picture, where rates for men are higher when compared with females. The suicide rate for men in Harrow is 9.0 compared with 3.6 for females. However, nationally, rates for females taking their own lives are increasing.

¹ HMG/Department of Health (2012) Preventing suicide in England. A cross-government outcomes strategy to save lives. Available here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/430720/Preventing-Suicide-.pdf

² Thrive LDN. Available here: <https://www.thriveldn.co.uk/core-activities/suicide-prevention/>

Similarly, the rate of hospital admissions as a result of self harm in 10 – 24 year olds is much lower in Harrow compared with London and England.

Given the varying rates across London, Harrow Public Health has come together with Brent Public Health to develop a joint Action Plan. This is because; the rates of suicides in all persons in Brent (7.3 per 100,000) are not vastly different from Harrows. Also, many of the organisations that either respond to or support suicide prevention operate and deliver services across both boroughs. Therefore, to eliminate duplication of actions under the national strategy, it was deemed pragmatic to join the action plans for each borough and produce one Plan.

A mapping exercise following an initial meeting of Harrow's multi-agency group was conducted in September. The outcomes showed that there were several partners undertaking activities that focused on suicide prevention and support for people affected by suicide. For example, MIND Harrow offer crisis support via a Single Point of Access Service (SPAS) and the Samaritans offer a range of support including prevention training in schools, such as "Huge Bag of Worries" in assemblies to *Postvention Support* with Network Rail.

In addition to this, Thrive LDN, a citywide movement to improve the mental health and wellbeing of all Londoners have undertaken several activities related to mental wellbeing and suicide prevention in Harrow. Of note, Thrive LDN has supported Harrow by providing local trainers to deliver Mental Health First Aid training to colleagues and local professionals.

Focusing on children and young people, Papyrus, a national charity aimed at preventing suicide in children and young people, commissioned by Thrive LDN have trained 23 school based staff in Harrow on SP-OT (Suicide Prevention – Overview Training).

Since then, the group has developed a comprehensive Action Plan covering the Government's recommendations on six action areas. However, the group have agreed to focus on two priorities during 2019- 2020. These areas are:

1. Reducing the risk of suicide in men in Brent and Harrow
2. Reducing the risk of suicide in children and young people

The Action Plan is currently a live document and is going through several rounds of re-iteration. Currently, the Plan has 31 actions across each action area ranging from promotion of suicide prevention training in businesses to supporting schools to deliver suicide prevention messages.

Why a change is needed

Whilst all councils are expected to develop and implement a Suicide Prevention Action Plan, Harrow currently, does not have an up to date Plan. However, following the mapping exercise, demonstrating activities from partners, coupled with Brent Council's desire to produce its own Action Plan, a coordinated and new Plan is required. This will enable a strategic approach to suicide prevention, particularly where services cross over in to neighbouring boroughs such as Brent.

The draft Action Plan attached, aims to reflect actions on the national six key priorities including self-harm. The Harrow multi-agency partnership group have also agreed that the Plan will prioritise children and young people (CYP) and as such, some actions have been agreed and noted on the appending Action Log.

Further to this, given that local Child Death Overview Panels (CDOP) have now merged into STP areas, there is an opportunity to receive aggregated data enabling Harrow to have a richer picture of CYP deaths and focus actions based on emerging insight.

The draft Plan will be reviewed by Public Health in both boroughs to agree whether:

1. The Plan developed by Harrow Public Health remains a borough specific plan OR
2. Both boroughs (Brent and Harrow) produce separate plans, where actions that can be delivered jointly with Brent are undertaken.
3. Which actions will be taken forward in the short, medium and long-term.

Implications of the Recommendation

Given that the draft Suicide Prevention Plan is a multi-agency partnership. It is anticipated that resources will be made available chiefly, from officer and colleagues' time. Also, partners will work together to ensure that where opportunities arise regarding data, funding, events and activities this information is shared within the group and utilised appropriately to promote suicide prevention.

For example, the next phase of Thrive LDN funding in January 2020 will be to deliver Level 2 training called SP-EAK (Suicide Prevention – Explore, Ask and Keep Safe) to Harrow primary care professionals. However, this will need to be undertaken in partnership with neighbouring boroughs, given that each borough will be allocated restricted number of places. Harrow and Brent will work together to ensure that the right people are identified.

Ward Councillors' comments

Financial Implications/Comments

There are no direct financial implications identified within this report.

However, it is expected that the Suicide Prevention multi-agency partnership will mobilise partners to draw on internal and external funding where they become available. Where this is not possible the annual budget setting process for each organisation will need to consider any future financial implications, although the expectation is that any actions will be contained within existing organisational funding envelopes.

The delivery of public health outcomes are funded by a specific ring fenced government grant which totals £10.8m for 2019-20. The longer term funding of Public Health has yet to be confirmed, with the potential for the service to be funded by business rates.

It is not clear what impact, if any, the changes to the funding will have on the level of available resource and future funding decisions will be considered as part of the annual budget setting process.

Legal Implications/Comments

Legal note there are no specific implications and risks identified within this Report. Any decisions undertaken in the delivery of the Suicide Prevention Action Plan will be subject to any relevant governance considerations

Risk Management Implications

<p>External</p>	<p><i>Change in national strategy- Preventing suicide in England. A cross-government outcomes strategy to save lives.</i> LOW: The Government makes a decision to discontinue the mandate on Local Authorities to undertake suicide prevention work.</p> <p>Suicide prevention is embedded within several cross-governmental departments strategies, including: The Mental Health Taskforce's report to NHS England, The five year forward view for mental health as a key recommendation.</p>
<p>Operational</p>	<p><i>The Action Plan once developed, is not clear or implementable.</i> MEDIUM: The draft Action Plan will be going through several iterations before approval. The purpose of the multi-agency partnership group will be to review all versions of the draft plan and agree actions and outcomes.</p> <p><i>Brent and Harrow Council's decide that a joint approach to suicide prevention is no longer desired.</i> MEDIUM: Brent and Harrow are two of eight Local Authorities within the same STP for North Central West London. Economies of scale, such as partners who are represented within both boroughs for example, Harrow Bereavement Care and Brent Bereavement Care and potential London-wide resources enhance joint working. Public Health from both boroughs will review activities as the Plan progresses.</p>

Equalities implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

Was an Equality Impact Assessment carried out? No

An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) has not been conducted as this paper is an update on the activities relating to developing a borough Suicide Prevention Action Plan. Currently, Public Health are informing the Board of the draft Action Plan, part of which includes ensuring that key groups are not discriminated against (e.g. high risk suicide groups) and good relations between different groups are taken into account.

Council Priorities

Please identify how the decision sought delivers these priorities.

- 1. Building a Better Harrow**
 - Create a thriving modern, inclusive and vibrant Harrow that people can be proud to call home
 - More people are actively engaged in sporting, artistic and cultural activities in ways that improve physical and mental health and community cohesion
- 2. Supporting Those Most in Need**
 - Empower residents to maintain their well-being and independence
 - Children and young people are given the opportunities to have the best start in life and families can thrive
 - Reduce the gap in life expectancy in the borough
- 3. Protecting Vital Public Services**
 - A strong and resourceful community sector, able to come together to deal with local issues
 - Harrow continues to be one of the safest boroughs in London
- 4. Delivering a Strong local Economy for All**
 - Reduce levels of in-work poverty and improve people's job opportunities
- 5. Modernising Harrow Council**
 - Deliver excellent value for money services

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance (Council and Joint Reports)

Name: Sarah Inverary

on behalf of the
Chief Financial Officer

Date: 19 December 2019

Name: Donna Edwards

on behalf of the
Monitoring Officer

Date: 19 December 2019

Name: Paul Hewitt

Corporate Director

Date: 19 December 2019

Ward Councillors notified:
MANDATORY

NO

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Sally Cartwright, Consultant in Public Health, 07927548184,
sally.cartwright@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers:

- Draft Suicide Prevention Action Plan December 2019
- Action Log for Harrow multi-agency suicide partnership