

Local Suicide Prevention Planning

Report of the Chief Officer for Communities, Public Health, Environment and Prosperity

Recommendation: It is recommended that the Devon Health and Wellbeing Board endorse the Devon wide Suicide Prevention Strategic Statement and note that the annual implementation plan will be actioned through the Devon and Torbay Suicide Prevention Strategic Implementation Group and its members and stakeholders in response to evidence of local need and impact.

1. Introduction

'People from across all types of local communities die by suicide and most suicides are the result of a wide and complex set of interrelated factors. As a result, suicide prevention requires work across a range of settings targeting a wide variety of audiences. Given this complexity, the combined knowledge, expertise and resources of organisations across the public, private and voluntary sectors is essential. No single agency is likely to be able to deliver effective suicide prevention alone'. (Public Health England. Local Suicide Prevention Planning a practical resource October 2016)

The development of a local suicide action plan is recommended by central government. The aim of this plan is to support the 2012 Strategy 'Preventing Suicide in England: A Cross Government Outcomes Strategy to Save Lives' and is referenced in the aforementioned PHE guide.

The Health Select Committee's inquiry into suicide prevention recommended improving implementation through strong leadership, clear accountability and improving transparency and scrutiny and producing an annual plan allows progress to be tracked over time.

2. Background

In April 2013 public health transferred from the NHS into Local Government so suicide prevention and public mental health became a local authority priority working closely with the police, Clinical Commissioning Groups, NHS England, Coroners and the Voluntary and Community Sector and wider stakeholders and communities.

Devon and Torbay established the Devon and Torbay Suicide Prevention Strategic Group which meets quarterly. In 2014 The South West Regional Zero Suicide Collaborative launched with a conference in Exeter. At this event, people with lived experience and workers in a wide range of statutory and voluntary organisations decided to form an operational group. This has evolved into the Devon and Torbay Suicide Prevention Alliance.

Devon and Torbay have worked closely together since 2013. Plymouth already had well established Strategic and operational groups, so decided against officially forming a wider network. However, the lead for suicide prevention for Plymouth attends the Devon and Torbay Suicide Prevention Strategic Group and collaborate on specific areas of the implementation plan. This has included rolling out Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) and the coproduction of the Devon-wide Suicide Prevention Strategic Statement.

3. Developing the Devon Suicide Prevention Implementation Plan

The Implementation plan is based upon the seven priority areas laid out in the 2017 update of the national strategy 'Preventing Suicide in England: Third progress report of the cross-government outcomes strategy to save lives'

These are:

- Reducing the risk of suicide in high risk groups
- Tailoring approaches to improve mental health in specific groups
- Reducing access to the 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
- Reducing rates of self-harm as a key indicator of suicide risk

Within Devon and Torbay there is a strong commitment towards preventing suicide across the system; the leadership role has been to assist with coordinating existing services; suicide prevention training; identifying the gaps in provision; supporting services with funding applications where appropriate and understanding the data, evidence and intelligence.

The implementation plan has tried to reflect the active role that so many partners have in suicide prevention by producing a collaborative plan. A template was shared with partners on the Strategic Group and members of the Devon and Cornwall Suicide Prevention Alliance and they were invited to add in the planned activities for their organisation. At the Devon and Torbay Suicide Prevention Alliance Conference held in October 2017, a workshop was held where participants were asked to identify areas where they thought there were gaps and to prioritise actions for the coming year. All suggestions were then fed into the implementation plan.

4. Next Steps

The Strategic Group will use the implementation plan to identify priority areas of work. So far these have included establishing a task and finish group to look at the risk and protective factors for children and young people; develop an agreed approach to monitoring data, trends and hotspots and continue to support the roll out of suicide prevention training by targeting resources. For example, a programme of training for Department of Work and Pension staff across Devon and Torbay.

5. Wider Context

Alongside specific actions to prevent suicide, Public Mental Health uses an evidence base to develop initiatives that aim to improve the emotional health and wellbeing for the whole population, particularly among groups that experience health inequalities. Using the suite of papers published by Public Health England, Devon will work across council departments and with the voluntary and community sector and wider partners to further develop an approach and interventions to prevent mental illness, promote good emotional health and wellbeing and support people who are in recovery from mental ill health. The Concordat for Better Mental Health provides a framework and leadership commitment to support a whole system approach to Better Mental Health and the Board may wish to sign up to this at a future meeting.

6. Legal Considerations

There are no specific legal considerations identified at this stage.

7. Risk Management Considerations

Not applicable.

8. Options/Alternatives

Not applicable.

9. Public Health Impact

Lifelong Mental Health is a Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy priority and mental health indicators are an important aspect of the Devon Health and Wellbeing Outcomes Report where some outcomes do not compare well. Suicide Prevention and Better Mental Health are important public health priorities for Devon.

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DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL

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Background Papers

Devon-wide Suicide Prevention Strategic Statement :

https://devoncc.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/PublicDocs/PublicHealth/EWGaZwON43NDIDJhToCEP_oUBIxrYnjx-N1Sy6Feizm0h1Q?e=IAPVbq

Devon Suicide Prevention Implementation Plan 2018-2019:

https://devoncc.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/PublicDocs/PublicHealth/EfFDcb8HyC5InP6jAjGdmlwBL_97laWtcdainR-F-5gt9w?e=anLqTQ