

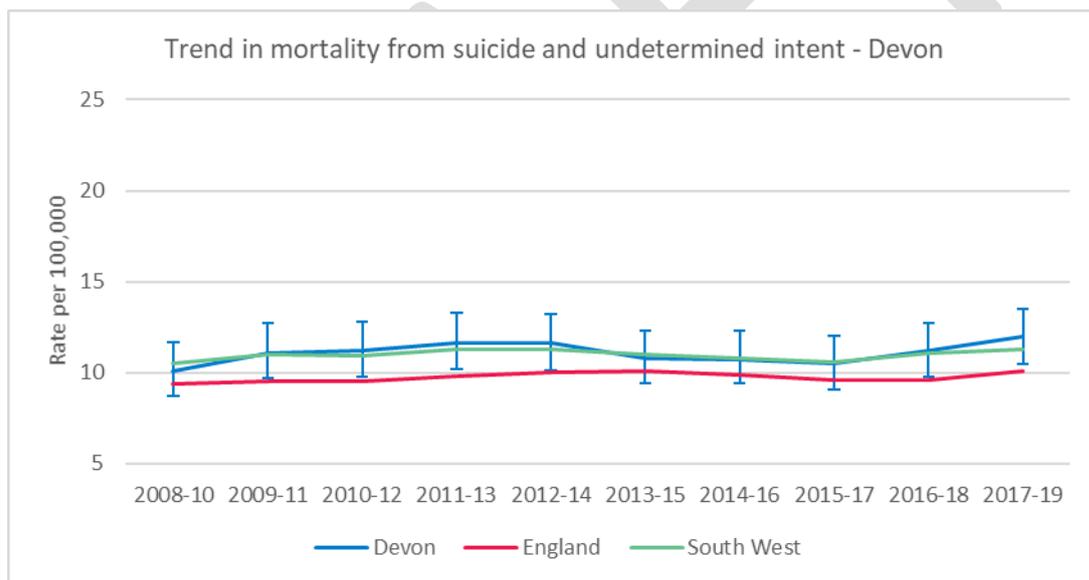
Devon Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2021-2022

Introduction

Suicide can have a devastating impact upon families, friends, neighbours, work colleagues and whole communities. Being bereaved by suicide can increase the risk of a person ending their own life by suicide, therefore suicide prevention is a priority.

Suicide prevention is everyone's business. Whilst local government have the responsibility to produce and deliver an annual action plan to prevent suicide, they need to do this in partnership with Health, Blue light, statutory services, the voluntary sector and communities. In order to do this, Public Health facilitate a Devon – wide Strategic Group which meets four times a year to oversee the delivery of the Suicide Prevention Action Plan.

In Devon the suicide rate has been rising since 2018 following the national trend. With a suicide rate of 12 per 100,000 Devon's suicide rate is higher than England and the South West.



(Devon PHIT)

The Coronavirus Pandemic

During the past year the population has had to endure restrictions upon their freedoms and many have experienced bereavement, loss of employment and financial difficulty. Whilst Real Time data is not indicating any significant rise in suicides during 2020, we cannot afford to be complacent. Data shows that there has been an increase in common mental health problems among the population and this is set to increase as the restrictions come to end. We do know that suicide increases when there is an economic downturn. Suicide risk reflects wider inequalities as there are marked differences in suicide rates according to peoples social and economic circumstances with those in poorer communities more likely to be affected by any economic downturn. We need to combine our efforts to ensure the right support is in place.

Preventing Suicide in England – national strategy

Devon has adopted the National Strategy which outlines two principle objectives: reduce the suicide rate in the general population and provide better support for those bereaved or affected by suicide. This is reflected in the seven priority areas:

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

[Preventing suicide in England: Fifth progress report of the cross-government outcomes strategy to save lives \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/622222/preventing-suicide-in-england-fifth-progress-report-of-the-cross-government-outcomes-strategy-to-save-lives.pdf)

Public Health England recommends that local areas should aim to tackle all seven areas of the national strategy in the long-term, with the following priorities for short-term action with a coordinated system approach set out by Professor Louis Appleby, Chair of the Suicide Prevention Strategy Advisory Group outlined below:

1. Reducing risk in men, especially middle age with a focus on economic factors
2. Preventing and responding to self-harm with a range of service for adults and young people in crisis, and psychosocial assessment for self-harm patients
3. Mental health of children and young people with joint working between health and social care, schools and youth justice, and plans to reduce drastic increase in suicide risk 15-19 years
4. Treatment of depression in primary care with safe prescribing of painkillers and antidepressants
5. Acute mental health care with safer wards and hospital discharge, adequate bed numbers and no out of area admissions
6. Tackling high frequency locations including working with local media to prevent imitative suicides
7. Reducing social isolation, for example through community based supports, transport links and working with third sector
8. Bereavement support, especially for people bereaved by suicide

[\(PHE LA Guidance 25 Nov.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/622222/phe_la_guidance_25_nov.pdf)

Working with Devon Partnership NHS Trust

In order to meet these priorities, we need to work closely with our local Mental Health Trust.

Devon Partnership NHS Trust's Safe from Suicide Team are working to the 10-point safety plan.



Their identified priorities for the coming year are:

- Adopt National Confidential Inquiry into Suicide and Safety in Mental Health (NCISH) standards for safer wards and early follow up after discharge.
- Roll out of Personalised Risk assessment and Safety Planning Training throughout the Trust
- Improving the learning cycle; moving towards new incident Patient safety Planning framework
- Continue to support the Real Time Surveillance System
- Work with partners from to better understand Suicide prevention needs.
- Support transition to Community Mental health Framework (CMHF) and embed NCISH 10-point safety plan within new models of delivery.
- Developing a Lived Experience Community of Practice.

Guidance for local suicide prevention planning

The [Samaritans and University of Exeter independent progress report](#) on local suicide prevention planning in England recommended that local areas should consider the following when refreshing or redeveloping their Suicide Prevention Plans:

1. LGA and ADPH should encourage local authorities to consider working with other local authorities to achieve economies of scale and maximise resources.
2. LAs and multi-agency groups should avoid spreading their resources too thinly by trying to cover all areas of the national strategy too soon. Those at the earlier stages of their response may benefit from embedding and improving the quality of activity already taking place rather than implementing multiple new activities. Similarly, it may be helpful to begin by playing to local strengths and focusing efforts on strategy areas where there is already effective partnership working before tackling national strategy areas that prove more difficult to implement in the local context.

3. LGA and ADPH should support local areas to move past the preparatory stage of building partnerships and planning actions, and into delivery of actions themselves where this is not already happening.

Taking into account these principles:

1. Devon is working more closely with Torbay and Plymouth to deliver some of our activities. We also meet regularly with colleagues across the South West to share learning.
2. For 2021-22 the Action Plan will focus on 8 priority areas and will aim to complement the work happening at a system wide level and among our partners.
3. The prioritisation of prevention through the NHS Long-Term Plan, means that for the first time, there are resources to enable us to 'move into the delivery of actions'

Current funding and projects

NHSE Transformation Funding

The Devon STP area which includes Devon County Council, Plymouth City Council and Torbay Council have been awarded £235,336 a year from 2020/21 – 2022/23 to deliver a suicide prevention programme. This money is being used to develop system wide projects and support the Devon Action Plan.

- Safer Suicide Communities – Monies to support grass roots community initiatives that raise awareness and aim to prevent suicide. Each Local Authority area will have its own resources to distribute.
- Safer Suicide Primary Care – As two thirds of people who end their lives by suicide had visited their GP in the 12 months before their death, we are aiming to provide training all primary care staff. Initially we will be working with a GP based in Cornwall who has developed Suicide Prevention and Safety Plan Training for Primary Care staff.
- Targeted Training offer - aimed at non-clinical staff working with high risk groups and 'Bystanders', taxi drivers, dog walkers. Some of this training will complement the training being rolled out by Devon Partnership NHS Trust and help to create a common language for suicide prevention among clinical and non-clinical workforces.
- Understanding Torbay's suicide and self-harm rate – A piece of research utilising people with Lived experience to better understand what support would be most useful. Whilst the focus of the research will be Torbay, the learning will be shared across the county.
- Communications and Media Reporting – working with a range of partners including the press to ensure that any reports of potential suicides are within Samaritans Guidelines

Devon STP Prevention Funding

Monies from the STP Prevention Fund are in place to support three projects until March 2022.

Data Analyst Post:

Based at Pete's Dragons the Data analyst is running and developing the Real Time Surveillance System. Information regarding any potential suicide across the county, are received via the police. The rationale for the service is:

- Ensuring a timely offer of bereavement support to anyone affected by the death.
- Identifying and responding to any potential cluster (two or more deaths that are linked).
- Identifying trends or any novel methods.

Suicide Bereavement training:

Following on from the pandemic Pete's Dragons devised a bespoke 4-hour online course which covers 'understanding grief, suicide prevention, and Suicide Bereavement'. Courses will be available throughout the year.

Men's Mental Health project:

The Lions Barbers Collective have devised their own suicide prevention training and we are supporting delivery of this to trainee barbers in colleges, existing barbers and once Covid restrictions have eased, a series of 'pop up barbers' at key workplaces and institutions.

What have we achieved so far?

(This will be in infographic format in the final document)

Over 2,700 people across Devon have received training in 'ASIST', 'Safe Talk' or 'Suicide Talk'

400 people from 60 agencies across Devon have received training in 'Understanding Grief', 'Suicide awareness' and 'Suicide Bereavement Support'

Worked in partnership to restrict access to a North Devon Bridge reducing the number of incidents from 24 in 2019 to 3 in 2020

A Suicide Bereavement Service has been commissioned across Devon from 1st April 2020 – 31st March 2023

A Real Time Surveillance System has been established across Devon

Over 50,000 'It's Safe to Talk About Suicide' leaflets distributed across many settings including GP surgeries, libraries and community centres. Leaflet downloadable here - [It's Safe to Talk About Suicide](#)

Devon Suicide Prevention Strategic Group Priorities

Following a workshop with members in November 2020 eight key priorities have been agreed for local action. Whilst these are priorities for Devon, the work and the

learning will be shared county-wide. Resources from the NHSE funding and our own Public Mental Health Grant will enable us to deliver against them.

Devon Public Health are also establishing an All Age Mental Health Group to support the Covid Recovery work that is happening across the county. The work of this group will complement the Action Plan.

The 8 Priorities

Prevention of suicide in Public Places

Working with colleagues from Network Rail, The Samaritans, and British Transport police to reduce the number of deaths on the railway.

Production of an interactive map to enable us to identify any high frequency locations and then develop action plans with a range of partners to limit access or add signage.

Developing a Post Vention Hub

Following the report 'From Grief to Hope' [From-Grief-to-Hope-Report-FINAL.pdf \(supportaftersuicide.org.uk\)](#), we aim to develop a hub offering support to all organisations working with people who are bereaved by suicide as well as ensuring that information about resources is easily accessible.

Exploring the links between suicide and DSVa

There is growing interest both locally and nationally in the links between Sexual violence and abuse and suicide (in both victims and perpetrators). Will work alongside local commissioners and providers and look at initiatives in other parts of the country to develop a plan of action.

Financial Pressures and Debt:

Evidence shows that suicide rates increase in times of economic downturn and debt is a recognised risk factor. The aim is to work with organisations such as CAB and DWP to look at additional support around wellbeing/ Suicide Prevention

Suicide and Self-Harm in Children and Young People

Children and Young people have disproportionately been affected by the Covid pandemic, with disruption to education and social life. We will revisit the work we did in 2017/18 and liaise with relevant partners to develop any new resources.

Loneliness and Isolation

Evidence shows links to relationship breakdown, bereavement, social isolation and suicide. Torbay council is leading on this are leading on this priority.

Engagement with People with Lived Experience

People with lived experience of suicidality or bereavement from suicide have an important role to play in the delivery of our action plan. We aim to find the right mechanisms to enable people to shape and support the delivery of this plan.

Audit

Even though we now have Real Time Surveillance, the annual retrospective audit, is still needed so that we can identify any risk factors; unemployment, family breakdown, which may not be apparent for the real time data. We will work with both coroners to arrange an audit of 2019 -2020.

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