

SUICIDE PREVENTION IN PLYMOUTH

Health and Wellbeing Board, 7 March 2024

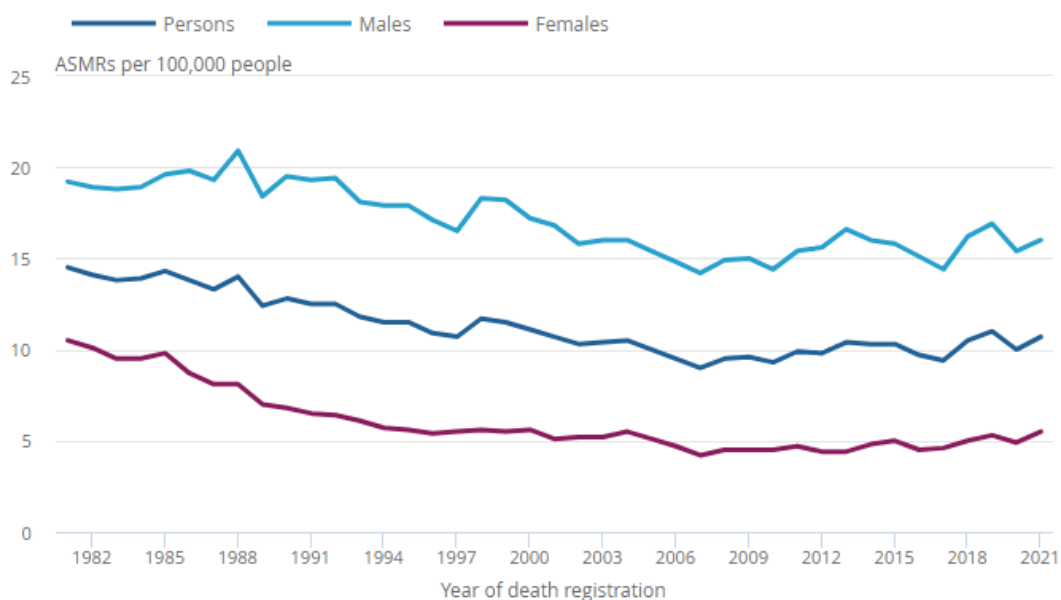


SUICIDE PREVENTION STRATEGY FOR ENGLAND 2023-2028

In September 2023 a new national suicide prevention strategy for England was published, called [Suicide prevention in England: 5-year cross-sector strategy](#). The strategy has updated priorities based on data, evidence and engagement with experts (including those with personal experience).

The continued need for a national suicide prevention strategy was because the current rate of suicide is not falling nationally.

Office of National Statistics: Suicides in England and Wales: 2021 registrations



In addition, at a national level:

- Suicide remains the biggest killer of people under 35 and one of the leading causes of death in men under 50.
- Over 2/3s of death by suicide are not known to specialist mental health services in the year prior to death.
- Rates across all ages groups under 25 have been increasing until recently.
- Self-harm rates have also been rising in children and young people
- New and better-quality evidence (e.g. harmful gambling and domestic abuse)
- Recent challenges: COVID-19, cost of living

The first purpose of the national strategy is to make it clear that suicide prevention matters and to bring everybody together around common priorities. This includes national government, the NHS, local government, the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sectors, employers, communities and individuals.

The aim of the cross-government strategy is to:

- Reduce the suicide rate over the next 5 years – with initial reductions observed within half this time or sooner.
- Improve support for people who have self-harmed.
- Improve support for people bereaved by suicide.

The priority areas for action to achieve these aims are:

1. Improve data and evidence to ensure that effective evidence-informed and timely interventions continue to be developed	2. Priority groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Children and young people b) Middle-aged men c) People who have self-harmed d) People in contact with mental health services e) People in contact with the justice system f) Autistic people g) Pregnant women and new mothers
2. Provide tailored, targeted support to priority groups , including those at higher risk at a national level	
3. Address common risk factors linked to suicide at a population level by providing early intervention and tailored support	
4. Promote online safety and responsible media content to reduce harms, improve support and signposting and provide helpful messages about suicide and self-harm	
5. Provide effective crisis support across sectors for those who reach crisis point	3) Common risk factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Physical illness b) Financial difficulty and economic adversity c) Gambling d) Alcohol and drug use e) Social isolation and loneliness f) Domestic abuse
6. Reduce access to means and methods of suicide where this is appropriate and necessary as an intervention to prevent suicides	
7. Provide effective bereavement support to those affected by suicide	
8. Make suicide everybody's business so that we can maximise our collective impact and support to prevent suicides.	

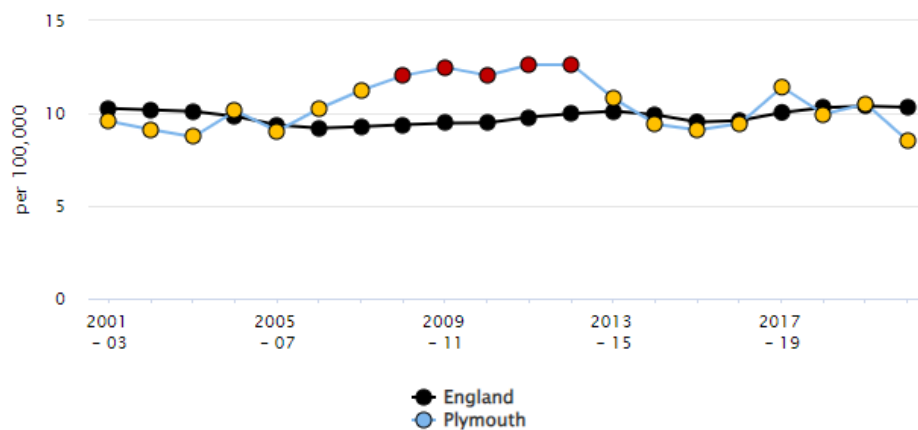
THE LOCAL PICTURE IN PLYMOUTH

On average around 24 people die by suicide each year in Plymouth. The standardised suicide rate for Plymouth between 2020-2022 was 8.5 per 100,000 compared to a national rate of 10.3 and a South West region rate of 11.9 per 100,000. The suicide rate is given as a 3-year rolling average and the time delay is to allow for the coronial process to occur. No death is confirmed as a suicide until it is officially determined as such following a coroner's inquest. The graph below shows how the suicide rate in Plymouth compared to England has changed between 2001 to 2022. In general, the suicide rate in Plymouth has been statistically similar to the England average (amber dots), but there was a period between 2008 and 2014 where the suicide rate locally was significantly above the national rate (red dots). The most recent suicide rate for Plymouth is below the national average, which is a positive trend, but the rate is not significantly different from the England average (i.e. it is within the same margin of statistical error).

Suicide rate (Persons)

[Show confidence intervals](#)

[Show 99.8% CI values](#)



Local data indicates that in Plymouth:

- There are three times as many males than females who die by suicide.
- The majority of those who died were below the age of 60.
- Almost all areas of the city are affected.

Please see *Plymouth Suicide Audit Summary 2020-2022*

THE LOCAL SUICIDE PREVENTION SYSTEM

Plymouth Suicide Prevention Strategic Partnership

- Open group chaired by Public Health
- To work collectively with local agencies, organisations and people to identify local priorities for suicide prevention, to inform the development and delivery of a local suicide prevention action plan based on the national strategy.
- Governance is to the Health and Wellbeing Board
- See *Plymouth Suicide Prevention Strategic Action Plan 2024-25*

Real time suicide surveillance

- Official suicide data is usually 1-2 years delayed due to the coronial process.
- We work with the police to provide real-time data on what the police call 'sudden self-inflicted deaths'
- Data analyst for whole of Devon based at Pete's Dragons (suicide bereavement service)
- Allows ability to:
 - Provide timely suicide bereavement support
 - Identify and respond to suicide clusters
 - Identify and respond to novel methods

Suicide bereavement service

- NHS Devon commissioned service
- People who are bereaved by suicide are more likely to die by suicide themselves
- Provide support for anybody (adults and children) affected by suicide for as long as they need
- Provide support to organisations/groups/schools affected by suicide
- Historical and recent suicide deaths accepted
- No waiting lists – support starts within 48 hours of contact
- Police officers hold contact card for Pete's Dragons to hand out to people affected in a timely manner.

Suicide prevention training:

- More than 2/3 of people who die by suicide are not known to mental health services in the year before death
- Training is essential to build capacity in the system and population
- More likely to connect with people before or at a time of crisis
- Training encouraged to whole population but also to particular workforces,



[Wellbeing at Work \(Livewell Southwest\) Events | Eventbrite](#)

Plymouth Suicide Audit

- In-depth review of coroner files of confirmed suicides
- To provide local insights and identify risk factors for suicide in Plymouth
- To share learning and inform suicide prevention activity going forward
- Currently reviewing files 2017-2021 to produce a detailed audit report in 2024

Working across Devon ICS area

- Regular meetings with suicide prevention leads in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay PH teams
- NHS Devon Suicide Prevention Oversight Group provides strategic oversight of the implementation of suicide prevention activity in Devon (local action plans, clinical settings, real time data)
- Suicide prevention as key part of Devon ICS Joint Forward Plan