

PLYMOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION

Health and Wellbeing Board, March 2025



PURPOSE

This briefing paper accompanies the committee report paper for Plymouth Health and Wellbeing Board item on suicide prevention on 6th March 2025. The paper outlines the local suicide prevention system, the key suicide prevention activities undertaken in 2024/25 as part of the Plymouth Suicide Prevention Strategic Action Plan, and the priorities areas for 2025/26. This briefing paper also outlines the recommendations made to the Health and Wellbeing Board regarding the current suicide prevention plan and the organisation of suicide prevention activity going forward.

THE LOCAL SUICIDE PREVENTION SYSTEM

Plymouth Suicide Prevention Strategic Partnership

- Open group chaired by Public Health, quarterly meetings
- 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.

Children and young people suicide prevention action plan

- A specific plan and delivery group as part of the Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership to look specifically at suicide prevention in children and young people.

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)
- Aims to identify and respond to, in real time:
 - Timely suicide bereavement support
 - Suicide clusters
 - Novel methods
- Weekly information and monthly meeting
- Can also look at other known risk factors, e.g. domestic abuse, employment status

KEY ACTIVITIES IN 2024/25

Suicide bereavement service

- NHS Devon commissioned service supported 686 people (387 new and 299 existing) people across the whole of Devon in 2024.
- People who are bereaved by suicide are more likely to die by suicide themselves
- Support is provided without waiting lists and it is for anybody (adults and children) affected by suicide for as long as they need
- Provided immediate response support to organisations/communities

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 supportive capacity in the system and population, so that people are more likely to connect with people before or at a time of crisis
- Training encouraged to whole population but also to particular workforces, e.g. housing, DV, substance use, primary care, DWP, VCSE organisations



Wellbeing at Work (Livewell Southwest) Events | Eventbrite

- In addition to community training, suicide prevention training has also been offered to clinicians in primary care.
- In 2024, 89 clinicians from primary care across NHS Devon area participated in this training.

Grassroots suicide prevention small grants

- Plymouth Octopus project ran a collaborative process to distribute grants to encourage collaboration as well as the overall aim of;
 - working with communities to raise awareness of the risk factors associated with suicide
 - building confidence and skills in taking action to prevent future preventable deaths
- The grants awarded were between £2,000 and £8,000:
 - Animal and Art Wellbeing Community Group
 - Diverse Exploration
 - Roleplaying for Resilience
 - NEST - First time Fliers
 - Wellness Workshop for Pregnant Women/New Mums
 - Chronic Pain Cafés

- Bike Trail Therapy

Suicide prevention guide and talk to councillors

- Presentation given to councillors on the principles of suicide prevention together with a guide on how to recognise somebody who may be in distress and how to respond, including the most appropriate crisis lines.

Coroner's Audit 2017-2021

One Hundred coroner inquest files reviewed for deaths registered between 2017 and 2021, to give additional insights into risk factors:

- Ten people who died knew somebody who had died by suicide
- 42 people had a known history of previous suicide attempts, 15 had a known history of self-harm (12 had both).
- 46 people lived alone
- Alcohol use, anxiety and depressive illnesses were the most commonly identified health conditions
- 53 people were in contact with primary care in the three months prior to their death. Mixture of physical and mental health concerns
- At least one adverse childhood experience (ACE) noted in 34 people, four or more ACES in six.

Domestic Abuse and Suicide Conference

- Collaboration between suicide prevention and domestic abuse teams across Devon, Plymouth and Torbay Councils to organise a conference in November 2024 to explore the links between domestic and sexual violence and suicide,
- Over 120 delegates attended, many more online
- Included a talk by the leading national expert on the topic, Professor Jane Monckton Smith OBE
- Conference recording available here: [**Making Connections That Matter - Preventing Domestic Abuse Related Suicide - YouTube**](#)

World suicide prevention day awareness event

- Half day event to raise awareness for suicide prevention across the city on 10th September 2024 (world suicide prevention day)
- Attended by around 100 people representing organisations as well as individuals who have been impacted by suicide.

PRIORITIES FOR 2025/26

Collaboration within Devon ICS

Currently, each Local Authority in the Devon ICS area has its own suicide prevention action plan. Each plan is based on the strategic approach and priorities of the national [suicide prevention strategy for England: 2023 to 2028](#), so there is significant overlap between the plans.

We propose moving to a single, ICS wide, action plan with core system partners. This shared action plan would continue to be based on the national strategy and importantly would maintain the focus on the local elements of each area based on local priorities. The national suicide prevention strategy provides a platform and framework to facilitate a One Devon Suicide Prevention Strategy, with local collaboration across key partner organisations, including NHS, voluntary, community and social sectors (VCSE), employers and individuals.

There are several **benefits** of a single, ICS-wide, integrated plan, including include:

- Coordination of interconnected actions through oversight of a single plan (including opportunities for joint work, mutual support and innovation). This will reduce duplication of effort and maximise impact of limited resources.
- Enhanced collaboration with core system partners (such as, but not limited to: Police, NHS Devon, Livewell Southwest/Devon Partnership Trust, Devon Mental Health Alliance, Network rail, Highways England, Pete's Dragons). Many organisations that are key to suicide prevention work across larger footprints than local authorities. Engaging these organisations once, rather than three times across Devon ICS, would improve engagement.
- Stronger collective voice in advising and identifying priority action with respect to suicide prevention within the Devon system.

Mapping of the three existing suicide prevention action plans from Plymouth, Torbay and Devon local authorities has demonstrated the feasibility of a shared plan and highlighted:

- All existing action plans align to the priority areas of the national strategy
- Some areas of local work are mentioned across all three plans, highlighting existing effective collaboration, but areas of duplicated reporting.
- Overlap in membership of locality suicide prevention partnerships placing increased demands on some roles and organisations who work across boundaries.

Devon, Plymouth and Torbay each have local suicide prevention partnerships, which bring together a wide range of statutory and voluntary organisations to understand local challenges and influence suicide prevention activity. These partnerships have strong engagement from across the local system and are crucial to local suicide prevention activity and making suicide prevention everyone's business.

Under this proposal these local suicide prevention partnership will play a key role in the development of the shared plan, ensuring that local priorities are captured. Furthermore, the local partnerships will continue to provide a forum for delivery of the plan at a local authority level.

This plan will maintain accountability to each Health and Wellbeing Board and continue annual engagement with the boards.

Men's mental health promotion

- Plymouth Octopus Project have been commissioned to support the development of a collaborative of grassroots and community organisations in Plymouth who are working to support men's mental health
- This work will utilise the collaborative advantage of organisations working together to improve community support available to men in the city.

Children and young people

- Continue to work across the children's system to reduce suicide through delivery of the action plan and reporting through the Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- Includes participatory approaches with young people to understand what information they want to support their wellbeing and that of their peers.

Suicide prevention training

- To update the suicide prevention and mental health training offer provided by Livewell Southwest to continue to meet the needs of the population.
- To effectively promote training to appropriate organisations and individuals

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to review, feedback and comment on suicide prevention activity undertaken in 2024/25 and the Plymouth Suicide Prevention Strategic Action Plan.**
- 2. The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to support the development of an ICS level suicide prevention action plan.**