

Suicide Prevention in Plymouth



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Overview



- Background
- Local suicide data
- Coroner registration delays
- Suicide Prevention – key information
- One Devon Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan
- Key activities and resources

Background



- Please look after yourself and take time if you need. [Mental health support | PLYMOUTH.GOV.UK](https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/mental-health-support)
- Suicide is the act or instance of intentionally killing oneself.
- Only a Coroner can determine a suicide, after an inquest.
- We may talk about data and numbers, but we are always aware that these figures relate to real people.
- Every suicide is a tragic loss and has devastating and long-lasting impact upon families, friends, neighbours, colleagues and whole communities.

Background

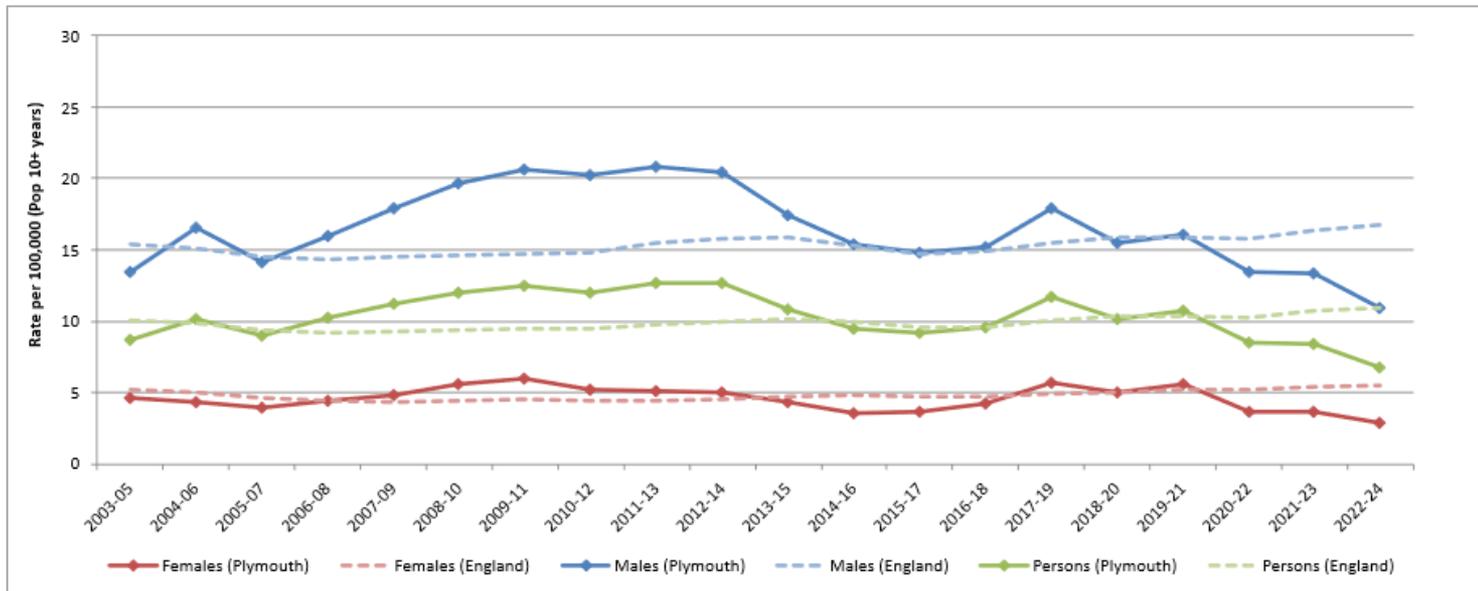


- The causes of suicide are complex and individual. There is rarely a single cause.
- Risk factors often reflect wider inequalities and economic factors.
- The impact is felt most deeply at a personal and human level. The average cost to society of each death is £1,67 million.
- 70% of people who die by suicide are not known to mental health services in the year before their death.
- Suicide can be preventable.

Plymouth Suicide Audit – Summary 2022-2024



Trends in mortality from suicide/ UI, England & Plymouth, 2003-05 to 2022-24



Source: Suicide Prevention Profile (January 2026)

Coroner registration delays

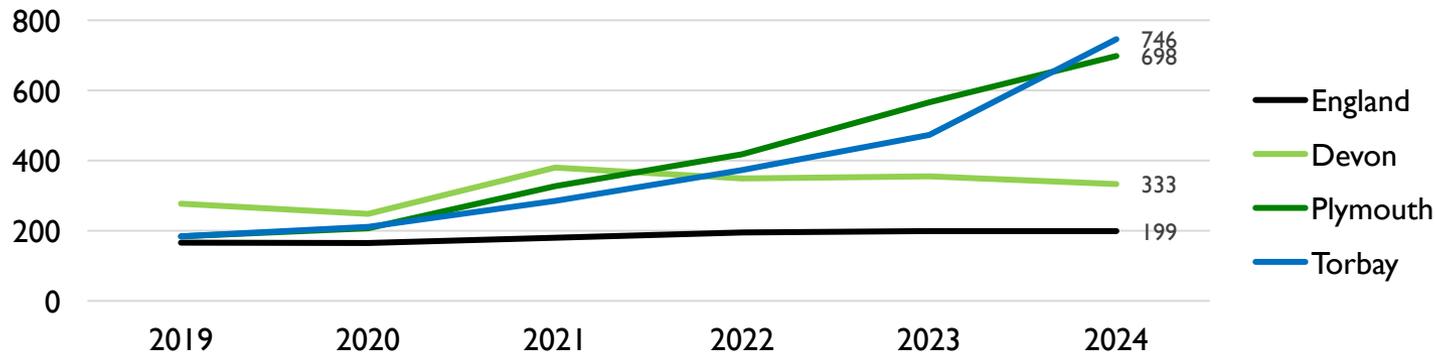


- Time between a death and when a death is registered
- A death that is registered in 2024 will be within the 2022-24 dataset regardless of when the death actually occurred
- The official suicide statistics are dependent on the time between death occurring and being registered as a suicide.
- Long delays can artificially reduce the suicide rate

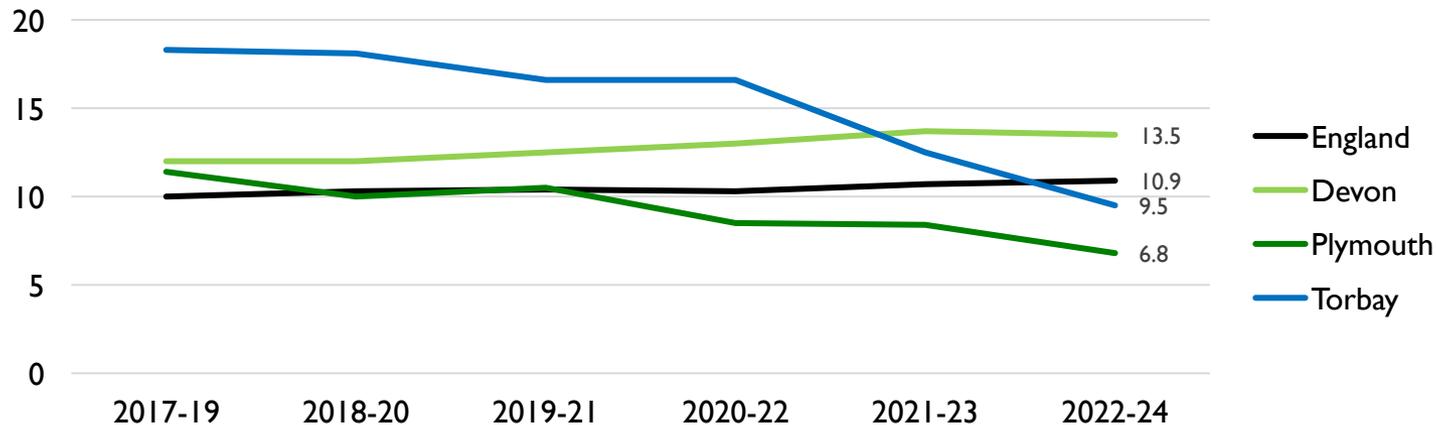
Coroner registration delays



Median time from date of death to date of registration for deaths by suicide registered in each year



Suicide rate per 100,000 population (three year rolling average)



What is suicide prevention?



- Suicide prevention is broad and includes everything from:
 - Measures to improve population level emotional health and wellbeing (including through the wider determinants of health).
 - Support for people with mental health issues (from early intervention through to crisis care).
 - Support for people who are bereaved by suicide.
- It is essential that the preventative approach addresses the complexity of the issue.
- No single organisation is responsible for suicide prevention and there are no simple measures to prevent suicide.
- Suicide prevention is everyone's business. A whole systems approach is required so that partners are working in collaboration towards the same priorities.

Talking about suicide



- Talking about suicide is hard.
- Asking about suicide can relieve the person of the internal burden if approached sensitively and compassionately.
- Worry about language shouldn't stop us talking about suicide...however,
- There is stigma associated with suicide and thoughts of suicide, Stigma reduces help-seeking behaviour.

Preferred language	Try to avoid
Die by/ death by suicide	Commit suicide (it is not a crime) Completed/successful suicide
Suicide attempt	A 'successful', 'unsuccessful', or 'failed' suicide attempt
Thoughts of suicide	'Just', 'only', 'threat', 'attention seeking'

Suicide bereavement service



- People bereaved by suicide are at higher risk themselves
- Bereavement support - NHS Devon commissioned service
- Provide support for anybody (adults and children) affected by suicide for as long as they need
- Historical and recent suicide deaths
- No waiting lists – support starts within 48 hours of contact.



Suicide Prevention Training



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

One Devon Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan



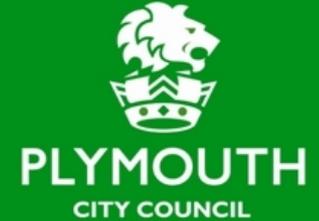
- In March 2025, Plymouth, Devon and Torbay Health and Wellbeing Boards each supported the proposal to Develop a One Devon Suicide Prevention Plan to replace the individual plans across each area.
- The reasons for the proposal were:
 - Improve partnership working across the county
 - To enable more effective oversight of the plans
 - Maximise capacity and reduce duplication
- Accountability to local Health and Wellbeing Boards would be maintained.

Development of the Strategic Plan



- The plan has been co-developed by system partners from across Plymouth, Devon and Torbay
 - 2025/26 Q1: Mapping of existing plans against the national strategy
 - 2025/26 Q2: Series of engagement workshops held
 - 2025/26 Q3: Development of the draft strategy using workshop outputs and further consultation
 - 2025/26 Q4: Final feedback and start of prioritisation

The Strategic Plan



- The plan is organised to align with the priorities of the national strategy:

Aims

1. Reduce the suicide rate within 5 years (with initial reductions in 2.5 years)
2. Continue to improve support for people who self-harm
3. Continue to improve support for people who have been bereaved by suicide

Improving data and evidence

Providing effective crisis support

Tailored, targeted support for priority groups

Reducing access to means and methods of suicide

Addressing common population level risk factors

Providing effective bereavement support ("postvention")

Promoting online safety and responsible media content

Making suicide prevention everybody's business

Priority groups

- a) Children and young people
- b) Middle-aged men
- c) People who have self-harmed
- d) People in contact with the criminal justice system
- e) Neurodivergent people
- f) Pregnant women and new mothers

Common risk factors

- a) Physical illness
- b) Financial difficulty and economic diversity
- c) Gambling
- d) Alcohol and drug use
- e) Social isolation and loneliness
- f) Domestic abuse

Governance



- Governance through existing suicide prevention partnerships in Plymouth, Devon and Torbay – accountable to their respective Health and Wellbeing Boards
- Prioritisation and oversight will be held by the Devon ICS Suicide Prevention Oversight Group (SPOG)
- Enables consistent priorities across the system, while allowing for local adaption

Overarching principles

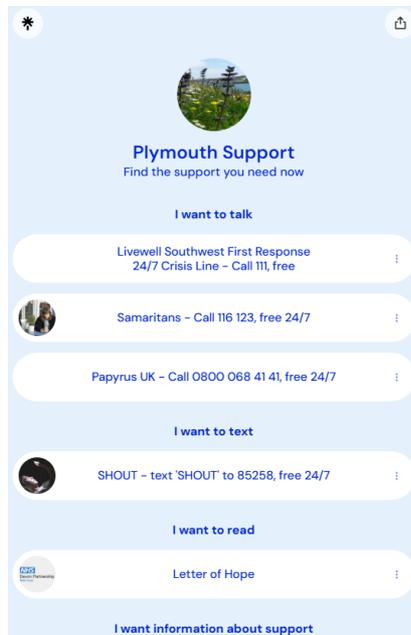


- Localised delivery within a system-wide framework, informed by national strategy
- Collaborative system working and strong partnerships
- Meaningful involvement of people with lived experience
- Equity and inclusion
- Evidence-informed and continuously improving practice

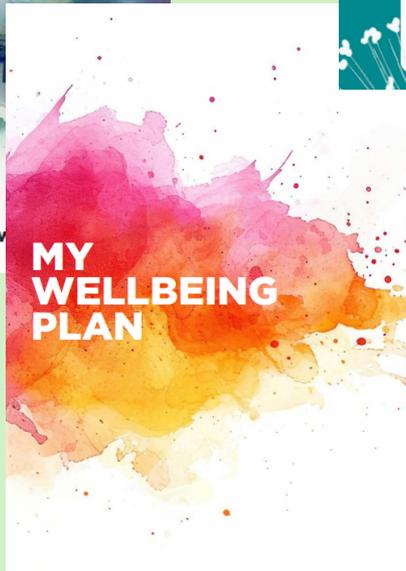
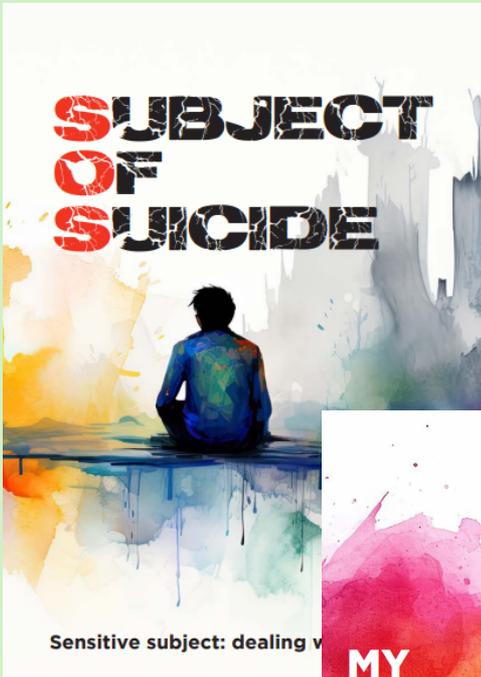
2025/26 Key activities



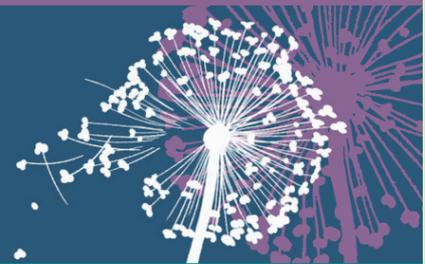
- Reviewed Livewell training package
- Launch of key 'suicide prevention toolkit' items – SOS Leaflet, CYP Guide, Safety Plan template
- City bridge reviews for prevention work – lighting, foliage, fence and access reviews
- Developing working relationships with Reach Plc
- Widened suicide prevention messaging:
 - Community suicide prevention drop in events
 - Speaking at networking events
 - Bespoke engagement with local organisations
 - Development and delivery of social media training
 - Positioning of wellbeing benches / plaques



Suicide Prevention Toolkit



My mental health safety plan



My reasons for living: (people, pets, hobbies, special interests, hopes, beliefs)

OFFICIAL

SELF-HARM AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

For people who work with adolescents



Working with adolescents can be rewarding, but it can also be challenging. We all have the potential to meet an adolescent in mental distress, who have self-harmed and/or has thoughts of suicide.

This guide for non-mental health specialists should be used alongside your relevant organisational policies, gives you key information that will help you to:

- ✓ Feel more confident talking about self-harm and suicide.
- ✓ Know how to respond appropriately.
- ✓ Understand when and how to seek further support.

Your support, at the right time, could make a huge difference for that young person.

- ♥ Talking about self-harm and suicide can bring up a wide range of emotions, especially if you or somebody you know has lived experience of self-harm suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts and/or have been bereaved by suicide.
- ♥ It is important that we take the time to look after ourselves, notice when we are feeling stressed or overwhelmed and know that this is acceptable.
- ♥ Self-care means a different thing to everyone, it may involve prioritising your own needs, talking to somebody you trust, seeking more support through your community or GP.