

# National Suicide Prevention Alliance Terms of Reference

## 1 Forming of the NSPA

The National Suicide Prevention Alliance is a cross-sector, England-wide coalition committed to reducing the number of suicides in England and improving support to those bereaved or affected by suicide. It was formed out of the Call to Action for Suicide Prevention in England.

## 2 The NSPA declaration, aims and what we do

The NSPA has seven aims which are set out in its declaration and summarised here:

### 1. Reducing stigma

For all parts of society, talking about mental health, and taking action to maintain good mental health, is as normal as talking about and maintaining physical health.

### 2. Help seeking

More people experiencing emotional distress seek help before they become suicidal.

### 3. Providing the right help

When people in emotional distress seek help, they receive appropriate support from the people or organisations they approach and they are offered appropriate options.

### 4. Reducing access to means

People experiencing severe emotional distress find it harder to access the means to take their own life.

### 5. Suicide bereavement

People bereaved by suicide get the support they need to cope with the impact on their life.

### 6. Data and evidence

There is better official data about suicide in England and more evidence about effective suicide prevention. Those working in suicide prevention find it easier to obtain this data and evidence.

### 7. Working together

Organisations with an interest in suicide prevention are collaborating with each other to make a bigger difference.

To enable the NSPA to achieve its aims, it operates by:

- **Delivering commitment & influence:** We identify public, private and voluntary organisations that can make a difference and we invite them to join us and take action.

- **Mobilising action:** We identify the most important issues to work on and we facilitate projects to address them. Taking action is the most important contribution a member can make to NSPA.
- **Building an active network:** We facilitate collaborations between organisations who can achieve more by working together.
- **Sharing best practice:** We share information about what organisations are doing to prevent suicide, support those bereaved by suicide and promote good practice in these areas.
- **Raising awareness & building knowledge:** We work to improve the quality and accessibility of data about suicide and help improve the evidence base about what works in suicide prevention and bereavement support. We share this intelligence with organisations that can make a difference.
- **Improving support:** We share information about support available for people in distress and those bereaved or affected by suicide, to increase options and raise awareness of what's out there.

### **3 National Suicide Prevention Alliance and the National Suicide Prevention Strategy**

- 3.1 The focus of NSPA activity and agreed priorities are based on what NSPA members believe is important to achieve lasting and tangible change and will not be limited to what is within the National Suicide Prevention Strategy for England. A number of these priorities map directly onto the areas for action detailed in the National Strategy.
- 3.2 The NSPA is fully supportive of the development and implementation of the National Suicide Prevention Strategy for England and the relationship remains that the national strategy provides the context within which the NSPA intends to successfully deliver an agreed overarching work-plan. NSPA members will therefore be free to work and campaign independently on areas not included in the strategy.

### **4 Getting involved in the NSPA**

- 4.1 There are two ways in which organisations and individuals can get involved in the NSPA:
  - As a member
  - As a supporter
- 4.1 Membership is open to any organisation or professional which supports the aims of the NSPA; commits to the NSPA declaration and membership agreement; and is willing to publicly share the action they are taking to reduce suicide and report on its progress.

4.2 The NSPA Steering Group has the right to exclude any organisation or individual professional from membership whose aims or activities contravene the principles of the NSPA.

4.3 Organisations and individuals interested in the work of the NSPA, but who are not ready to take action, will be invited to register as a supporter.

## **5 Members' rights and responsibilities**

5.1 Members' rights and responsibilities are set out in the Membership Agreement. These may be amended from time to time by the NSPA Steering Group.

5.2 Members can expect:

- To be part of a growing alliance taking action to reduce suicide, improve the support for those bereaved by suicide and making a measurable difference.
- Regular communications about the NSPA's work and members' activities.
- Access to information, reports, good practice and sector-specific guidance.
- Opportunities to collaborate with other members.
- Their organisation's name and logo (if applicable) to be displayed on the NSPA website and in the annual review; their actions and updates to be published on the NSPA website.
- One vote and the right to elect members of the Steering Group.

5.3 All members should commit to:

- Supporting and promoting the aims of the NSPA as set out in the NSPA Declaration.
- Nominating one person who has the authority to represent it and to vote on its behalf.
- Taking action to reduce suicide and sharing this with NSPA, in order that NSPA can promote the work of its members and the alliance, including on its website.
- Reporting on progress of action at least once a year.
- Sharing information, contacts, intelligence and good practice with the NSPA and other members.
- Attending NSPA events.
- Exploring opportunities to collaborate with other members - learning from one another other, building on what works well and pooling resources.
- Promoting membership of the NSPA (adhering to guidelines about using the NSPA's name and logo) and encouraging other organisations to join

5.4 Members may be invited to make voluntary donations to support the work of the NSPA – either a financial donation or support in-kind. There are no compulsory membership fees.

5.5 The NSPA expects its members to respect the balance between promoting relevant products and services with other NSPA members, and the inappropriate use of member communication channels.

## **6 Supporters' rights and responsibilities**

6.1 Supporters can expect:

- Email communications about the NSPA's work
- Invitations to some of the NSPA's events

6.2 Supporters with lived experience may be asked to share their experience through case studies, speaking at events and participating in convened 'task and finish' groups.

6.3 Supporters will not automatically be invited to the annual membership meeting and will not usually have any voting rights.

6.4 Supporters' names will not usually appear on the NSPA website. Supporters may not usually use the NSPA's name and logo in their publications.

6.5 There is no charge to register as a supporter.

## **7 National Suicide Prevention Alliance Structure and Governance**

### **7.1 Overview**

7.1.1 The NSPA is governed by a Steering Group, at least half of whom are elected by the NSPA's members.

7.1.2 The Steering Group is led by Co-Chairs elected by the Steering Group. The Co-Chairs have overall responsibility for the development of the NSPA and its activity.

7.1.3 The Steering Group may set up sub-committees, comprising of steering group members, to develop the NSPA's infrastructure and processes. These will be facilitated by one of the Co-Chairs.

7.1.4 The Steering Group may set up 'task and finish' groups to progress the joint working of the NSPA. These will be time-limited with objectives set by the Steering Group. They will be chaired by a member of the Steering Group and may include NSPA members and supporters.

7.1.5 An Annual Membership Meeting (AMM) will be held to provide an update on NSPA business and related activity and consult on the priorities for the coming year. All member organisations are invited to send representatives.

7.1.6 The elections for the Steering Group will take place just prior to or at the AMM, such that the results are announced at the AMM.

## **7.2 NSPA Steering Group**

- 7.2.1 The Steering Group provides the governance and strategic direction for the NSPA.
- 7.2.2 There are two permanent members:
- The Department of Health (DH), as the current primary funder and policy lead.
  - Samaritans, as the current host organisation for NSPA staff.
- 7.2.3 The Steering Group will have a minimum of ten and a maximum of 14 members.
- 7.2.4 A minimum of 5 Steering Group members will be elected by the NSPA membership. Each member has one vote in the election. Any member may nominate someone from its organisation to stand for election.
- 7.2.5 The remaining Steering Group members will be appointed by the Steering Group, with appointees recommended by a Nominations and Membership Committee.
- 7.2.6 The Steering Group may also co-opt additional non-voting members if it feels specific expertise or experience may be needed which is not provided by existing Steering Group members. This could include clinicians, academics, those with lived experience of suicidal crisis or people bereaved by suicide.
- 7.2.7 Steering Group members can hold a term of three years, with a maximum of two terms to be served.
- 7.2.8 Election procedures are approved by the Steering Group and managed by the NSPA Secretariat.

## **7.3 NSPA Co-chairs**

- 7.3.1 The Steering Group is led by two Co-Chairs who have overall responsibility for the development of the NSPA and activity.
- 7.3.2 One Co-Chair is elected by the Steering Group from amongst its own members. This election takes place once a year after the Steering Group elections have taken place and no later than the first Steering Group meeting following the Annual Membership Meeting.
- 7.3.3 Samaritans has a standing role as the second Co-Chair. This may be subject to review as the NSPA develops.

## **7.4 Annual Membership Meeting**

- 7.4.1 All members of the NSPA will be invited to an Annual Membership Meeting and may submit items for the provisional agenda, for consideration and approval by the Steering Group or the representative with the delegated authority for agreeing the AMM agenda.

- 7.4.2 Member organisations that present projects at the Annual Membership Meeting will be encouraged to outline potential opportunities for NSPA members to contribute to or benefit from the work presented and how the wider network might also be involved in current or future work.
- 7.4.3 Annual Membership Meetings of the NSPA will serve to review, discuss and seek feedback on future priorities for collaborative action. Members agree for these to be put forward to the NSPA Steering Group for consideration.
- 7.4.4 If an NSPA member wishes to have an NSPA related discussion outside of the Annual Membership Meeting, the member organisation will alert the NSPA Secretariat. The Secretariat will support the member organisation to arrange the discussion including potentially coordinating invitations for additional relevant members.
- 7.4.5 Elections for the Steering Group will be held just prior to, or at the Annual Membership Meeting. If conducted at the Annual Membership Meeting, alternative arrangements for voting will be available in advance of the meeting for those members that are unable to attend.

## **8 Resources**

### **8.1 Financial Reporting**

- 8.1.1 The NSPA Steering Group will be updated quarterly on NSPA income and costs.
- 8.1.2 The wider NSPA membership will be updated once a year through the production of an annual financial report, to be included in the NSPA's Annual Review.

### **8.2 Funding and in-kind support**

- 8.2.1 The NSPA receives funding in part from the Department of Health.
- 8.2.2 Funding received by the NSPA is allocated by the Steering Group in delivering against the actions set out in the agreed NSPA work-plan.
- 8.2.3 In addition, members will be invited to make a voluntary donation once a year to support the work of the NSPA and/or to contribute support-in-kind resource.

### **8.3 Staff**

The NSPA is supported by staff hosted by Samaritans. The role of the staff includes (but is not limited to):

- 8.3.1 Overseeing the delivery of the agreed NSPA work-plan and future iterations.
- 8.3.2 Being the first point of contact for queries about the NSPA.

- 8.3.3 Inviting and inducting national members, including advice and guidance on action planning.
- 8.3.4 Monitoring progress against the NSPA work-plan and NSPA Declaration.
- 8.3.5 Representing the NSPA, alongside members of the Steering Group, to external audiences including the media where appropriate.
- 8.3.6 Organising NSPA meetings including Annual Membership Meetings and annual events.
- 8.3.7 Developing and maintaining the NSPA online presence including website content; social/digital media coverage.
- 8.3.8 Providing leadership in developing areas of joint work.
- 8.3.9 Directing, on behalf of the Steering Group, areas of joint work.
- 8.3.10 Managing an allocated NSPA budget on a day-to-day basis (within the financial management systems required by Samaritans).
- 8.3.11 Managing the relationship between the NSPA and relevant local agencies inclusive of periodic enquiries.

## **9 Communications**

### **9.1 Use of the NSPA name**

- 9.1.1 Members of the NSPA are encouraged to state in publications and e-materials that they are members of the NSPA and support its work.

### **9.2 Use of the NSPA logo**

- 9.2.1 When describing the work of the NSPA, members may use the NSPA logo.
- 9.2.2 The NSPA logo may also be used in relation to NSPA action when this action has been agreed at annual meetings or via email at the request of the NSPA Secretariat.
- 9.2.3 The NSPA logo must not be used to suggest explicit or implicit support for events or for published materials where permission has not been given.

### **9.3 Member surveys**

- 9.3.1 To supplement information collected by (annual) updates, member surveys may be conducted periodically.
- 9.3.2 There will be a maximum of two member surveys undertaken per calendar year.

9.3.3 Results of these surveys will be discussed via the NSPA Steering Group and the findings will be used to share good practice and to inform future activity, to improve process development, and to aid member engagement.

#### **9.4 Events schedule**

9.4.1 A detailed overview of NSPA events including a meeting schedule will be published annually defining the purpose for specific meetings and events within that calendar year.

9.4.2 This overview will also set expectations for member attendance – to be agreed by the Steering Group in advance of publication.

### **10 Amendment of these terms of reference**

10.1 These terms of reference may be amended at any time with the agreement of the NSPA Steering Group.



## **ANNEX 1 – NSPA Steering Group Terms of Reference**

### **Objectives**

The objectives of the NSPA Steering Group are to:

#### **Strategic direction and leadership**

- Guide the work of the NSPA.
- Maintain the independence of NSPA from government.
- Oversee the development of NSPA priorities and associated work-plan iterations.
- Approve (with NSPA staff) additional areas of joint-work to be conducted under the name of the NSPA, further to the objectives detailed via the NSPA annual work-plan.

#### **Finances**

- Ensure the NSPA is on a secure financial footing by actively exploring/ sourcing viable options for future funding of the NSPA programme of works.
- Agree the allocation of resource against set work-plan objectives.

#### **Governance**

- Develop, agree and periodically review the Terms of Reference for the NSPA.
- Set and periodically review the criteria, terms (e.g. length of tenure) and role description for the Steering Group and Co-Chairs.
- Ensure rotation of the chairing of NSPA meetings/ events.
- In the event that no nominations to the role of Co-Chair are received *or* in the event that following appointment, a successful candidate proves to be unsuitable for the role, it will be the role of the Steering Group to manage performance and/ or grievance resolution and to collectively undertake/ agree delegation of Co-Chair responsibilities until such time as a new appointment can be made.

#### **Meetings**

- Agree the NSPA annual meeting schedule – for all constituent groups/ complementary structures.

#### **NSPA Membership**

- Set the criteria for levels of NSPA membership, support and related commitments.
- Manage any escalated concerns related to membership, support and/ or grievance resolution.

## External engagement

- Agree responses to public and press enquiries concerning NSPA activities.
- Offer targeted support for local implementation of the national strategy.
- Safeguard the external reputation of the NSPA, proactively managing risk.
- Oversee the development of a lasting digital profile for the NSPA.
- Maintain the NSPA accord of no collective lobbying function; this may be subject to review.

## Decision-making and ways of working

### Decisions

- The NSPA Steering Group will normally seek to reach decisions by consensus.
- If consensus cannot be reached, actions may be approved by a majority of voting Steering Group members present.
- A quorum shall be two-thirds of the Steering Group present at the time in question, including one Co-Chair.

### Meetings

- The NSPA Steering Group should meet at least four times a year; preferably once per quarter.
- The Steering Group will (via the NSPA Secretariat) publish an annual calendar of meeting dates.
- Steering Group meetings will be chaired by one of the NSPA Co-Chairs on a rotating basis.

### Ways of working

- NSPA Steering Group meetings will be convened and supported by the NSPA Secretariat.
- All Steering Group meeting papers, including the agenda; annexes or presentations; minutes of the last meeting; and an update report on the agreed NSPA work-plan/ activities will be circulated a minimum of a week in advance of the meeting.
- Steering Group members who are not able to attend a scheduled meeting will also receive copies of the papers. Any questions, points of information or comments that members not in attendance may wish to raise, can be passed to either the NSPA Secretariat or fellow members. These will then be fed into discussions during the course of the meeting.
- There will be occasions when the Steering Group is required to make decisions between quarterly meetings. In these circumstances, members will be contacted by email and given five working days to respond with comments.

- A decision to be taken via email returns will be made by majority voting with two-thirds of the Steering Group membership being the minimum required to agree a decision.

### **Sub-committees**

- The Steering Group may set up sub-committees to support the ongoing development of the organisation's infrastructure and processes.
- Sub-committees will be facilitated by one of the Co-Chairs.
- Membership of any sub-committee will be confined to Steering Group members.

### **Task and finish groups**

- The Steering Group may set up 'task and finish' groups to progress the joint working of the Alliance.
- These will be time-limited with objectives set by the Steering Group.
- They will be chaired by a member of the Steering Group and may include members and supporters.

## **Co-Chairs**

### **Role of the Co-Chairs**

The collective role of the Co-Chairs for the NSPA is detailed below:

- To share leadership of the NSPA Steering Group.
- To ensure that the objectives and remit of the NSPA Steering Group are adhered to and as far as possible, met over the course of their Chairmanship.
- To represent the NSPA externally, including to potential partner agencies, funders and to Government.
- When necessary and/ or appropriate, to make executive decisions in-between scheduled Steering Group meetings in collaboration with fellow Co-Chairs.
- To chair NSPA meetings and to be ultimately responsible for the strategic direction of the Alliance.
- Agree the work-flow of NSPA staff and to monitor performance against agreed objectives, in consultation with staff line management.

### **Chairing of NSPA meetings**

- Co-Chairs of the NSPA will rotate the responsibility for chairing Steering Group and relevant NSPA meetings.

- Co-Chairs will work with NSPA staff to develop the agenda for Steering Group meetings. They will have final sign-off on the agenda for these meetings, but will have an obligation to consult with other members of the NSPA Steering Group prior to meeting agendas being finalised.
- Co-Chairs will be encouraged to allow people with lived experience to chair sections of meetings, where appropriate.