

'Progress on cross-government workplan, and ambitions for the future'



Public Health
England

Protecting and improving the nation's health

Progress on cross-government workplan and some thoughts for the future

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Background: Cross-Govt Workplan

- In 2012, the Government published the cross-Government National Suicide Prevention Strategy, updated in 2017, to strengthen delivery of its work to reduce the number of suicides in England.
- In 2016 the Health Select Committee conducted an inquiry into suicide prevention, their final report published in 2017. A key recommendation was the need for a “clear implementation strategy, with strong national leadership, clear accountability, and regular and transparent external scrutiny” of the National Strategy.
- In response in 2018, the Government committed to the development of the first Cross-Government Suicide Prevention Workplan to compile the work relevant to suicide prevention and self harm across government departments and highlight opportunities for joint-working

Workplan: Purpose & Remit

We are the first country in the world to publish such a comprehensive plan of cross-governmental work on suicide prevention at this scale.

The Workplan outlines the key actions being taken forward across different sectors, including the NHS, local government and the criminal justice system to address suicide, which includes:

- Supporting the delivery of local authority suicide prevention plans;
- Ensuring every mental health trust has a zero-suicide ambition plan for mental health inpatients by the end of 2018/19;
- Implementing the Prison Safety Programme across the prison estate;
- Improving data collection at local and national level, and harnessing technology to identify those most at risk of suicide and self-harm.

The Delivery Group

- The National Suicide Prevention Strategy Delivery Group (NSPSDG), a group of lead policy officials across government departments and agencies, including the charity sector via membership of the NSPA, was established to monitor and report on progress of this Workplan.
- The NSPSDG is responsible for supporting the co-ordination and delivery of cross-Government actions in the National Suicide Prevention Strategy, as well as the recommendations in the Government's response to the HSC.
- The NSPSDG reports regularly to the National Suicide Prevention Strategy Advisory Group (NSPSAG), chaired by the Suicide Prevention Minister and Professor Louis Appleby. An update to the Workplan will be published annually alongside progress reports to the National Suicide Prevention Strategy.

Some Highlights: MoJ & HMPPS

- The Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS), DHSC, and NHS England are working together to implement a Prison Safety Programme across the whole prison estate to reduce suicide and self-harm.
- A postvention support service, supported by Ministry of Justice (MoJ) / Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS), has been developed to improve support for people in prisons following suicides. A Samaritans-led pilot runs until March 2020.
- Training to improve the skills and confidence of staff through training to reduce risks of suicide and self-harm (SASH) and provide appropriate support is ongoing. By the end of 2018, 12,000 staff had completed the full training and 24,000 completed at least the introduction to SASH.
- MoJ, HMPPS and health partners continue to support prisons to develop and improve their multi-agency plans for suicide prevention and self-harm reduction. Prisons have been encouraged to ensure their strategies link up with the local multi agency plan.

Highlights: Department of Transport

- Three phases of the suicide prevention campaign 'Small Talk Saves Lives' has been undertaken by Samaritans and the British Transport Police (BTP) and Network Rail (NR) throughout 2017 and 2018 across the rail network.
- BTP and the rail industry have developed an escalation process. Data sharing enables partners to come together with local health and social care partners to work together to address problem sites.
- The Department for Transport (DfT) has introduced provisions into train operator franchise agreements which require them to produce a suicide prevention strategy.
- In 2018 DfT established suicide prevention meetings, with membership including Highways England, Maritime and Coastguard Agency, BT, NR, Royal National Lifeboat Institution and Transport for London. The group shares share good practice, update on activity and look for shared opportunities for suicide prevention initiatives, including collaboration of local prevention planning related to clusters.

Highlights: Department for Education (DfE)

- The University Mental Health Charter was published in December 2019, led by Student Minds and co-created with staff and students from over 200 higher education organisations across the UK. It challenge universities to go beyond baseline requirements and make mental health a university-wide priority.
- DfE is also working with the higher education sector to explore disclosure agreements for universities, so universities and colleges have permission to share information on student mental health with parents or a trusted person.
- The joint health and education Children and Young People's (CYP) Mental Health Green Paper was published in 2017, and the Government's response in 2018. Implementation of the recommendations to improve mental health provision for CYP is ongoing, including:
 - Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) are a new service designed to improve join-up between schools, colleges and specialist health services in primary, secondary and further education. The support will be delivered in schools. They will be established in 20% –25% of the country by 2023.
 - From September 2020, Relationships Education will be compulsory for all primary pupils, and Relationships and Sex Education compulsory for all secondary pupils

Highlights: DCMS

- The Online Harms White Paper (2019) sets out a programme to tackle content or activity that harms individual users, particularly children. Actions from the CYP Mental Health Green Paper relating to social media and potential harms to children and young people health are being taken forward as part of this work.
- The National Suicide Prevention Strategy Advisory Group met with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and organisations providing research, education and treatment for gambling addiction to explore the impact of problem gambling and suicide.
 - Public Health England (PHE) and the Local Government Association published guidance for local authorities on tackling gambling-related harm. It encourages public health teams to consider the potential links between suicide prevention and harmful gambling.
 - A PHE review of the evidence relating to the public health harms of gambling expected in 2020.
- DCMS continues work with the sporting community to build on work already taking place to support men; including activities following the National Sports Strategy to promote the benefits of physical activity in improving mental health and wellbeing for everyone.

Progress in 2019

New members

Departments of Work & Pensions, Defra and the Ministry of Defence

Agreement on 3 themes for joint learning and common themes:

- **Data & information sharing** – A range of data relating to suicide and self-harm is collected across the departments. Members are working to how this might be usefully shared across, including options to inform ONS exploration of the annual data
- **Training** – Training for government staff is required to span the transport network, health settings, prisons and a wide range of public services. Members are sharing their experiences to explore how key competencies and capabilities can be identified for suicide prevention training.
- **Self-harm** - Self-harm is a key indicator risk of suicide across community, hospital and custodial settings. Members recognise that addressing increasing levels of self-harm is a key issue for all delivery partners.

The Future

- The Workplan highlights the breadth of work taking place across the Government.
- A great amount has been achieved against the National Strategy since 2012. The Delivery Group is an opportunity to strengthen links across Government and build on this progress.
- There is a need to balance the action on mental services and primary care with work across departments and sectors on primary prevention
- The National Suicide Prevention Strategy Advisory Group (NSPSAG), chaired by the Minister and Professor Louis Appleby, has considered early proposals for there to be three areas of proposed focus for 2020/21. Based on ONS data it is felt these areas are where further action could have the greatest impact:
 - **children and young people;**
 - **middle-aged women and men;**
 - **self-harm.**
- The options for new or further actions in these three areas, set out in the following slides, are at a very early stage of consultation and development.

Area 1: Children & Young People

There have been clear increases in suicide rates among the under 25s across the genders. Young women aged 15 to 19 years and 20 to 24 years have both seen statistically significant increases in their rates since 2012.

Potential options for new and further action

- Local authorities to support local education actions on their multi-agency groups, to help support actions being taken in local colleges, universities and community groups to implement on-going suicide prevention and postvention plans.
- Consider the introduction of a 'Children & Young People's Wellbeing Impact assessment' for new government policies

Area 2: Middle aged men & women

Men aged 45 to 49 years had the highest rate of all men with 26.1 deaths per 100,000 males (491 deaths). Whilst three times as many men than women die by suicide, more women than men report that they have attempted suicide (8% of women compared with 5.4% of men).

Potential options for new and further action

- Roundtable to bring together all activity on what the evidence indicates ‘what works’ or ‘what looks promising’ in preventing suicide in middle age. Research could also be proposed by the group to address any gaps emerging from review of international, national and local interventions.
- PHE could work with local areas to ensure that activities are being evaluated to help build evidence and examples of good practice around what works for men and women, especially those in middle age.

Area 3: Self harm

Strongest predictor of future suicide (although there are multiple risk factors for suicide).

One in four (26%) women aged 16-24 in England have reported they self-harmed at some point; compared to 10% of men of the same age.

Potential options for new and further action

- Continued work on an evidence-based treatment pathway for self-harm for people of all ages.
- Embed self-harm prevention in support for local area plans.
- Develop proposals to help IAPT therapies be more responsive to the needs of self-harm patients.

Next steps

- The next NSPDG meeting is due to take place in April 2020
- Work to update the workplan and incorporate the activities of new members is in progress.
- Further discussion and agreement of activities relevant to the three areas of focus for 2020/21
- DHSC and Chair of NSPDG to visit key Government Departments individually during 2019 to discuss their Department's work streams and progress against commitments outlined in the Workplan.