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Thames Valley Real-Time Suicide Surveillance System – Resource Pack

Prepared by:

Helena Fahie and Nisha Sharma (Public Health England South East Centre)
David Colchester (Thames Valley Police)

Acknowledgements:

Thames Valley Suicide Prevention and Intervention Network (SPIN)
Susannah Mee and Angela Gammage (Public Health England South East Centre)



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1. Introduction

This resource pack has been designed for Coroners, Police, Local Authority Public Health Suicide Prevention Leads and others who are involved in suicide prevention work. The three key purposes of this resource pack are to:

- 1.1. Describe the process undertaken by the Thames Valley Suicide Prevention and Intervention Network (TV-SPIN) in order to develop the Thames Valley Real-Time Suicide Surveillance System (TV-RT-SSS)
- 1.2. Describe how the TV-RT-SSS operates
- 1.3. Provide useful resources that can be utilised or adapted to suit local need

2. Summary of Thames Valley Real-Time Suicide Surveillance System Resource Pack

2.1. Context:

Having access to timely data on suicide is crucial for recognising themes and patterns that may contribute to cases of contagion and clusters. It enables local stakeholder to identify opportunities for proactive initiatives to prevent future suicides and to provide timely bereavement support. In many cases suicide data is not accessible until months after the death and the Coroner's verdict. A real-time suicide surveillance system enables relevant stakeholders such as the local authority public health team and the multi-agency suicide prevention group to review information about the suspected suicide in advance of the Coroner's conclusion.

Thames Valley already had a well-established Suicide Prevention and Intervention Network (SPIN), however Thames Valley Police (TVP), with support from other key partners, recognised that developing a real-time suicide surveillance system (RT-SSS) would be a crucial next step.

2.2. Who is involved:

- The local NHS Healthcare Provider Trusts (Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust and Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust)
- Thames Valley Police
- The local Coroners (Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Milton Keynes)
- Public Health England South East Centre
- NHS England – Thames Valley Strategic Clinical Network
- Local Authority Public Health Leads
- Oxford University Department of Psychiatry - Centre for Suicide Research

2.3. Steps taken to set up the surveillance system:

- The suicide prevention lead from Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust brought together the various stakeholders mentioned above to discuss how a RT-SSS could be developed.
- TVP identified a police lead to develop the RT-SSS; the lead they identified worked across Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Milton Keynes.
- Process and protocols were established within TVP and between organisations, such as local Coroner's Officers and Public Health Leads, to ensure the capture and flow of information and a timely response to trends, possible clusters and contagion.
- Quarterly meetings were established with local authority public health suicide prevention leads to discuss the data generated through the RT-SSS and to agree priority actions and preventative initiatives.

2.4. How system works:

The process flow-chart on page 5 describes how the TV-RT-SSS works.

2.5. The outcome:

The TV-RT-SSS is now well established and has delivered on key project outcomes:

- Successfully captured all suicides from November 2015 to date.
- Enabled identification and analysis of trends and patterns related to potential linked cases/ clusters.
- Developed the ability to cross-check data with Coroner Teams on a regular basis which has assisted with data validation.
- Systematically shared timely information with public health suicide prevention leads in order to enable proactive action to be taken to prevent suicide.
- Enabled co-ordinated swift response to identified cases of contagion and clusters through the TV-SPIN.
- Enabled timely bereavement support through Cruse Bereavement Support Service.
- Helped identify Suicide Prevention Champions in several organisations through local partnership work.

2.6. Key learning points:

Developing the TV-RT-SSS has required a partnership approach, one which needs continuous commitment, but is not burdensome.

The key learning points to date include:

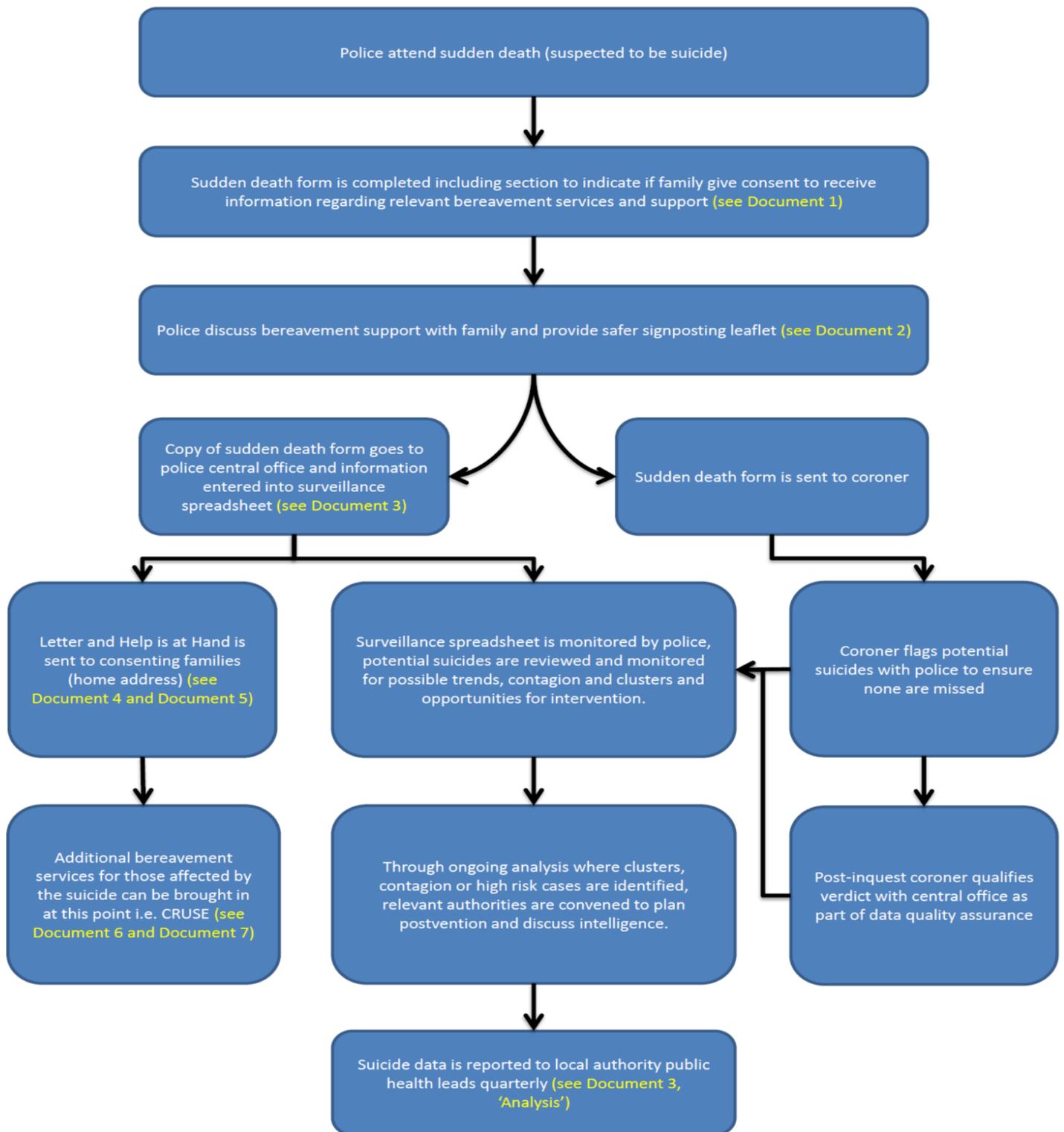
- Responsiveness of local authority suicide prevention/public health leads and other relevant stakeholders is critical to its success.
- Postvention work including bereavement support is reliant on local funding arrangements.
- Partners involved in the TV-RT-SSS must ensure they have dedicated resources and adequate capacity in order to process and act on intelligence being generated by the system.

2.7. Next Steps:

- Explore opportunities to consider the suicide data in line with other relevant data sets; for example: self-harm, substance misuse and A & E data.
- Develop partnerships with regional and national organisations involved in suicide prevention work such as Network Rail, National Farmer Union etc.
- Understand how this work stream links with Police Negotiator work in resolving crisis incidents involving attempted suicides.

3. Surveillance system flow chart

Thames Valley Real-Time Suicide Surveillance Flow-Chart



4. Useful documents

Document title	Brief description	Document
4.1. Sudden death Form (Gen 19)	This form is completed by Police and includes the following sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reporting officer - Deceased's details, including medical details - Process for attendance, notification of death and forwarding of reports - Deceased's medication details - Deceased's relatives' details - Circumstance of death - Statement of identification - Witness details - Mortuary notification form 	Click here to download the PDF
4.2. Safer signposting leaflet	Leaflet given by TVP to those affected by the suicide. The leaflet describes the processes and next steps in terms of the Police and the Coroner and signposts to bereavement services/ places to receive extra help and support.	Click here to download the PDF
4.3. Spreadsheet database including sample data	Suicide data spreadsheet containing the following fields: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of suicides recorded in Thames Valley including a breakdown by county and sex - Location of suicide - Deceased's country of birth - Methods of suicide, broken down by county - Ages of the deceased broken down by county 	Click here to download the Spreadsheet
4.4. Letter to the Bereaved	This letter is sent to the family of the deceased by Thames Valley Police and offers their condolences and signposts to helpful resources. The "Help is at hand" leaflet is also enclosed with the letter.	Click here to download the PDF
4.5. Help is at hand leaflet	"Help is at hand" is a support guide to help others affected by someone taking their own life. The guide has been developed primarily by people who have been bereaved by suicide, supported by Support After Suicide and PHE . This guide provides people affected by suicide with both emotional and practical support.	Click here to download the PDF
4.6. Cruse Bereavement Support – Service Level Agreement	Protocol for face to face supportive signposting for people bereaved by suspected suicide of adults in Oxfordshire: a pilot project partnership between Oxford Cruse and SPIN/Oxford Health NHS FT supported and funded by NHS England.	Click here to download the PDF
4.7. Oxfordshire Cruse Bereavement Care Leaflet	Information leaflet for members of the public explaining what Oxfordshire Cruse Bereavement Care is and the support it offers.	Click here to download the PDF
4.8. Thames Valley Suicide Prevention Resource Briefing	Public Health England have collated a briefing which provides links to useful resources, toolkits and websites relevant to suicide prevention. Please share it with colleagues who share an interest in this important topic.	Click here to download the PDF