



HM Prison &
Probation Service

Hidden & High Risk:

Reflections on the need for prioritisation of suicide prevention activities with individuals under probation supervision.

Professor Karen Slade, HMPPS and Nottingham Trent University

Amy Beck, Probation Service

Aims of Workshop

- To provide a basic overview of the Probation Service and highlight how vulnerabilities relevant to suicide prevention intersect for this population
- Present new national data on probation self-inflicted deaths to encourage greater awareness of this high-risk group for NSPA members
- Provide an opportunity to reflect on current priorities, challenges and suggestions for change and share knowledge and some examples of good practice on suicide prevention activities within the Probation Service.
- Reflect on the impact of suicide for this high-risk group and, consider how NSPA members could engage collaboratively to support a reduction in suicide by engaging with the needs of individuals under probation supervision.

Making a safe space

We would like to reinforce the importance of ensuring we maintain a safe space to discuss suicide.

We also acknowledge the different pathways and experiences bringing people together for the workshop today - please be respectful of differing views and opinions.

Throughout the workshop we will also be mindful of terminology and will use people-first language e.g., 'people on probation supervision'.

Please note as this workshops is reporting on data it will refer specifically to methods

Self-care: We reinforce that self-care needs to be prioritised for us all.

[StayAlive](#) - Essential suicide prevention for everyday life

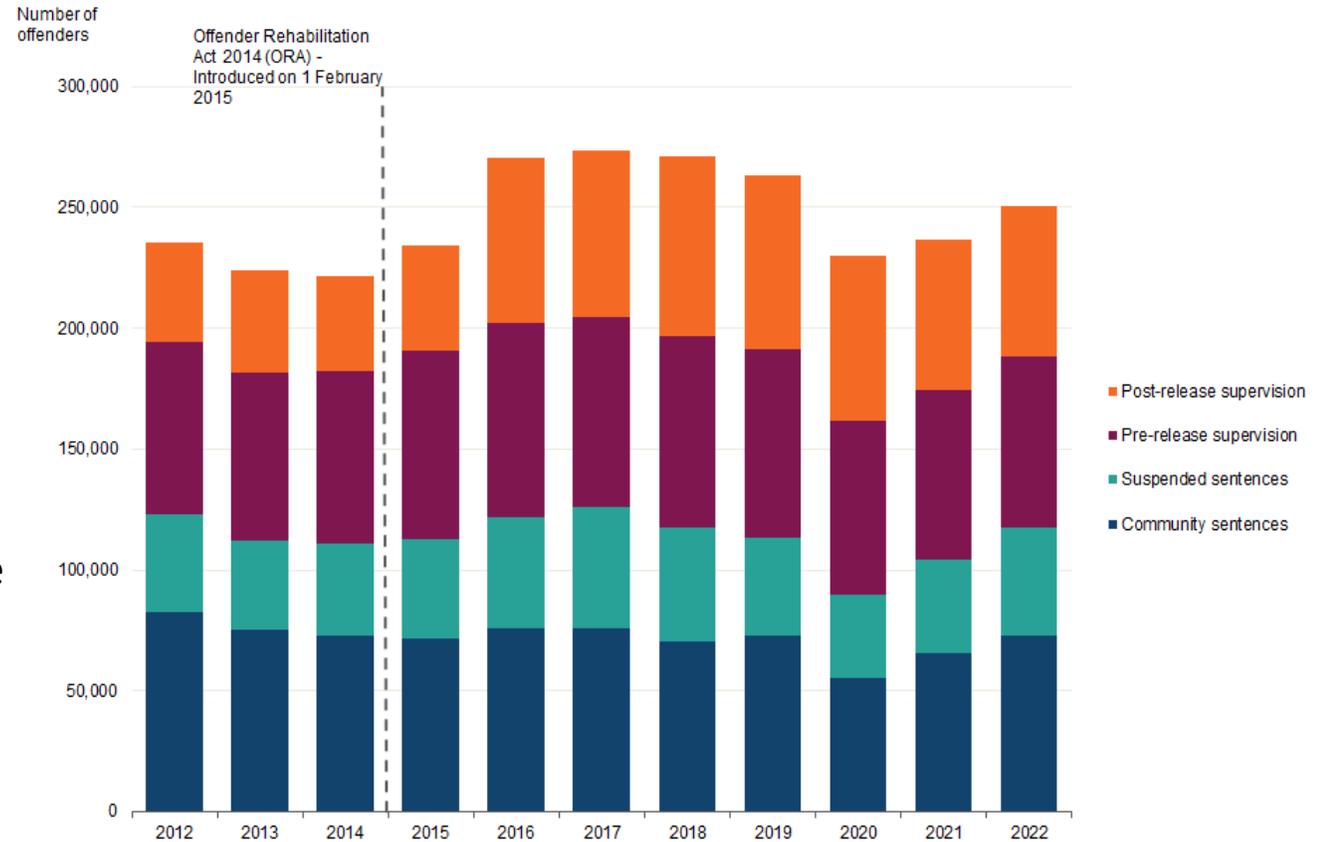
[Contact Us | Samaritans](#)



Probation Overview

HM Prison and Probation Service is committed to reducing self-inflicted deaths and prioritising health and wellbeing of those people on probation.

- The Probation Service provides supervision in the community as well as Court and Prison based services through nearly 18k staff.
- There are currently nearly 250k people being overseen by the Probation Service.
- People on probation have higher levels of complex needs such as mental health and substance misuse issues. These are often strongly linked to their risk of harm to themselves and others.
- The service are responsible for enforcing Orders of the court and licences (5,726 recalls to prison between April and June 2022).



“

Preventing deaths is not the primary responsibility of probation practitioners, but they can have an impact on the health of those under supervision, either through the work that they do to tackle health issues that are themselves criminogenic, risk factors, or barriers to effectively addressing offending behaviour, or by encouraging those under supervision to access services to address health-related needs

”

Reporting and Reviewing Deaths Under Probation Supervision in the Community Policy Framework Issue Date: 06 June 2022

Probation and Suicide

The Probation service does not have a statutory duty of care in the same way as prisons but has the opportunity to support people at different points as they go through the criminal justice system:

- At court when they first appear – bail risk assessments, Pre-Sentence Reports (20k April to June 2022) and information sharing with Prisons (nearly 16k first time prisoners April to June 2022).
- On Community based Orders – requirements such as those focussed on mental health, drug and alcohol treatment provide opportunities for support alongside interventions such as home visits.
- In custody – supporting people accessing services in custody and see a future beyond prison.
- On release from Prison – helping people prepare for release and on release itself in the community.
- In Approved Premises – providing access routes to health care and preparing for move on. Embedding the suicide prevention strategy.
- This work can only be delivered through partnerships with key agencies in the health services, substance misuse services and other statutory organisations like the police.

Working Together: Wider SP risk factors example

Prison and Probation Ombudsmen
fatal incident investigation report
September 2021



Despite efforts made by both the prison and community probation officer, Mr X remained homeless following his release. It seems likely that this, along with his alcohol misuse, exacerbated his feelings of suicide. We are surprised that the local authority did not consider Mr X a priority for emergency housing although we note that the provision of accommodation and mental health for people leaving prison is an issue that extends beyond the remit of HMP X or local probation services.

Opportunities

A few of the recent development and opportunities:

- Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements, Integrated Offender Management and Drug Rehabilitation / Alcohol treatment requirements provide a structure to bring organisations together. More flexible working developed through covid has the capacity to improve access to support and more frequent contact.
- Expansion of PPO investigations to include prison leavers gives us more understanding and scrutiny to inform practice.
- A new policy framework to provide better data, learning from all deaths & support for staff and people on probation
- New overall substance misuse strategy including specific changes such as Naloxone availability in Approved Premises.
- Community Accommodation services, especially the support for released people on probation to secure independent accommodation.
- Psychologically Informed Planned Environment Approved Premises. More supportive environment and tailored to individuals needs which supports wider risks as well as risk to self.
- Development of Deaths under supervision work across Probation able to support and develop work

Prevalence

People on probation supervision are **9-13 times** more likely to die from suicide than the general population

[systematic review, Sirdifield et al., 2020]



32% of people on probation had attempted suicide at some point in their lives.

[Pluck & Brooker, 2014]



Rates of current suicide ideation (USA) are between 10-13% of people on probation

[Carderelli et al, 2015; Yu and Sung, 2015]

Deaths under probation supervision 2021/22

1385 deaths

192 (14%)
female

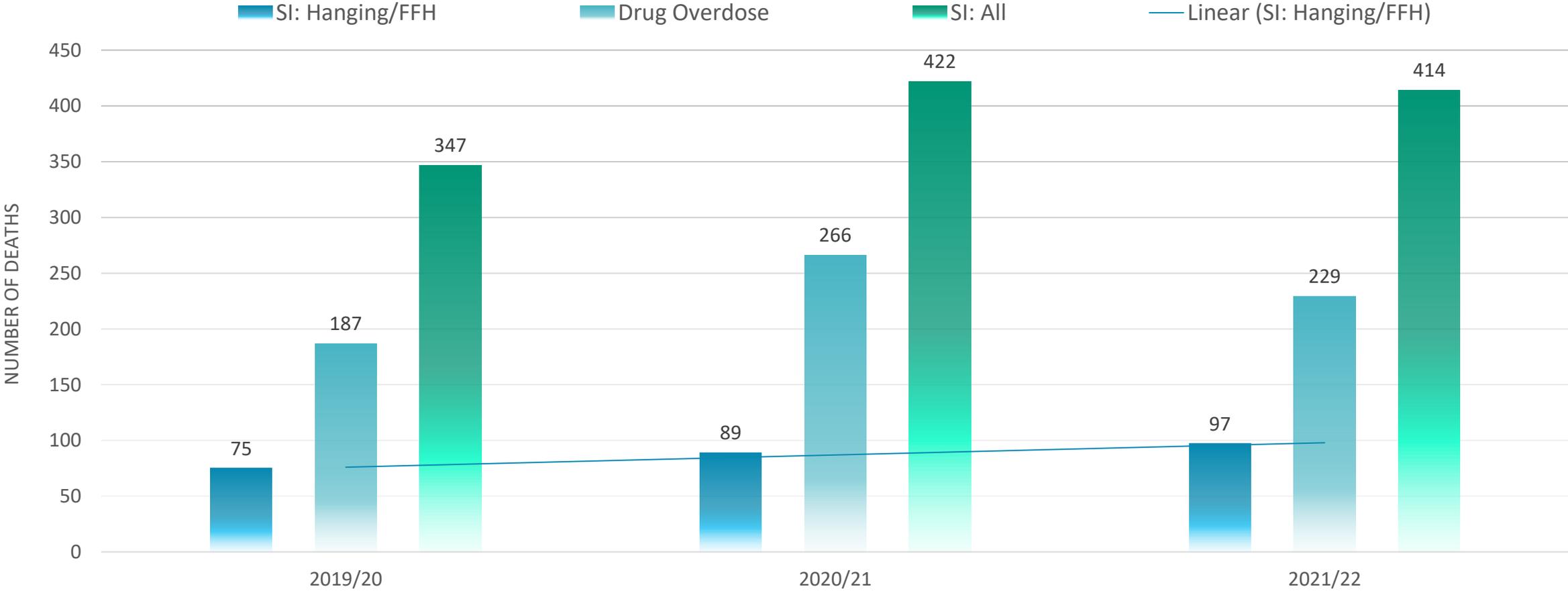
Pre-pandemic 2019/20
999 deaths

Prevalence by cause of death (%)

■ Natural Causes ■ Self-inflicted ■ Homicide ■ Accidental and Other ■ Unclassified



Data Trends



Deaths Under Supervision

Profile factors relevant for suicide

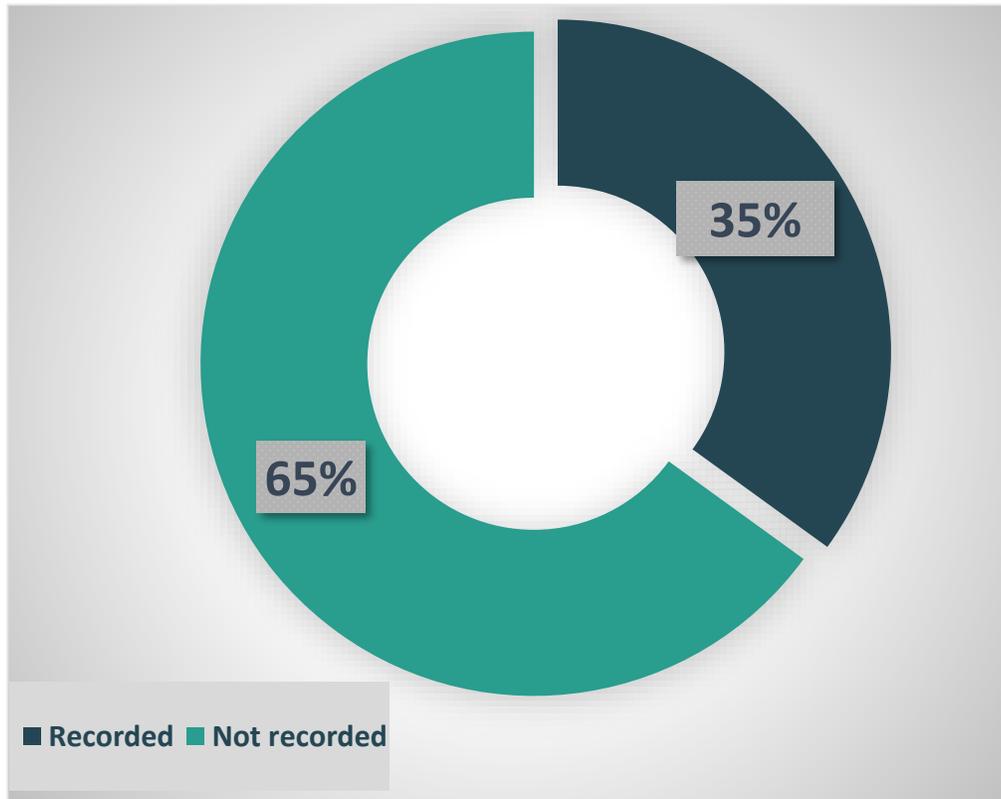
This analysis aimed to expand our understanding of the national profile and characteristics of those who die under probation supervision in England and Wales covering April 2019- March 2021

Further details, other causes of death and factors are available in the full report ([link in final slide](#))

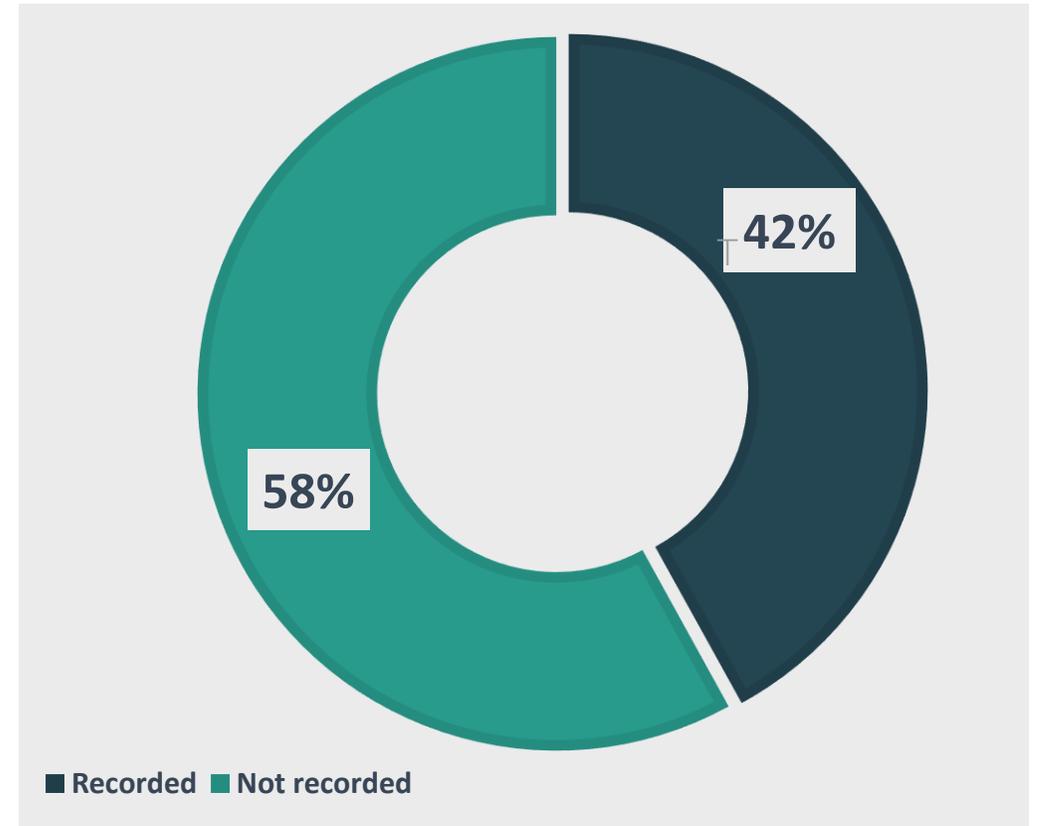
Known risks

In those who died from 'apparent suicide'

Suicide or self-harm risk



Mental Health



Unlike in the general population where men are three times more likely to die from suicide, **men and women under supervision are at more even risk** (women only slightly less)

Similar patterns for ethnic backgrounds



More likely if a **perpetrator or victim of domestic violence** or serving a sentence for violence (not sexual offences)



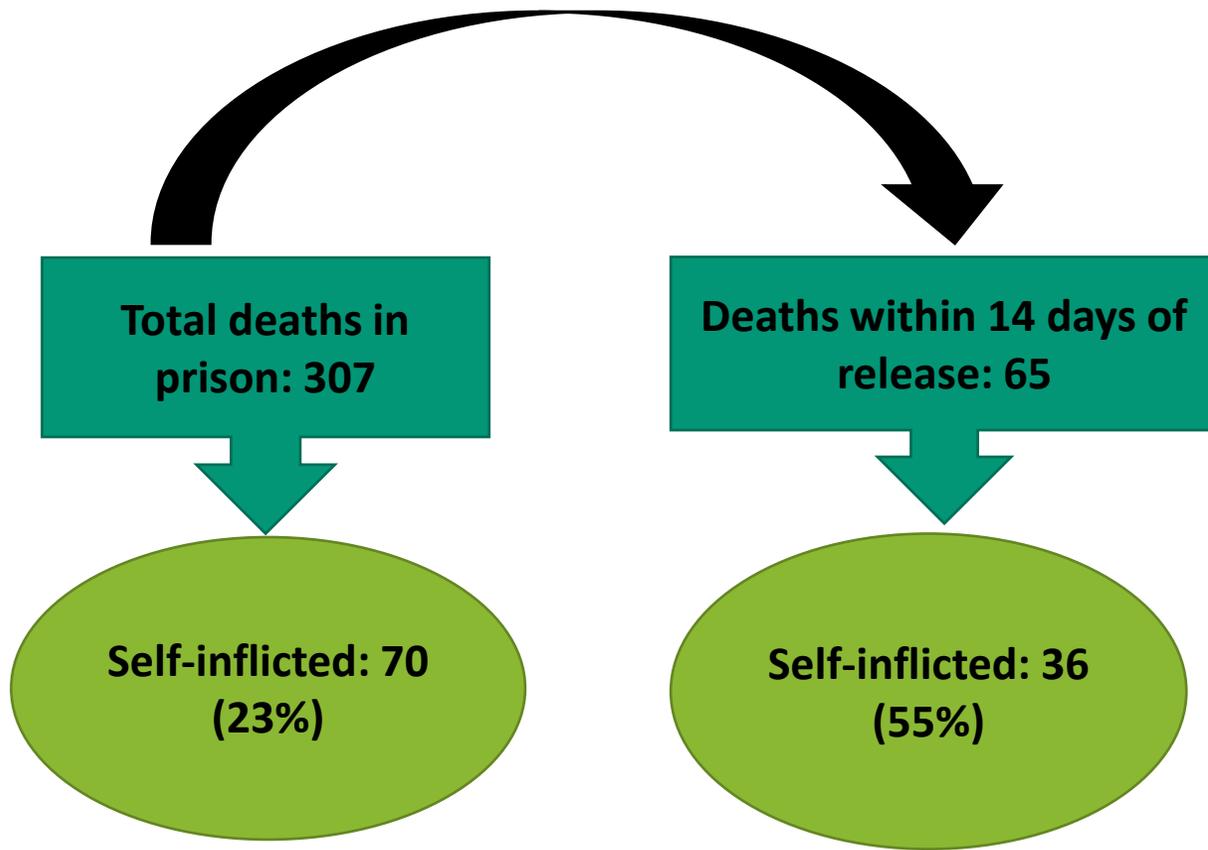
This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-SA-NC

More likely to be **facing enforcement action or recall to prison**



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-NC

Prison release: transition



The early days and weeks after release [and sentencing for community sentences] are a high-risk time for both suicide and drug-related deaths.

Data from MoJ (2022) Safety in Custody statistics

See PSI 64/2011 for more information on prison suicide prevention processes



Leading practice



SaSP and CARE

Two-stage approach to suicide prevention and self-harm management within every Approved Premises in England and Wales.

Support and Safety Plan (SaSP)

Collaborative Assessment of Risk and Emotion (CARE)

Every resident receives

For those at current/ imminent risk of suicide or serious self-harm.

**welfare assessment,
individual support plan and
encouraged to develop a safety
plan**

Similar in stages to ACCT within prisons:

- ✓ Immediate information sharing and safety action plan
- ✓ Detailed assessment and care plan
- ✓ MDT care planning reviews

For more information: Slade (2022) New approaches to suicide prevention in approved premises

Safety Plan

Developed initially in collaboration with MIND.

NEW version about to launch after collaboration with academics and lived experience for accessibility for neurodiverse population

The Safety Plan includes:

- A safety plan for crisis
- Detail of available supports
- Well-designed exercises covering developing understanding of emotion, thoughts and behaviour and improving wellbeing.



Challenges



Which door?

Services accounting for multiple risks or needs including dual harm.

Prioritisation of people on Probation in accessing services due to social stigma.



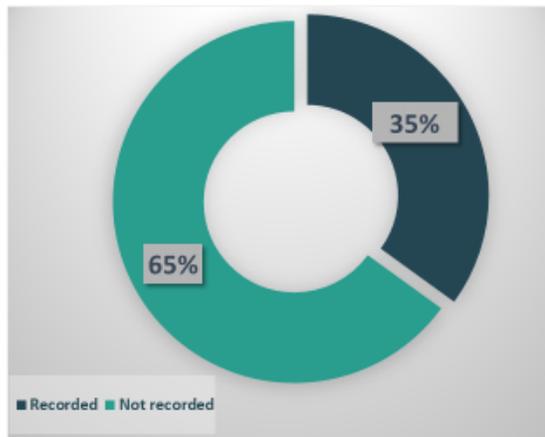
Information sharing



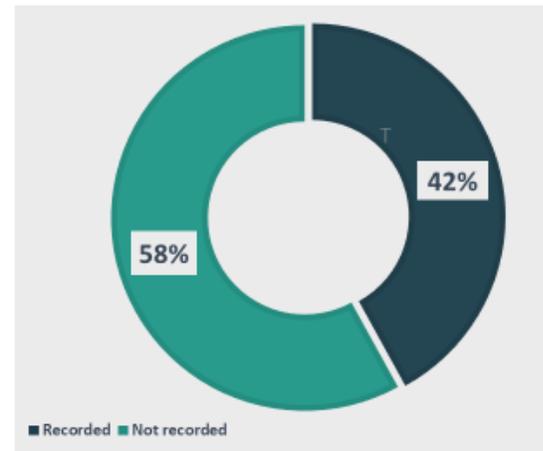
Known risks

In those who died from 'apparent suicide'

Suicide or self-harm risk



Mental Health



We know about some risks

Its likely that less risk is known about by Probation than is present (e.g. 50% of suicides have a history)

Information sharing is can help everyone & working together.

Personal Reflections on the Challenges (1)

Paucity of Research

- Limited research and evidence base on effective suicide prevention activities for individuals under probation supervision
- Lack of lived experience suicide prevention research for the population

Service Provision Considerations

- Forensic population & health inequalities around access and treatment
- Availability of effective responsive suicide prevention services to meet individual need
- Rigid service requirements can lead to exclusion
- Probation staff can struggle to navigate NHS service provision and differing health 'thresholds'
- Difficulties with provision and care after release from prison

Complex Need

- Complexity of need often means 'no neat boxes'
- Acute levels of trauma and suicide bereavement mean many individuals need support but are not being reached
- Engagement and behaviour can be challenging e.g., dual harm (those who harm themselves and others) can mean lack of prioritisation as 'not an easy group'

Personal Reflections on the Challenges (2)

Limited Integration

- Individuals under probation supervision are not often considered within Local Authority SP Action Plans

Crisis Management Focus

- Focus by services on acute suicidal crisis rather than earlier prevention or recognition of long standing vulnerability

Falling between the gaps

- Dual diagnosis debate
- Revolving assessment door
- 'No mental illness'
- Perception that probation alone can manage risk
- Approved Premises being seen as a 'place of safety'

Who can I connect with locally in Probation?

Regional Deaths
Under Supervision
(DUS) Leads

Regional Suicide
Prevention Leads

Heads of local
Probation Delivery
Unit (PDU)

Health and Justice
Co-ordinators

Heads of
Community
Integration

Probation
Practitioners



How can NSPA members engage collaboratively to support a reduction in suicide by better engaging with the needs of individuals under probation supervision?

What further opportunities can be identified?

How can barrier to engagement be overcome?

Integrating people on supervision

Considering the specific needs of those on probation supervision within suicide prevention planning, work and service access.

Reducing the stigma

Collaborative planning

How can we move towards better information sharing and joint management and planning?

Learning together

How can we develop our understanding and holistically review deaths to have meaningful learning at a local and national level to prevent future deaths?

Innovation in suicide prevention in those under probation supervision

On 22 November NTU and HMPPS held a joint event exploring ways to develop partnership to develop work in suicide prevention with those on probation supervision

Video available of all talks via link:

[NTU - 22 November 2022 - FULL SHOW V2 \(vimeo.com\).](#)

Morning Session – Insight talks
Sonia Flynn- Chief Probation Officer
Prof Karen Slade: Strategic Lead for deaths under supervision
Gill Poutney: Suicide and self-harm prevention policy, DHSC
Amy Beck: Probation Suicide Prevention Lead
Caroline Mills: Prison and Probation Ombudsmen (PPO)
National Approved Premises Team
Dr Jake Phillips, Sheffield Hallam University
Jess Worner: National Suicide Prevention Alliance
Dr Jay-Marie Mackenzie, University of Westminster

For information from this presentation

Recent [official figures on deaths under supervision](#)

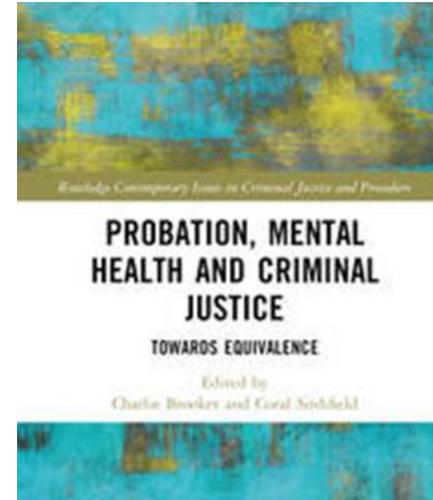
The new [policy framework on deaths under supervision](#).

Dual Harm research e.g., [Slade et al., \(2022\)](#)

Contact for more information:

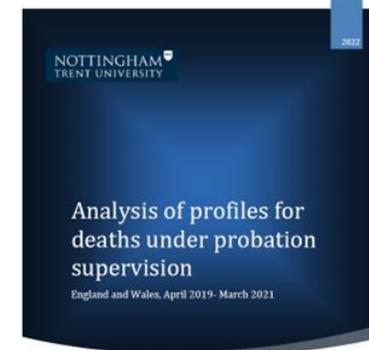
Karen.slade1@justice.gov.uk or
karen.slade@ntu.ac.uk

Amy.beck@justice.gov.uk



Chapter 10:

New approaches to suicide prevention in Approved Premises



Ctrl + Click to access report