

Suicide prevention sector-led improvement

Prospectus 2019/20

The Suicide Prevention programme is part of our sector-led improvement offer of support: www.local.gov.uk/SLI-offer

FOREWORD

It goes without saying each and every suicide that takes place is a tragedy and it's everybody's business to work together to tackle this tragic loss of life and support all of those affected by it.

On average in England 12 people take their own lives every day. This affects their families, their friends and people they work and live with. For every death, another six to 60 people are thought to be affected directly. Relationships break down, careers suffer and mental health worsens.

It is not surprising then that the economic impact is estimated to be so high. For every suicide nearly £1.7 million is lost in things like productivity and caring for those left behind.

But it need not be like this – suicides can be prevented. From the detailed work that has already taken place we know certain groups are more at risk. The opportunities are there for us to reach out and help those people.

So what can we in local government do? Our public health remit means we have responsibility for addressing many of the risk factors, such as alcohol and drug misuse, while our wider responsibilities for housing and local growth mean we can have an impact on the wider determinants. It is why public health is driving work on suicide prevention through its strategies and local action plans. Suicide prevention is a public health priority for local government and every local authority has a suicide prevention plan in place.

The Samaritans and the University of Exeter's new independent research shows that there is strong leadership from councils' public health teams on suicide prevention, with many excellent initiatives delivered in partnership to help drive down suicide rates.

Local authorities are already working closely with schools, railway operators, supermarkets, hospitals and the police to prevent suicide and help those affected by it and are committed to further strengthening their prevention plans.

The Government's announcement that the Local Government Association (LGA) and Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH) would receive funding for this sector-led improvement programme, to help further strengthen local action to reduce and prevent suicide, is a clear endorsement of councils' locally-driven approach and a recognition that by working together and supporting one another we can reduce rates of suicide and save lives.

The sector-led improvement programme outlined in this prospectus is a great opportunity for councils and their partners to access leading expertise, learn from one another and share good practice. This will expand the already strong approach local areas are taking to suicide prevention, and we encourage councils and their partners to utilise what this programme offers.



Councillor Ian Hudspeth
Chairman, LGA Community Wellbeing Board



Professor Jim McManus
Vice-President, Association of Directors
of Public Health

BACKGROUND

The Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH), the Local Government Association (LGA), Public Health England (PHE) and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) have been working together to explore the development of a public mental health support offer, starting with suicide prevention.

In October 2018, ADPH and LGA jointly conducted a survey with councils to identify what effective local suicide prevention planning looks like, and how national and local partnerships are working together to reduce and prevent suicide. One hundred and fifty out of 152 local authorities with responsibility for public health completed the survey.

Samaritans and the University of Exeter, commissioned by ADPH and LGA with support from PHE, produced a report on local-level suicide prevention planning in England.¹ Findings from the report were drawn from the survey research, qualitative interviews with suicide prevention leads, and qualitative analysis of local suicide prevention plans. The findings and recommendations from this report feed directly into the sector-led improvement (SLI) programme outlined in this prospectus.

The survey results show that SLI suicide prevention activity is already happening in around one third of councils and 88 per cent of respondents would welcome support from LGA and ADPH to further drive improvement.

On 17 June 2019, the Government pledged extra funding for the ADPH and LGA SLI programme to support local authorities to strengthen suicide prevention plans, under a range of measures aimed at improving support for mental health.

Based upon the findings from the self-assessment survey, corresponding report, and drawing upon LGA and ADPH's extensive SLI experience across different policy areas, the following support is available 2019/20:

- a series of tools, products and events to provide wider and easier access to good practice and learning
- regional support to build capacity for SLI activity, targeting a larger number of councils who could further strengthen an already solid approach to suicide prevention with less intensive support
- bespoke expert support to help the relatively small number of local authorities self-identifying as facing significant delivery challenges around suicide prevention.

Through the regional support and case studies in particular, the important role of other voluntary, public and private sector organisations will be reflected. Support through this programme will complement existing SLI activity and suicide prevention activity at sustainability and transformation partnership (STP) level. The LGA and ADPH will work with PHE and NHS England regional suicide prevention leads to link activity.

The programme will address the particular needs of local communities, including any groups that may require tailored approaches for suicide prevention, where relevant for local demographics.

Evaluation will be built in from the outset, but it is noted it will take time to understand the impact of SLI activity on the effectiveness of local suicide prevention plans and approaches.

It is intended that this will be a three-year programme (funding dependent). In future years, should this programme extend, the SLI activity will broaden out to public mental health.

For more on the policy context of suicide prevention, see 'Suicide Prevention: a guide for local authorities'.²

¹ www.samaritans.org/about-samaritans/research-policy/national-local-suicide-prevention-strategies

² www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/1.37_Suicide%20prevention%20WEB.pdf

THE PROGRAMME 2019/20

National support

A series of national tools, products and events available for all local areas will be designed and developed to provide wider and easier access to suicide prevention good practice, learning and existing resources.

Webinar series January/February 2020

Masterclass March 2020, London

Dates will be confirmed shortly on our website www.local.gov.uk/suicide-prevention. A webinar series and masterclass will provide opportunities for directors of public health and their teams to reflect upon local suicide prevention planning, learning from and sharing good practice. The masterclass will also provide the opportunity to hear from national experts and to shape the future of the programme beyond 2019/20.

- **Stream-lined prevention resource** which directors of public health and their teams can use at a local level, improving and enabling easier access to existing national suicide prevention guidance and resources for local planning and delivery.
- **Case studies** will provide detailed examples of local and regional good practice on suicide prevention.

- **‘Must Know’ publication for councillors**, will be a source of information and support for portfolio holders, raising awareness about suicide prevention key policy issues and good practice.
- **LGA national political and clinical leadership offer** will include examples of suicide prevention good practice at events such as the Annual Summit, to raise awareness of suicide prevention amongst leaders across health and care.

Further details on each aspect of the above can be found at www.local.gov.uk/suicide-prevention

Regional ADPH network support

Each regional ADPH network will receive a grant for SLI suicide prevention activity. This will fund coordination capacity, enabling each network to build upon strong existing suicide prevention SLI activity within the regions, reflecting regionally determined priorities.

To find out more, contact your regional ADPH SLI coordinator.

If you are unsure who this is, please email magdalena.vandersteen@adph.org.uk

BESPOKE EXPERT SUPPORT FOR LOCAL AREAS

Bespoke support is available from the national programme team for up to twelve councils and partners, who self-identify as facing significant delivery challenges around suicide prevention.

Experts will deliver a one-day workshop in the council with partners, designed using findings from their self-assessment, tailored specifically for local need. An action plan will be produced for the local area to take forward to address local opportunities and challenges in suicide prevention.

Local authorities are invited to submit an expression of interest for bespoke support. Councils with joint suicide prevention arrangements are welcome to submit a joint expression of interest.

Whilst the submission of expression of interest does not require a formal application, it is suggested to cover the following:

- describe the suicide prevention delivery challenge to be explored by the bespoke support
- provide evidence of local need.

Expressions of interest should not exceed two pages.

**The deadline to submit is 5.00pm
Friday 1 November 2019.**

Expressions of interest are required to be supported and signed by the director of public health. It is also encouraged to seek the approval the public health lead member and partner organisations.

Due to the programme timescales, confirmation is required that there is local capacity for the support to be delivered by the end February 2020.

If expressions of interest exceed the current level of support, bespoke sessions will be allocated by the programme team based upon the criteria set out above.

**Please submit expressions of interest to
suicide.prevention@local.gov.uk**

Contact

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REF 4.91