

Report of Office of the Director of Public Health

Report to Scrutiny (Adult Social Services, Public Health, NHS)

Date: 28 March 2017

Subject: Overview of Approach to Reducing Suicides in Leeds

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. This report is intended to give the following ;
 - i.) An overview of the work of the Leeds Strategic Suicide Prevention Group, including key findings from the Leeds Suicide Audit, and the Priorities of the Leeds Suicide Prevention Action Plan
 - ii.) Headlines on work targeted at men
 - iii.) Links to national and regional work

Recommendations

1. The Board receives and notes the work of the Leeds Strategic Suicide Prevention Group, including the key focus of its work on men most at risk of suicide in the city.
2. The Board is requested to comment on the Leeds Suicide Prevention Action Plan, particularly in relation to reducing suicides in me.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to give an update to the Board in relation to the function and work of the Leeds Strategic Suicide Prevention Group with a particular focus on male suicides in the city and headlines on targeted work to date.

2. Background information

- 2.1 Every 3 years the Leeds Strategic Suicide Prevention Group is responsible for overseeing the completion of a suicide audit for Leeds and developing and delivering a suicide prevention action plan. The chair of this group is Victoria Eaton, Chief Officer, and Consultant for Public Health who leads the portfolio for public mental health and suicide prevention. Membership of the group consists of key partners who deliver suicide prevention work in the city. This includes :-

- Leeds Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs),
- Mental health GP clinical leads
- Many third sector partners, including Leeds MIND, Leeds Survivor-led Crisis and Samaritans
- Leeds City Council public health and adult social care,
- West Yorkshire Police,
- Leeds and York Partnership Foundation Trust (LYPFT)
- Leeds Community Healthcare (LCH),
- HMP Leeds/prison service
- West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue service,
- West Yorkshire Coroner,
- Leeds Beckett University,
- Those bereaved by suicide.

A review of the group membership is undertaken annually to reflect current issues and work being prioritised. The Leeds Strategic Suicide Prevention Group reports to the Mental Health Partnership Board, under the Governance of the Leeds Health & Wellbeing Board.

- 2.2 The Leeds Strategic Suicide Prevention Group is responsible for overseeing the suicide audit process. Suicide audits are recommended to be undertaken by Local Authorities in national strategy and guidelines. These have been developed by the Department of Health, Public Health England (PHE) and the National Suicide Prevention Strategy Advisory Group and the House of Commons Health Select Committee (2016-17). Audits give us a unique and rich picture into wider issues and risk factors for suicide deaths that the Office of National Statistics (ONS) is unable to provide.
- 2.2.1 The primary aim of the current audit is to contribute robust local data, which can be used in the development of a refreshed suicide prevention plan. This will ensure that resources are directed towards appropriate evidence-based interventions.
- 2.3 In 2014 the Leeds Suicide Audit was cited as gold standard practice in national Public Health England guidelines. Leeds work on prevention of suicide is recognised nationally and regionally. In January 2017 the Leeds City Council commissioned suicide bereavement service was used as a case study in the Local Government Association Guidelines for suicide prevention. Members of the group

also presented at a regional Masterclass intended for supporting the roll out of good practice across the region. Leeds Suicide Bereavement Service ran a workshop about the service in Leeds at the Masterclass. Leeds public health colleagues have contributed on good practice in local suicide prevention activity to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention chaired by Madeline Moon MP, and continues to work with this group.

3. Main issues

- 3.1 Please see audit report (2011-2013) for full findings from the audit, which is appended to this report, alongside Leeds working suicide prevention action plan. The audit and reports from the men's work found using the following link:
<http://www.leeds.gov.uk/phrc/Pages/Suicide-Prevention.aspx>
- 3.2 Suicide is preventable and we must all continue to work together to ensure suicide is not still seen as an inevitable death for some. Every life lost represents someone's partner, parent, child, friend or colleague, and their death will profoundly affect people in their family, workplace, club and residential neighbourhood.
- 3.3 Nationally, three in four deaths by suicide are by men. The highest suicide rate in England is amongst men aged 45-49. People in the lowest socio economic group and living in the most deprived geographical areas are 10 times more at risk of suicide than those in the highest socio- economic group living in the most affluent areas.
- 3.4 There are a range of factors associated with suicide that are particularly common in men. These include depression, especially when it is untreated or undiagnosed, relationship breakdown, worklessness, financial difficulties, loss of status and low self- esteem. Actions to address the impact of these risk factors and, to encourage men to seek help is vital in order to effectively reach men at risk.
- 3.5 Leeds had a total of 213 deaths by suicide over 2011-13 over 3 years. This reflects the national suicide rate for England. The rate of deaths from suicide has increased slightly in Leeds, which again reflects the national trend. The most common age group was those aged 40 to 49 with 81% White British.
- 3.6 In relation to gender, 83% of the cases were male. The audit found that men are almost five times more likely to end their own life than women (rate 5:1). This is higher than the national average (rate 3:1). The rate of suicide in men has increased since the previous audit; however the rate in women has not. The figures clearly show that men are over eight out of ten of those who die through suicide, while men generally make far less access to mental health support.
- 3.7 Work to address reducing the rates of suicide in men continues to be prioritised in the city. One priority was to target effective work with high risk groups through community development which included engaging men at risk.
- 3.8 Initially public health commissioned BARCA to undertake local insight work to understand how to work with men at risk of suicide in Armley and what would help them get support. They were also commissioned to specifically use community development principals to engage with the men. The insight report recommended:
 - Community work targeted at single, workless men aged 30-60 to tackle isolation and social exclusion.

- Establish a volunteer befriending network for men affected by social isolation and/or depression.
- Awareness Raising and a greater promotion of relevant support services – especially crisis support and the ASIST programmes.
- Adopt a City Wide Approach to these measures
- A development of a local crisis resource by men at risk (Crisis Cards)

- 3.9 Following the Insight work a citywide symposium was held engaging partners who work with socially isolated middle age men, who live in predominantly deprived areas to share the findings and look at how and where we could roll this work out.
- 3.10 Other 3rd sector organisations applied and received grant monies from external sources and began replicating the work.
- 3.11 Leeds city council funded “The Green Man” initiative following on from the insight work. This work was led by The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) at Hollybush with locality partners across the city including Space2, BARCA, Leeds Health for All. Each agency already delivered work with isolated men within their neighbourhoods and were best placed to take forward the recommendations on a local level. Space2 ran a men’s group within Gipton, Health for All ran Men’s Space project and involved in Men in Sheds, and Barca built on the work delivered as part of the insight project. All these initiatives were where the highest numbers of deaths occurred from suicide and were in areas of deprivation. The funding was for a year to help kick start local initiatives and raise wider awareness within local communities. The work and findings was shared widely including with primary care colleagues. Further investment of local men specific activity was funded by local CCGs particularly in West Leeds (Wortley men’s walking group) and more recently in South and East Leeds. The learning from the Green Man project was used to help social prescribing models today in how to engage with men and promoting of peer supportive activity. These groups continue to run today and have become part of the work local 3rd sector organisations prioritise.
- 3.12 In 2015 the West Yorkshire Fire service commenced the “Adopt a Block” initiative which initially was developed to tackle the increased number of incidents in high rise accommodation within Leeds. High rise blocks with the highest number of incidents were often found to be in the poorest areas in the city and the fire service realised they had an opportunity with the 3rd sector to engage with isolated men at risk of suicide. The Fire service now work with BARCA and housing officers with men at risk of suicide and encouraged them to use local services and provide them with the opportunity for wider support and link into local men’s work. The Fire service and BARCA are now beginning to engage with local GPs and IAPT services to look at how they address working in a more collaborative way with the men at risk. The Fire Service is a valuable member of the strategic suicide prevention group.

3. Corporate considerations

3.1 Consultation and engagement

- 3.1.1 Men at risk of suicide, from Armley, Wortley, Gipton, Beeston and Seacroft were at the heart of informing how best to engage with men who are feeling socially isolated and suicidal. They have helped shape effective interventions. In the last 12 months

over 25,000 of these crisis cards initially developed with help from the Insight work have been ordered by agencies and is cited as a valuable resource for front line staff.

- 3.1.2 Those bereaved by suicide are also at the heart of suicide prevention in the city and were part of the scoping work for the service specification for the bereavement service.

3.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 3.2.1 In delivering the suicide prevention action plan, the proposals set out will include careful consideration and demonstrate that equality, diversity, cohesion and integration impacts will be undertaken.

3.3 Council policies and best council plan

- 3.3.1 This work sits under the current health and wellbeing strategy for Leeds and best council plan.

3.4 Resources and value for money

- 3.4.1 The scrutiny recommendations set out to provide clarity of existing services aimed at addressing reducing suicides and improve coordination and efficiency where appropriate.

3.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

- 3.5.1 There are no legal implications to consider in line with recommendations

3.6 Risk management

- 3.6.1 The suicide prevention work stream is intended to reduce risk of suicide for the people of Leeds. If Leeds City Council did not lead this work then there would be considerable lack of investment, leadership and coordination for Suicide Prevention work in the city.

4. Conclusions

- 4.1 As a city, we will continue to target suicide prevention interventions towards those identified as most at risk and as a priority in the Leeds Suicide Prevention Action Plan.
- 4.2 For Leeds, the proportion of men taking their own lives is greater than the England average, and therefore our Leeds Suicide Prevention Plan reflects this in its targeted approach to those men most at risk of suicide.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 The Board receives and notes the work of the Leeds Strategic Suicide Prevention Group, including the key focus of its work on men most at risk of suicide in the city.

5.2 The Board is requested to comment on the Leeds Suicide Prevention Action Plan, particularly in relation to reducing suicides in men.

6. Background documents¹

None used

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.