

HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD			
Report Title	Lewisham Suicide Prevention Strategy 2019-21		
Contributors	Director of Public Health, London Borough of Lewisham	Item No.	8a
Class	Part 1	Date	7 March 2019

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide members of the Health and Wellbeing Board with the draft content of the Lewisham Suicide Prevention Strategy 2019-21.

2. Recommendation/s

Members of the Health and Wellbeing Board are recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the draft content of the Suicide Prevention Strategy and direct as required any further analysis or commentary.

3. Policy Context

- 3.1 In March 2016 the Five Year Forward View for Mental Health was published which set out the ambition that the number of people taking their own lives nationally would be reduced by 10% by 2020/21 compared to 2016/17 levels. The document also set out the following national recommendations in terms of suicide prevention:

- The Department of Health, PHE and NHS England should support all local areas to have multi-agency suicide prevention plans in place by 2017, contributing to a 10 per cent reduction in suicide nationally.
- These plans should set out targeted actions in line with the National Suicide Prevention Strategy and new evidence around suicide, and include a strong focus on primary care, alcohol and drug misuse.
- Each plan should demonstrate how areas will implement evidence-based preventative interventions that target high-risk locations and support high-risk groups (including young people who self-harm) within their population, drawing on localised real time data.
- Local suicide prevention plans should also agree indicative targets and trajectories for the reduction in suicides, to support transparency and monitoring locally over the period.

4. Background

4.1 In line with the recommendation from the Five Year Forward View, a suicide prevention plan has been developed for Lewisham. The Public Health England (PHE) 'Local Suicide Prevention Planning: A Practice Resource' guidance was used in the development of this strategy.

4.2 Development of the strategy has involved the following stages:

- Establishment of a multi-agency stakeholder group

The Lewisham Suicide Prevention Strategy Group was set up in January 2017 to develop and implement the suicide prevention strategy for Lewisham.

- Completion of a Suicide Audit

A refresh of a previous local suicide audit was performed in February 2017. This audit refresh was performed using data from the Primary Care Mortality Database to examine all deaths recorded as suicides in Lewisham between 2012 and 2016 (calendar years). Deaths recorded as having 'open verdicts' were also included in the audit since deaths due to suicide are defined as deaths given an underlying cause of intentional self-harm or injury/poisoning of undetermined intent. This data formed the basis of the strategy/plan development.

- Drafting of the suicide prevention strategy and action plan

The key priorities areas of the national strategy were used to form the framework for actions in this strategy. In addition to using local data to inform these actions, the Lewisham multi-agency group convened several stakeholder events to gain important local views on what would be important to incorporate into the local strategy.

5. Lewisham Suicide Prevention Strategy 2019-21

5.1 The vision of the strategy is to be a borough that becomes safer from the risk of suicide. The main aims of the strategy are as follows:

- To contribute to a national 10% reduction in the suicide rate by 2021
- To provide better support for those affected by suicide in Lewisham
- To raise awareness of suicide prevention in Lewisham among the frontline workforce and wider community

5.2 The priority areas for action in the strategy mirror those of the national strategy and are as follows:

- Reduce the risk of suicide in key high-risk groups

The high risk groups identified by the audit and consultation events include:

- Young men (those between the ages of 25 and 44 years)
- Those who misuse drugs and/or alcohol
- Pregnant women

The main actions in this priority area include: promoting suicide prevention training to services that are targeted at those in these high risk groups e.g. substance misuse services, midwives and health visitors; supporting work on dual diagnosis in the borough; and reducing stigma around talking about mental health in men through initiatives such as the Lewisham Time to Change Hub and Downham Men's Group collaborative project on mental health with Lewisham HealthWatch.

- Tailor approaches to improve mental health in specific groups

Children and young people have been chosen as the specific group to target for this area of the strategy, as a means of prevention/early intervention. The actions in this priority are involve building on the initiatives and services already in place for children and young people in Lewisham and ensuring that they align with the proposals included in the government Green Paper on improving the mental health of children and young people.

- Provide better information and support to those bereaved or affected by suicide

There are currently no dedicated support groups for those affected or bereaved by suicide in Lewisham. The strategy group will work to support the co-ordination of a local group and will also work to ensure that existing resources and groups across London are appropriately signposted to by those who might be first responders to a suicide in the borough.

- Support the media in delivering sensitive approaches to suicide and suicidal behaviour

Collaborative work with South East London (SEL) boroughs and the Samaritans will support this priority area of the strategy, through engagement with local media outlets to influence more sensitive reporting around suicides taking place across the SEL geography. A collaborative approach has been sought for this action area due a number of local media outlets in SEL having shared ownership. SEL boroughs will also work with Thrive LDN on this area to influence media outlets that operate across London.

- Support research, data collection and monitoring

A joint approach with SEL boroughs and Thrive London will be sought for this priority area to work with Coroners to develop both local and London-wide data sharing agreements to support a local annual suicide audit for Lewisham. Data and intelligence from local Child Death Overview panels (CDOP), Drug and Alcohol-Related Death panels and serious incident reporting from secondary care could also be collated in order to provide the most up to date data on suicides to incorporate into local suicide audits.

An action plan and monitoring/evaluation framework have also been developed for the strategy to support its implementation.

6. Financial implications

6.1 NHS England have not released any specific funding to support the Lewisham suicide prevention strategy. Resources and expertise to implement the strategy will be sought from Thrive London. The work described in the Strategy will be carried out within the existing budgets of the Council and partner organisations.

7. Legal implications

7.1 There are no specific legal implications of this strategy.

8. Crime and Disorder Implications

8.1 There are no Crime and Disorder Implications from this report.

9. Equalities Implications

9.1 The suicide audit performed to inform the strategy made use of available data on the protected characteristics (age, gender, country of birth as a proxy for ethnicity) of those who have completed by suicide in Lewisham between 2012 and 2016. The main inequalities identified from the audit were in relation to age and gender, with men between the ages of 24 and 45 years being at highest risk of completing suicide in the borough. These findings were fed into the development of actions for the main priority areas of the strategy.

10. Environmental Implications

10.1 There are no Environmental Implications from this report.

11. Conclusion

11.1 A suicide prevention plan has been developed for Lewisham to cover the 2019-2021 time period and aims to make the borough safer from the risk of suicide and contribute to a national 10% reduction in the rate of suicide by 2021.

If there are any queries on this report please contact Catherine Mbema, Public Health, Lewisham Council, on 0208 314 3927, or by email at: ***Catherine.mbema@lewisham.gov.uk***