

Lancashire Health and Wellbeing Board

Meeting to be held on Tuesday, 12 November 2024

Corporate Priorities:

Caring for the vulnerable;
Delivering better services;

Self-Harm and Suicide Prevention Strategy 2024-29

(Appendices 'A' and 'B' refer)

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Brief Summary

The development of a Lancashire Self-Harm and Suicide Prevention Strategy is one of the commitments under the Health and Wellbeing Board's Happier Minds priority. The Strategy has been produced with partner agencies including Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board, district council leads, voluntary sector organisations including individuals who have been affected by suicide. It mirrors the national Suicide Prevention Strategy's key areas but with a clear focus on local priorities in Lancashire. It outlines the data and intelligence of suicide and self-harm and sets out an all-age partnership action plan to deliver the ambition to reduce suicides and self-harm.

Recommendation

The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to approve the Lancashire Self-harm and Suicide Prevention Strategy 2024-29 and Action Plan 2024-25.

Detail

Development of a Lancashire Self-Harm and Suicide Prevention Strategy is a key commitment under the Health and Wellbeing Board's Happier Minds programme. Self-harm and suicide prevention also overlaps with the Board's priorities on Best Start in Life.

The draft Strategy 2024–29 and Action Plan 2024-25 (Appendices 'A' and 'B') have been co-developed through a consultation process in February and March 2024. Partners who have been involved include the Adult and Children Safeguarding Boards, Lancashire Suicide Prevention and Self-Harm Reduction Strategy Group, Lancashire Child Death Overview Panel, district councils, Lancashire Alcohol and Drugs Partnership, place partnerships, Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care



Board and Lancashire County Council. A separate engagement exercise has also taken place to capture actions relating to children and young people.

The Strategy's aim is to reduce suicides and self-harm in Lancashire by addressing the key areas outlined in the national Suicide Prevention Strategy published by Department of Health and Social Care (2023). The areas for action are:

1. Improving data and evidence
2. Providing tailored and targeted support to priority groups
3. Addressing risk factors
4. Online safety, media, and technology
5. Providing effective and appropriate crisis support
6. Tackling means and methods of suicide
7. Providing timely and effective bereavement support
8. Making suicide prevention everyone's business

Suicide is a major issue for society and a leading cause of years of life lost. In 2023, the England suicide rate increased from the previous year (2022), the North West has seen the biggest increase in rates from 2022 to 2023. Every suicide is an individual tragedy and when someone dies by suicide the shock is felt by families, friends, neighbours, colleagues, and professionals. Evidence suggests that for every suicide 135 people are impacted and based on this figure over 14,175 people could have been affected by suicide in 2022-23 alone.

The factors leading to someone taking their own life are complex and are often linked to circumstances and experiences over an extended period or recent events. Risk is often higher in those who are more disadvantaged or socially excluded and with specific risk factors such as gender, mental illness, substance misuse and trauma.

The picture in Lancashire

The Strategy sets out the data and intelligence on suicides and self-harm. Between the period 2021-23 there were 458 deaths registered, with the cause of death identified as suicide, in the Lancashire-12 area. Of these 345 were male and 113 were female. Over three quarters of suicides were males.

- Lancashire-12 area's suicide rate is significantly higher than England for all persons (14.2), males (21.9), and females (6.8) when compared to England (10.7, 16.4, and 5.4 respectively).
- Lancashire's suicide rate for all persons is the 22nd out of 153 upper tier local authorities in England. Lancashire-12 area's suicide rate remains worse than the England rate as has been the case since 2006-08.
- For the period 2020-22 the estimated years of life lost to suicide (all persons, 15-74 years) in Lancashire was 45 years, which is significantly higher than for England (34.1).
- Suicide rate (all persons) in the following districts are significantly higher than the England rate (10.7): Lancaster (17.8), Preston (17.8), and Burnley (17.4).
- The deaths that occurred in Lancaster, Preston, and Burnley accounted for nearly 40% of the registered deaths from suicide in Lancashire for the specified period totalling 176 out of 458 deaths.



In 2023 two audits were completed to gain further insight into the suicide data; a ten-year thematic review of child deaths pan-Lancashire which was commissioned by Lancashire Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) and an audit of the conclusion of alleged suicides working with the Coroner's Office of suicides that occurred in 2022. The thematic review identified an average of fewer than 5 deaths per year which were more common in those aged 15-17 years of age, the method of suicide and circumstances. The audit of coroner reports reviewed 72 recorded suicide cases and findings identified several factors including relationship breakdown, debt, loneliness, and substance misuse.

Progress to date/Action Plan for 2024-25

- Establishing the Suicide Prevention Oversight Group (SPOG) that provides governance and oversight. Chaired by Lancashire Director of Public Health, Sakthi Karunanithi as Senior Responsible Officer (SRO), in collaboration with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) Associate Director for All Age Mental Health Programmes, Liz Dover.
- Self-harm practice guides have been developed for educational settings, adults and professionals.
- Suicide prevention training has been commissioned and delivered by a range of partners. In 2022, more than 3,000 professionals in Lancashire participated in self-harm training.
- Training by Samaritans for local media outlets regarding covering suicide sensitively.
- Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board has adopted the THRIVE framework as part of the re-design and commissioned a range of mental health support services for children and young people e.g. Peer support, parenting support, prevention and resilience. A digital support offer has also been commissioned in conjunction with Local Authorities across the Integrated Care Board.
- Lancashire County Council has commissioned Lancaster University to deliver a Compassionate School Hub supporting staff wellbeing and delivering a whole school approach with key partners.

This work is underpinned by improving mental wellbeing, ensuring a collaborative approach enabling access to the right support, at the right time and building strong, resilient, and socially connected communities.

Conclusion

The Lancashire Self-harm and Suicide Prevention Strategy 2024-29 is a call to action and provides a framework to reduce suicide and self-harm informed by data and intelligence, audits, consultation with partners and ongoing work through suicide prevention partnerships across the County. The action plan will be reviewed annually so it remains timely, and actions are delivered and monitored. A system-wide approach is required; no one organisation can address this complex public health challenge, we must make reducing suicide and self-harm everyone's business.



Appendices

Appendices 'A' and 'B' are attached to this report.

Appendix	Title
Appendix 'A'	Lancashire Suicide Prevention and Reducing Self-Harm Strategy and Action 2024-2029
Appendix 'B'	Lancashire Self-Harm and Suicide Prevention Strategy Action Plan 2024-25

List of background papers

[Suicide prevention strategy for England: 2023 to 2028 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/suicide-prevention-strategy-for-england-2023-to-2028)

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A

