



Annual Review 2023

Northamptonshire Suicide Prevention Strategy 2022-2025

Northamptonshire Suicide Prevention Steering Group
September 2023

Introduction

This report highlights the key findings from the first annual review of the refreshed Northamptonshire Suicide Prevention Strategy 2022-2025 and corresponding action plan.

The refreshed strategy and action plan was launched in September 2022 and the delivery is being coordinated by the Northamptonshire Suicide Prevention Steering Group. This report will review the progress in implementing the action plan and recommendations for further actions to ensure this area of work remains updated and relevant to local need.

Background

Suicide is defined as the deliberate act to intentionally end one's life (1). The effects of a suicide can be devastating, and the impact felt by many – including family, friends, neighbours, employers, colleagues, professionals, and the wider community. People bereaved by suicide are also more likely to experience poor mental health and have an increased risk of suicide themselves.

In Northamptonshire, around 60 people take their own life each year. As a partnership, we believe that every death by suicide is one too many. Each of these deaths can potentially be prevented, therefore suicide prevention is a priority for everyone. This strategy and action plan aims to reduce suicide and self-harm in Northamptonshire, through a whole-county, all-age approach.

In line with the newly published *Suicide Prevention in England: 5 year cross sector strategy (2023)* (2) following on from the *Preventing suicide in England: fifth progress report (2012)* (3), the partnership is taking a cross-system collective approach to suicide prevention. The suicide prevention strategy for England identifies eight priorities to contribute to reducing suicide and self-harm. This strategy is aligned to these priorities, which are:

1. Improving data and evidence to ensure that effective, evidence-informed and timely interventions continue to be developed and adapted.
2. Tailored, targeted support to priority groups, including those at higher risk, to ensure there is bespoke action and that interventions are effective and accessible for everyone.
3. Addressing common risk factors linked to suicide at a population level to provide early intervention and tailored support.
4. Promoting online safety and responsible media content to reduce harms, improve support and signposting, and provide helpful messages about suicide and self-harm.
5. Providing effective crisis support across sectors for those who reach crisis point.
6. Reducing access to means and methods of suicide where this is appropriate and necessary as an intervention to prevent suicides.
7. Providing effective bereavement support to those affected by suicide.
8. Making suicide everybody's business so that we can maximise our collective impact and support to prevent suicides.

Partner agencies on the Northamptonshire Suicide Prevention Steering Group were instrumental in developing this strategy. These agencies are committed to working together to deliver this strategy.

The Northamptonshire Mental Health, Learning Disability and Autism Population Health and Prevention Pillar (adults) and the Children and Young People Collaborative Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Work Programme (children and young people) maintain strategic oversight of the implementation of the strategy. Progress and outcomes are reported through the Mental Health, Learning Disability and Autism Collaborative and to the North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire Health and Wellbeing Boards.

Review of Priorities

This section will review the strategy action plan against the aims and objectives set out to be completed and/or in progress by the first year following the strategy launch. There are several actions that are set out in the strategy action plan that are yet to begin, please view the full updated action plan document for details.

Below is a summary of our headline achievements since September 2022.

Priority 1: Reduce the risk of suicide in key high-risk groups

| What we set out to do... | What we achieved... | What we plan to do... |
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| Coordinate a countywide prevention campaign aimed at groups identified at high-risk of suicide | Local high-risk groups have been identified from a deep-dive audit on local data – these include substance and/or alcohol misuse; self-harm and/or previous suicide attempts; adverse events in childhood; relationship breakdown; illness (mental health condition); illness (physical health condition); debt/financial problems. | Develop and deliver a campaign plan aimed at reducing the risk of suicide for these identified groups. |
| Coordinate a campaign for World Suicide Prevention Day (10 th October 2023) with key partners | Coordinated the ‘Take a Break’ sofa campaign with NHFT, across various locations across North and West Northamptonshire. The aim of the campaign was to encourage passers-by to stop, sit and talk, to help to raise awareness of suicide prevention and the services that can provide support, as well as reducing stigma around suicide and self-harm. This was a successful campaign, and it was followed up by a visit to the University of Northampton for World Mental Health Day October 2023. | Continue to develop and deliver future campaigns for World Suicide Prevention Day, World Mental Health Day and support other key dates/events. |

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| Deliver a suicide prevention training programme to upskill primary care and frontline staff in the early identification of risk factors | <p>A mental health and suicide prevention training framework has been developed and delivery has begun. This includes the development of mental health awareness and suicide prevention training for primary care (general practices, pharmacies, and dental practices) and bespoke advanced suicide mitigation training.</p> | <p>Continue to develop and deliver the mental health and suicide prevention training framework.</p> <p>Review induction processes for West Northamptonshire and North Northamptonshire Councils to incorporate suicide prevention training for all staff.</p> |
| | <p>A pilot support package for West Northamptonshire Council's Customer Service Teams' call handlers was developed to increase awareness of suicide prevention and available services, and to increase resilience and support for staff.</p> | <p>The pilot support package will be reviewed and updated ahead of rolling out across all teams with call handlers in North and West Northamptonshire Councils.</p> |
| Continue to monitor suicide data and intelligence to maintain our understanding of high-risk groups and inform trends and emerging issues | <p>A report has been developed following a deep-dive audit on local data. Local real-time surveillance data is collated on suspected deaths by suicide and is evaluated regularly. Links with local safeguarding partnerships have been established.</p> | <p>Data and intelligence will continue to be collected and monitored. Findings from the audit and Mental Health Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) will be used to enhance understanding of all-age high-risk groups.</p> |
| Explore opportunities to enhance intelligence on local suicide from across the suicide prevention partnership | <p>Opportunities to access additional data sources are explored regularly.</p> | <p>Opportunities to enhance intelligence on local suicide from across the suicide prevention partnership will continue to be explored.</p> |
| Explore solutions that enhance the development of protective behaviours and suicide prevention | <p>A Psychoeducation and Respite pilot for Mental Health Carers was completed and evaluated. The Specialist Perinatal Mental Health and Maternity Mental Health service has been expanded in line with Long-Term Plan ambitions. An Emotional Coaching Pilot initiative for parents/carers of children with suicidal ideation was implemented, monitoring and evaluated.</p> | <p>Expand the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) Talking Therapies Service and Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Services in line with Long-Term Plan ambitions.</p> |

Priority 2: Tailor approaches to improve mental health in specific groups

| We said we were going to... | Achievements | Future actions |
|--|--|--|
| Improve partner and public awareness of local mental health services targeted to identified priority groups | A map of local mental health services is in development. | Develop and deliver a campaign plan aimed at reducing the risk of suicide for identified groups. |
| Analyse intelligence to improve understanding of local mental health services and service users | <p>A report has been developed following a deep-dive audit on local data.</p> <p>Local real-time surveillance data is collated on suspected deaths by suicide and is evaluated regularly.</p> <p>Links with local safeguarding partnerships have been established.</p> <p>Opportunities to access additional data and intelligence sources are explored regularly.</p> | Findings from the audit, real-time surveillance system and Mental Health JSNA will continue to be analysed and used to enhance understanding of local mental health services and service users. |
| Monitor trends in data and intelligence to inform priorities | Analysis of local and national data has contributed to the identification of local high-risk groups. | Data and intelligence will continue to be collected and trends will continue to be monitored to inform priorities. |
| Sign up to the Prevention Concordat | There is Northamptonshire system-wide sign up to the National Mental Health Prevention Concordat since November 2022. | Suicide prevention priorities are being delivered within the Prevention Concordat Action Plan. |
| Maintain delivery of the Wave 3 Transformation Programme | The NHS Wave 3 Transformation funding was used to deliver STORM training for staff working in hospitals, to produce and distribute Protect Cards, and provide a 24/7 digital support offer to 250 residents in the county. | <p>An alternative 24/7 digital support offer will be funded from 2024.</p> <p>There will be continued delivery of STORM training and distribution of Protect Cards.</p> <p>The funding will contribute to the campaign plan.</p> |
| Strengthen and enhance response to people with suicidal ideation/ self-harm making transition from Children and Young People to Adult Pathways | <p>There has been expansion and alignment of the 16-25's Enhanced Support Service model.</p> <p>The Mental Health Transitions Strategy is currently in development.</p> | The alignment of the Enhanced Support Service with the Care Leavers Team to create a Community of Practice for young people transitioning from children and young people to adult pathways is in progress. |

Priority 3: Reduce access to means of suicide

| We said we were going to... | Achievements | Future actions |
|--|---|---|
| Work with partners to prevent public places being used for suicide | A map of locations has been developed to identify priority locations. | Asset owners of priority locations will be engaged with to create action plans with opportunities for mitigation. |
| Engage with partners and retailers to influence policy change to reduce access to certain means of suicide | Data and intelligence have been evaluated to identify local means of suicide. | Partners and local retailers will be engaged with to explore opportunities for changes to existing policies. |
| Continue to monitor existing suicide data and intelligence sources to inform emerging methods and local trends | A report has been developed following a deep-dive audit on local data. Local real-time surveillance data is collated on suspected deaths by suicide and is evaluated regularly. Links with local safeguarding partnerships have been established. | Data and intelligence will continue to be collected and monitored to inform of emerging methods and local trends. |

Priority 4: Provide better information and support to those bereaved or affected by suicide

| We said we were going to... | Achievements | Future actions |
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| Work with emergency service partners to explore opportunities to better support staff involved with suicide intervention | Research on available postvention support has been completed. A contact list of key emergency service partners is in development. | Local emergency service partners will be engaged with to undertake a needs assessment of existing postvention support and use research to adjust and enhance current service provision. |
| Coordinate a countywide suicide prevention package to support educational establishments | A support package for all educational establishments in Northamptonshire has been developed to support in the event of a suspected death by suicide in a school community, including postvention and prevention information launched in February 2023. | The support package is to be reviewed on an annual basis and reshared with educational establishments with key updates. Similar support packages will be developed offering information and guidance around self-harm and online harms. |
| Explore opportunities to develop intelligence and data on bereavement services and those bereaved by suicide | A monitoring system for the bereavement services has been established and is reported on regularly. | The monitoring system will be explored and evaluated by bereavement service partners, using the findings to enhance and develop the available bereavement support. |

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| from across the suicide prevention partnership | | |
| Embed the local Bereavement Real-Time Referral Pathway | A local bereavement real-time referral pathway has been embedded. | The bereavement referral pathway will be reviewed regularly. |

Priority 5: Support the media in delivering sensitive approaches to suicide and suicidal behaviour

| We said we were going to... | Achievements | Future actions |
|---|---|---|
| Develop a local Media Framework to support responsible reporting of suicide | A local media reporting framework has been developed and shared with local media partners. | There will be continued engagement with local media partners to promote the framework and support cooperative and transparent working partnerships. |
| Establish a local media monitoring system | A local monitoring system has been established, with support from communication colleagues when reporting concerns arise. | The established local monitoring system will continue to be used and developed as appropriate. |

Priority 6: Support research, data collection and monitoring

| We said we were going to... | Achievements | Future actions |
|--|---|---|
| Undertake an audit of Coroners cases to enhance our understanding of the local situation | A report has been developed following a deep-dive audit on local data. | The audit will continue on a regular basis. |
| Continue to work with partners to maintain the Northamptonshire Suicide Real Time Surveillance System (RTSS) | Local real-time surveillance data is collated on suspected deaths by suicide and is evaluated regularly. | Work with partners will continue to maintain the Northamptonshire Suicide Real Time Surveillance System (RTSS). |
| Develop an escalation protocol for suspected suicide cases | An escalation protocol has been developed and is followed when actions have been identified to reduce further impact. | The established escalation protocol will continue to be used and developed as appropriate. |
| Support the development of the Mental Health JSNA to inform future actions | The Mental Health JSNA is currently being developed. | Recommendations for future consideration will be identified once the Mental Health JSNA has been developed. |

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| Explore opportunities to develop intelligence and data sources from across the suicide prevention partnership | Opportunities to share and receive relevant data and intelligence are explored regularly. | Opportunities to develop intelligence and data sources from across the suicide prevention partnership will continue to be explored. |
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Priority 7: Reducing rates of self-harm as a key indicator of suicide risk

| We said we were going to... | Achievements | Future actions |
|--|--|--|
| Improve awareness and understanding of services offering support for self-harm in Northamptonshire | A map of self-harm services and support has been developed. | Actions are currently underway to improve local data and intelligence on self-harm. Next steps will then include working with partners to promote services and support to identified groups. |
| Develop a pilot Self-Harm Real Time Surveillance System (SHRTSS) which will provide an insight into those who self-harm but do not present to primary or secondary care services | Development of this pilot was stopped due to challenges around data sharing. Actions are currently underway to improve local data and intelligence on self-harm. | Work with identified partners to identify recommendations for future consideration within this Strategy. |

Key Recommendations

The Suicide Prevention Strategy for England 2023 to 2028 (2) was recently published.

To ensure the Northamptonshire Suicide Prevention Strategy remains relevant to local need and updated with national guidance, the following additions have been made to the local action plan. Please view the updated action plan published alongside this review for further details.

| Objective | Action |
|--|---|
| 8.1 Continue to develop suicide prevention plans in Northamptonshire following local need | 8.1.1 Restructure of the Northamptonshire Suicide Prevention Steering Group in line with NICE guidelines |
| | 8.1.2 Complete a map of Northamptonshire’s mental health pathways to identify barriers to access |
| | 8.1.3 Develop a self-harm support package for educational establishments in Northamptonshire |
| | 8.1.4 Develop an online harms support package for educational establishments in Northamptonshire |
| | 8.1.5 Review the pilot support package for call handlers in the WNC Customer Service Team for improvements and roll out to call handler teams across the county |
| | 8.1.6 Embed formal processes with Adult and Children and Young People safeguarding boards to support with suicide cases |
| | 8.1.7 Commission a 24/7 all age digital support offer for residents of Northamptonshire |
| 8.2 Continue to develop suicide prevention plans in Northamptonshire following the national suicide prevention strategy guidance | 8.2.1 Explore data and trends for people with autism/ASD/ADHD/ learning disabilities to inform the development of campaigns and future work |
| | 8.2.2 Work with local domestic abuse services to support awareness and understanding of mental health and suicide prevention |

Conclusion

The refreshed Northamptonshire Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan for 2022-2025 was launched in September 2022. Since the launch there have been several key achievements.

Some of these achievements include a deep-dive data project to improve understanding of local high-risk groups and the launch of a support package for educational establishments in Northamptonshire in the event of a suspected death by suicide in a school community. There is a Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Training framework underway, mapping of means of suicide to make the county safer, and a pilot resource in place to support call handlers when a caller presents in mental health crisis.

Suicide prevention remains everyone's business. Now more than ever efforts from all partners are required to ensure our county feels safe and supported.

In September 2023, the England Suicide Prevention Strategy for 2023 to 2028 was published. National guidance and local data have informed the annual review and key recommendations for the county-wide, all-age strategy and updated action plan. The updated action plan reflects on the actions set out following the first annual review. This area of work will continue to be reviewed annually to ensure suicide prevention remains updated and relevant for local need.