

## **Self harm and suicide prevention: partnership working in Nottingham**

### **Update for the Nottingham City Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee on Self Harm and Suicide Prevention for the meeting being held 24<sup>th</sup> April 2025**

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#### **1. Purpose of the paper**

This paper sets out the partnership work led by public health on self harm and suicide prevention in Nottingham and provides an update on the progress since the 2023 Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

#### **2. Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Self Harm and Suicide Prevention Strategy 2024-2029 and Suicide Prevention Charter**

*Development with local voices, data and national strategy*

The voices and perspectives of people with lived experience of suicidality or bereavement by suicide have been crucial in every step of developing the new Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Self Harm and Suicide Prevention Strategy, and the accompanying Suicide Prevention Charter<sup>i</sup>. Local people with lived experience formed a Charter Co-Development group, and members of the Charter Co-Development have joined the Strategic Steering Group. Engagement with local people through the Suicide Prevention Stakeholder Network enables wider reach and ongoing engagement with local people.

The Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Suicide Prevention Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) 2023<sup>ii</sup> sets out the local data, and describes local services, assets and unmet need. The JSNA has informed subsequent work in this area.

The national Suicide Prevention Strategy for England<sup>iii</sup> focuses on preventing suicides and improving support for people who have self harmed and those bereaved by suicide. National data<sup>iv</sup> highlights that of the 17 people who die by suicide in the UK every day, five people were in contact with mental health services. The national Strategy emphasises the importance of population-wide approaches that address common risk factors linked to suicide, and provide a continuum of timely person-centred support for people who are at risk of or affected by suicide and self harm, including tailored, targeted support to priority groups.

### *Vision, ambitions and principles*

The vision and ambitions of the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Self Harm and Suicide Prevention Strategy and Suicide Prevention Charter are based on this population-wide approach. We believe that everyone - not only those who work in mental health or suicide prevention services - makes an important contribution to preventing self harm and suicide.

Our shared strategic vision is ‘Suicide prevention is everyone’s business. Nottingham and Nottinghamshire will be a place where organisations and people understand what they can do to promote wellbeing and reduce suicide and self harm. Everyone affected by suicidality, suicide bereavement and self harm will be treated with respect and have access to resources to support them and opportunities to build hope’.

The four Strategy ambitions and areas for action are included in Table 1 below.

Table 1. The Nottingham and Nottingham Self Harm and Suicide Prevention Strategy 2024-2029 ambitions and area for action

<b>Ambition</b>	<b>Areas for action</b>
Promote a safe and stigma free environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- tackle stigma and raise awareness through effective communication</li> <li>- promote online safety to reduce exposure to harmful content and direct people in need to appropriate resources</li> <li>- support access to training to develop a skilled workforce that feel confident and comfortable discussing and signposting to self harm and suicide prevention support services</li> <li>- reduce access to means of suicide and make places safer</li> </ul>
Promote wellbeing and reduce risk in at-risk groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- improve the wellbeing of people by promoting positive opportunities and inclusive environments</li> <li>- develop tailored approaches that recognise the challenging life factors that may lead to self harm and suicidal feelings</li> </ul>
Ensure people get the right support, at the right time and in the right place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- develop a compassionate and skilled workforce that is committed to embedding the Suicide Prevention Charter throughout their practice</li> <li>- support access to the right help and opportunities to establish coping strategies, manage distress and restore hope</li> <li>- offer guidance to friends, family and carers to help them support loved ones experiencing thoughts of suicide, self harm or suicide bereavement</li> <li>- provide effective crisis support services and timely follow-up</li> <li>- improve opportunities and pathways to identify, refer and provide timely support to people bereaved by suicide</li> </ul>
Ensure local data and lived experience informs and drives self harm and suicide prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- continue to develop Real Time Suspected Suicide Surveillance to identify risks</li> <li>- develop intelligence on self harm to identify risks and preventative approaches</li> <li>- commit to engaging with the local population to understand their lived experience of self harm, suicide, and bereavement to inform strategies and approaches</li> </ul>

## *Suicide Prevention Charter*

Alongside the Strategy, the Suicide Prevention Charter includes eight statements on how local people want organisations to work. The statements are

- I want my mental health to be prioritised and supported at an early stage to avoid having to wait until a crisis to receive appropriate help
- I want to have a safety plan in place and a good support network around me
- I want to be asked about my personal story and wellbeing at an early stage so the right help can be given, but then want to avoid having to repeat my story unnecessarily
- I want to be listened to, treated with respect, and supported in a caring and friendly way
- I want language to be used which is respectful, reduces shame, and supports me to have a conversation on suicide where I can openly express my emotions and feelings without being judged
- I want clear, accurate and transparent information on my options including medication and waiting times and receive practical advice to support my mental health in the meantime
- I want friends and family to be included, and for them to be treated with respect and compassion
- I want to live the life I want and do the things I enjoy, and not be defined by a single experience

The Charter includes an information pack with guidance and ideas for organisations on how they can meet these aspirations, and links to further resources and information.

### **3. Implementation of the Strategy and Charter**

#### *Partnership working and the role of people with lived experience*

The Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City Suicide Prevention and Self Harm Strategic Steering Group is responsible for the development and implementation of the Nottinghamshire and Nottingham Self Harm and Suicide Prevention Strategy 2024-2029, and includes representatives from organisations delivering the action plan. Formal governance of the Strategic Steering Group is through the two Health and Wellbeing Boards, Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City, and the NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care System Mental Health Board.

Several other partnership groups support work to implement the Strategy. These are:

- a Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Further Education and Higher Education Working Group which oversees a shared action plan to promote mental wellbeing and prevent self harm and suicide in student populations
- a multi-agency Real Time Surveillance of Suspected Suicide Working Group, chaired by public health teams. The group monitors and responds to identified suicide risks, and monitors and support delivery of suicide bereavement pathways. This includes leading the implementation of the local multiagency Suicide Cluster Response Plan Guidance in response to potential suspected suicide clusters (a situation in which more suspected suicides than expected occur in terms of time, place, or both).
- the Nottingham and Nottingham Suicide Prevention Stakeholder Network, delivered by the city and county public health teams, provides bimonthly networking and training

opportunities for professionals and citizens, including those from a range of statutory services, voluntary and community organisations and people with lived experience. In April 2025, 450 people are members of the network. Training sessions are planned in the next three months on the topics of gambling related harm and relationship breakdown.

Local people with lived experience are members of the Steering Group and of the committee which organises the Stakeholder Network, providing ongoing leadership to this programme of work and oversight of Strategy delivery.

#### *Commitment to organisational action*

A key aim within implementation plans for the Strategy and Charter is to create a system for local organisations to make a commitment to action to prevent self harm and suicide. The Strategy has provision for organisations of all types and size across the local health and care system to make a pledge to deliver on the ambitions and principles of the Strategy and Charter, and to share their pledge with the Steering Group.

These pledges provide a way to recognise and celebrate good practice, to share ideas, action and innovation across the system, and to turn the idea of self harm and suicide prevention being everyone's business into visible action.

## **4. Update on actions and progress in 2024/2025**

### *Background*

In late 2024/2025, two external evaluations of elements of the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Self Harm and Suicide Prevention programme provided valuable insight into the implementation and impacts of the programme and identified areas for action and improvement.

Since publication of the Suicide Prevention Charter in December 2024, several organisations working in the city - Nottinghamshire Police, Harmless CIC and the Social Prescribing Advice Link Worker team in the Aspire Primary Care Network – have made pledges to the Strategy and Charter. Other partnerships and organisations in Nottingham are developing pledges to be completed and shared early in 2024/2025. These pledges contribute to action across all four ambitions of the Strategy and provide a model for other organisations to follow.

## *Actions and progress in 2024/2025*

### *Promote a safe and stigma free environment*

- staff and volunteers in a wide variety of roles across Nottingham attended more than 500 places on the local commissioned self harm and suicide prevention training programme delivered by Harmless CIC. External evaluation of the programme by Billson Consulting showed significant impacts on participant knowledge, confidence and practice; participants consistently praised training quality, in particular the integration of lived experience in the content and delivery
- external evaluation by Billson Consulting found that the local suicide prevention campaign and materials had established a local identity and had improved local recognition of suicide prevention resources and initiatives
- the Real Time Surveillance Working Group continued to co-ordinate preventative action to reduce risk of suicide in public places in response to local data and intelligence

### *Promote wellbeing and reduce risk in at-risk groups*

- the public health team awarded small grants to 13 voluntary and community organisations working in the city. The small grant scheme supported work promoting mental wellbeing in local communities, with a focus on identified at-risk groups: males, young people at risk of self harm, people experiencing financial vulnerability, autistic people and people bereaved by suicide
- the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Further Education and Higher Education Working Group developed a shared protocol on supporting young people, staff and communities following the death of a student by suspected suicide

### *Ensure people get the right support, at the right time and in the right place*

- Nottinghamshire Police undertook work to increase officers' knowledge and understanding of the Tomorrow Project, the local suicide bereavement service, in order to increase awareness of and access to the service
- the local self harm and suicide prevention training offer was enhanced by the addition of tailored training sessions focused on the needs of specific demographic groups. Tailored sessions enhanced workforce knowledge and skills in supporting people from at-risk groups including boys and men, people from Gypsy Roma and Traveller communities, and people from LGBTQIA+ communities
- the Real Time Surveillance of Suspected Suicide Working Group revised the local Suicide Cluster Response Plan Guidance to enhance our planned response to suspected suicide clusters

### *Ensure local data and lived experience informs and drives self harm and suicide prevention*

- a Listening Project conducted by Opinion Research Services engaged with stakeholders and citizens to better understand the needs and preferences of people in some at-risk groups, and made recommendations to tackle stigma, increase help seeking behaviour and reduce barriers to accessing support
- the Charter Co-Development group was established as a continuing forum to enable the voices of people with lived experience to inform a wide range of local organisations on how best to prevent self harm and suicide

## 5. Plans for 2025/26

The public health team will co-ordinate the activity below.

### *Promote a safe and stigma free environment*

- co-production of a local self harm communication campaign with citizens and stakeholders to complement the existing suicide prevention campaign
- community-based communications campaigns aligned to World Mental Health Day, World Suicide Prevention Day, and Self Injury Awareness Day
- work to increase the reach and accessibility of the local training programme, particularly among workforces with lower access

### *Promote wellbeing and reduce risk in at-risk groups*

- co-production of 1) mental wellbeing communications for older adults and people seeking asylum and refugees to support self-care and promote help seeking; 2) suicide prevention communications for men, autistic people and people bereaved by suicide to raise awareness of support and promote help seeking
- support mental wellbeing small grant holders to work together and share learning to inform our understanding of how best to reach and support people in at-risk groups

### *Ensure people get the right support, at the right time and in the right place*

- promotion of Zero Suicide Alliance e-learning across statutory organisations, the community and voluntary sector, workplaces and communities
- delivery of self harm and suicide prevention training for primary care staff, and dissemination of an updated Suicide Prevention Resource Pack for Primary Care
- work with commissioners and providers of healthcare services for people with long-term health conditions to explore opportunities to increase mental health, self harm and suicide prevention support for those who need it
- a simulation of implementation of the Suicide Cluster Response Plan Guidance in order to identify areas for improvement
- a pilot of targeted support for community groups and workforces to increase capacity for human intervention to support people in suicide crisis in public places

### *Ensure local data and lived experience informs and drives self harm and suicide prevention*

- enhanced data sharing arrangements so a wider range of local partner organisations share data related to suspected suicide to enhance our response to risks and needs
- inclusion of the Suicide Prevention Charter in the content of commissioned training courses, and work to increase engagement with and use of the Charter across the city

## References

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<sup>i</sup> [Suicide prevention | Nottinghamshire County Council](#)

<sup>ii</sup> [Suicide Prevention Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2023](#)

<sup>iii</sup> [Suicide prevention strategy for England: 2023 to 2028](#)

<sup>iv</sup> [Staying safe from suicide: best practice guidance for safety assessment, formulation and management](#)