

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Health Scrutiny Committee
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Report for: Information
Report of: Public Health

Report Title

Trafford Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan

Summary

An overview of progress made with Trafford's Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan and the findings of a local suicide audit.

Recommendation(s)

To note the information in the report

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

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1. Introduction

Suicide is a major public health problem. In 2017, almost 6000 people in the UK took their own lives. Suicide is the leading cause of death in men between the ages of 35 and 49 and the biggest killer of adults between the ages of 35 and 49. Suicide also has a devastating impact on the individuals, families and communities that are bereaved or affected.

A range of inter-related social, relational and individual factors contribute to, maintain and increase the risk of suicide. Risk factors in Trafford appear consistent with local and national trends. Given the diversity of risk factors, a whole system approach to support and intervention is crucial.

Reducing the number of suicides is a key priority for the NHS over the next decade. In 2016, The Five Year Forward View for Mental Health document outlined a plan to reduce the suicide rate by 10% by 2020/21 and progress continues to be made toward this goal in Trafford.

This paper describes the progress made with the Trafford Suicide Prevention Action Plan and outlines the findings of a local suicide audit. The questions outlined on pages 5 and 6 of the 'Suicide Prevention – A Guide for Local Authorities' document provide the structure for the paper. Questions from this document appear in italics in this report, together with our response.

- *Is suicide prevention included in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS)*

Suicide prevention is addressed within the JSNA and JHWS as part of the Mental Health priority area. Further detail is held within the suicide prevention strategy, rather than in the JSNA or JHWS.

2. Trafford Context

- *What is the rate of suicide among the general population in the local authority area? Is this rate higher or lower than the general population rate for England?*

In Trafford, an average of 15 people per year die by suicide. The suicide rate in Trafford is lower (7.3 per 100,000) though statistically similar to England (9.6 per 100,000). It is the lowest in the North West and Greater Manchester and lowest among a group of 15 other statistically similar local authorities.

- *What is the current trend in suicide rates showing?*

The overall trend has been towards a reduction (from 11.5 per 100,000 in 2001-03 to 7.3 per 100,000 in 2015-2017).

- *Is information available on the rate of suicide among different groups and gender, eg middle-aged men?*

Five year (2013-2017) data from the Primary Care Mortality Database indicates that four times as many men died by suicide compared to females in Trafford. This is consistent with Greater Manchester and national figures.

Inequality in Trafford is reflected in the suicide rate, with a rate of 9.8 per 100,000 in the most deprived areas compared to 4.6 per 100,000 in the least deprived. However, the averages are not statistically significantly different due to small numbers.

Risk factors in Trafford appear consistent with the national picture and include; being male, being middle aged (45-49), having a history of self-harm, physical health

problems, relationship breakdown, living in an area of high deprivation, experiencing financial difficulties or problem debt, working in low-skilled manual occupations or skilled building trades, carers and women working in nursing or the arts/media. The majority (two thirds) of people who die by suicide are not in contact with mental health services despite mental health problems being a key risk factor for suicide. The results of a local suicide audit conducted using 2015 data identified that the most common method of suicide in Trafford was hanging/strangulation.

- *Are any data collected on attempted suicides within the local authority area? If so, by whom? Are these data shared with other agencies?*

Data is routinely collected on attempted suicides attended by the Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service and this data has been shared with the public health team in Trafford as part of the work of the Suicide Prevention Partnership. Work towards attempted suicide data being shared with the Trafford Suicide Prevention Partnership by the North West Ambulance Service is also within our action plan.

3. The Trafford Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan

- *Have you got a suicide prevention strategy and action plan in place?*

Trafford has a suicide prevention strategy and action plan in place. The strategy is all-age and considers wider determinants, prevention, intervention and support following a suicide. Consistent with national priorities, Trafford's aim is to reduce suicides by at least 10% by 2020 and to provide better support to individuals, families and communities at risk of or affected by suicide.

A stakeholder event was held in June 2019, which saw 40 representatives from 23 organizations come together to discuss how to prevent suicides in Trafford. This event fed into the development of the action plan for Trafford which was launched in July 2019.

Consistent with the Greater Manchester suicide prevention strategy, the Trafford strategy and action plan focusses on the eight priority areas identified in the Public Health England guidance for local suicide prevention plans:

- Reducing mental distress and improving mental wellbeing and resilience
- Reducing inequalities
- Improving the mental health of people with long term physical health conditions
- Reducing the suicide risk in men
- Preventing and responding to self-harm
- Improving the mental health of children, young people and women during pregnancy and postnatally
- Reducing isolation and loneliness

- Offering suicide bereavement support.

Work has begun to address these priorities through the action plan and progress is described below.

4. Suicide Prevention Partnership Group

- *Partnership working is key. Have you set up a multi-agency suicide prevention partnership?*

A multi-agency suicide prevention partnership group was established in Trafford in August 2019 to oversee progress of the action plan.

- *What other local agencies and partners are members of this group or network, or are consulted as part of any suicide prevention activity (eg police)?*

The following key agencies and partners are represented in the suicide prevention partnership:

- Trafford Public Health
 - Trafford CCG
 - Trafford Communications Team
 - Trafford Partnership and Community Directorate
 - Trafford Adult Community Social Care Service
 - Greater Manchester Mental Health Trust (GMMH)
 - Medicines Management, Trafford CCG
 - Trafford Third Sector Adult Mental Health (Bluesci)
 - Trafford Third Sector Child Mental Health (42nd Street)
 - Department for Work & Pensions, Trafford Cluster
 - Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue Service
 - Greater Manchester Police
 - North West Ambulance Service
 - Her Majesty's Prison & Probation Service, Trafford
 - Trafford Housing (Irwell Valley Homes; Your Housing Group)
 - South Manchester Coroner's Office
 - Local Care Alliance
 - Trade Unions
- *Does this involve GPs or other professionals working in primary care settings? If not, how do they input into activities or actions to prevent suicides locally?*

A Trafford GP is also a member of the partnership group and provides expertise and input into the local actions.

- *Is there a local councillor with specific responsibility for suicide prevention?*

Two Trafford councillors have specific responsibility for suicide prevention and one councillor takes on the role of chair of the suicide prevention partnership group.

- *What level of understanding of suicide do local councillors, directors of public health (DsPH) and CCGs have?*

Local councillors, the director of public health and the lead commissioner in Mental Health for the CCG in Trafford are engaged fully with the suicide prevention work and have a good understanding of suicide in the borough and the priority actions.

5. Progress with Action Plan

- *Are you developing suicide prevention awareness and skills training for professionals in primary care and local government (housing, environmental health, social care, benefits, etc) and other services that may come into contact with individuals at risk of suicide? If so, what groups of front-line staff have had such training? Does it involve the local community?*

Trafford will roll-out a mandatory e-learning package on suicide prevention and skills training to all Trafford council staff to increase recognition of signs, increase suicide awareness and encourage active signposting and support. We will monitor take-up of the online e-learning package and ensure compliance with refresher training every two years. This package will also be offered to Trafford CCG staff. We will also roll-out a 'Mental Health in the Workplace' e-learning package to all Trafford Council staff with managerial responsibilities to increase recognition and support for mental wellbeing in the workplace.

Trafford will continue to provide training for primary care staff on the presentation of psychological distress and identification of risk, especially in men and older adults and support an 'every contact counts' approach.

The Primary Care Mental Health and Wellbeing Service (PCMHWB) in Trafford provides an integrated, whole systems approach for individuals with inter-related health and social problems (e.g. debt, employment, housing) in the community. This service also supports links between people and their communities through a social prescribing model. This will further increase opportunities to identify and support people at risk of suicide in primary care.

Finally, we will promote the Greater Manchester 'Shining a light on suicide' campaign to the local community through our public facing websites and social media channels including a brief online training package developed by the Greater Manchester Suicide Prevention Partnership "Suicide, Let's Talk" to increase awareness of suicide and reduce stigma.

- *Could you target certain high-risk professions? Workers such as farmers and fishermen have a higher risk of suicide.*

We are collating data on suicide risk by profession as part of the real time data pilot to enable more effective targeting of messages towards those at greatest risk locally. However, we will aim to target the high risk professions identified as at risk nationally e.g. low-skilled manual occupations and nurses.

- *Are you providing training to frontline staff who come into contact with those at greatest risk of suicide, such as drug and alcohol workers? Teach them how to broach the subject, how to support people and where they can be signposted for further help.*

We aim to develop awareness of signs of suicidal ideation for staff groups that have contact with the public through a brief online training package developed by the Greater Manchester Suicide Prevention Partnership "Suicide, Let's Talk" to staff such as GP receptionists, pharmacists, Department for Work and Pensions staff, housing groups, ambulance & contact centre staff, link workers in PCMHWS; homeless teams; foodbank staff; youth services; security staff and hotel workers.

We also aim to support the inclusion of questions regarding mental health/suicidal ideation as part of initial tenancy interviews completed by local housing groups (e.g. Irwell Valley Homes and Your Housing Group) and ensure staff are aware of support available in Trafford to signpost to.

- *Have you identified high-frequency suicide locations? Reduce access to the means of suicide by providing extra safeguards and support at buildings rail crossings, cliff edges and bridges that have been used by people to take their own lives*

Trafford is participating in a 12-month Real Time Suspected Suicide Data Pilot alongside Stockport and Tameside. The pilot began in June 2019. The Trafford public health team is alerted to a suspected suicide by the South Manchester coroner via an analyst from the Rochdale public health team. This data will support the identification of high risk locations or locations at which safety improvements could prevent suicides. Reports from the RTSSD pilot will be provided on a quarterly basis to the Trafford Suicide Prevention Partnership. These reports will outline the number of suspected suicides, themes, trends and actions taken. Additional actions may also be identified through review of these reports by the partnership group.

- *What steps have been considered or taken to reduce the risk of suicide at such locations?*

We are not aware of any locations identified as high risk (>1 suicide) in Trafford at present from the data available. However, the ongoing RTSSD pilot may identify locations where steps could be taken to reduce risk and this will be actively monitored in line with the Standard Operating Procedure for this work.

- *What other agencies are involved in supporting this preventative action at high risk places?*

The Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service, Greater Manchester Police and North West Ambulance Service are all supportive of preventative action and are represented on the Trafford suicide prevention partnership group. Sharing of knowledge and data will be key to preventative action and this has been agreed as an action at the most recent partnership meeting. Key national organisations with responsibility for high risk locations, including Network Rail and Highways England work with the council through the Greater Manchester Suicide Prevention Executive.

- *Does the local coroners' office support preventative action at local level? If so:*
 - *Are coroners formal members of any groups or networks that exist?*
 - *Do they provide access to coroners' records of inquests for local analysis or audit purposes?*
 - *Do they involve or inform the local authority or DPH if they identify (at inquest proceedings or earlier) particular areas of concern, eg locations used for suicide, possible clusters of suicide, increase in a particular method or new and emerging method of suicide?*

The South Manchester Coroner is supportive of preventative action at a local level and is a member of the partnership group in Trafford. The coroner is part of the real time suicide data pilot, which is providing timely data that can be rapidly actioned e.g. a suitable support response at a system level such as for schools or workplaces. This data also facilitates the identification of patterns and trends in real-time such as suicide clusters or new and emerging methods of suicide.

While Coroner's office has provided records for previous suicide audits (most recently in 2016/16) a combination of computerization of records and the GDPR regulations that came into effect in May 2018 has made direct access to records has more difficult. We are exploring different ways of accessing this data. However, the RTSSD pilot is providing timely data that can be rapidly actioned e.g. a suitable support response at a system level such as for schools or workplaces. This data also facilitates the identification of patterns and trends in real-time such as suicide clusters or new and emerging methods of suicide.

- *Do JSNAs adequately identify action to support people at risk of suicide or suicidal behaviour within the local population?*

Action to support people at risk of suicide or with suicide behaviour is described within our suicide prevention strategy, rather than within our JSNA. The JSNA in Trafford is an accessible high level summary of health and wellbeing in Trafford, and identifies needs rather than specific actions. It highlights mental health as a key priority with which the suicide prevention strategy aligns.

- *Tackling self-harm and targeting the young are new priorities. How are you working with schools and colleges?*

Partners such as 42nd Street, Papyrus, Talk Shop and the Youth Offending Service will continue to raise awareness of mental health problems and suicide prevention through training to their staff and staff working with Children & Young People in mental health services, schools, colleges and universities.

The Greater Manchester I-THRIVE programme will continue to promote and provide children and young people with psychological support through health services (e.g. Healthy Young Minds), schools and early help hubs, reducing stigma and improving emotional wellbeing for young people.

We also commission Kooth, a popular online counselling service for people aged under-25 which can provide free and timely psychological support. This service also provides inreach to schools to raise awareness of mental health issues and the services available.

- *How are you supporting those affected by suicide? There is strong evidence to suggest those who have been bereaved are also at risk – invest in services to help them.*

We have established links with the Greater Manchester Suicide Bereavement Information Service to ensure Trafford residents affected by suicide have access to accurate information on where they can access support in Trafford. We will ensure local service information is up-to-date and accessible.

The RTSSD pilot will increase opportunities to provide timely support to organisations such as schools and workplaces affected by a suicide. We will signpost to resources produced by the Samaritans e.g. the “Step by Step” guidance for schools and colleges and resources available through the Greater Manchester “Shining a light on Suicide” website.

- *What about the media? You can work with the local press and broadcasters to ensure responsible reporting of suicides.*

We link with and support the work the Greater Manchester Suicide Prevention Partnership is undertaking with local media outlets e.g. the Manchester Evening News to ensure compliance with national guidance developed by the Samaritans on the responsible reporting of suicides in the media.

- *Are you providing or can you signpost families to bereavement services?*

The Trafford Wellbeing Counselling Service based at the Macmillan Wellbeing Centre can offer bereavement counselling to people who are bereaved by suicide. Individuals can be signposted to this service directly or via the Greater Manchester Suicide Bereavement Information Service.

Copies of the Trafford Suicide Prevention Plan and Strategy are attached.