

SUICIDE PREVENTION ACTION PLAN

| | |
|---|---|
| Head of Service: | Rod Brown, Head of Housing & Community |
| Wards affected: | (All Wards); |
| Urgent Decision?(yes/no) | No |
| If yes, reason urgent decision required: | |
| Appendices (attached): | Appendix 1 – Suicide Prevention Action Plan Appendix 2 – Alison Todd Protocol for Surrey |

Summary

The report sets out the Council's proposed Suicide Prevention Action Plan

Recommendation (s)

The Committee is asked to:

- (1) Agree to adopt the Suicide Prevention Action Plan and associated programmes of work set out at Appendix 1.**

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 In 2019, the Council produced its Health & Wellbeing Strategy (HWBS). This identified the borough's suicide rate for the period of 2016-2018 as being 10.4 per 100,000 of the population in comparison to the Southeast's rate of 9.2. This represented 21 lives lost to suicide.
- 1.2 The Council responded by ensuring the mental and emotional wellbeing of residents was identified as a priority for the borough's HWBS, and subsequent action plan. The delivery of the action plan was, however, significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 1.3 Since the HWBS was approved by committee in late 2019, there has been a notable spike in the borough's suicide rate and between 2018-2020 a rate of 14 per 100,000 of the population was recorded. This represents 29 lives tragically lost to suicide. 19 of those who died during this period were male. In the same period, the Southeast's rate was 10.1 per 100,000.
- 1.4 The Council therefore proposes a robust response and is recommending the Committee agrees to the proposed Suicide Prevention Action Plan.

Community and Wellbeing Committee

16 January 2024

2 Background

- 2.1 The borough is experiencing a higher rate of suicide than previously seen.
- 2.2 Prior to now, an increase in the rate of suicide was observed between 2009 to 2013. At this time, the Country was experiencing significant financial hardship; a factor to be considered as the Country continues to face the pressures of the cost of living.
- 2.3 In July 2018, there was a change in the standard of proof used by coroners in respect of the evidence required to determine if someone had died by suicide. This changed from evidence being '*beyond reasonable doubt*' to '*on the balance of probability*'. Consideration is to be given as to how this may impact on the number of deaths now being recorded as suicide.
- 2.4 In response to the relatively high prevalence of suicide within the borough, in March 2023, the Councils Health Liaisons Panel supported the development of a Suicide Prevention Action Plan (SPAP) (Appendix 1).
- 2.5 Further to this, in March 2023, Surrey County Council published its (refreshed) Surrey Suicide Prevention Strategy 2023-2026 <https://www.healthysurrey.org.uk/mental-wellbeing/professionals/suicide-prevention-strategy>. The Strategy identifies 6 priorities for the prevention of suicide across the County. The Strategy also supports delivery of Priority 2 (Supporting people's mental health and emotional wellbeing) in Surrey's 10-year Health & Wellbeing Strategy.
- 2.6 The Council's SPAP is therefore broadly based on the 6 priorities outlined in Surrey's Strategy in recognition that the factors pertaining to suicide remain consistent across the County.
- 2.7 The Suicide Prevention Action Plan (SPAP) primarily seeks:
 - To enhance the Council's response to those experiencing crisis and expressing suicidal thoughts.
 - To promote and engage in joint working with Public Health Surrey County Council, statutory partners (to include the Police where necessary and appropriate), and the community & voluntary sector in ensuring targeted and effective workstreams.
 - To work jointly with Public Health Surrey County Council to understand real-time surveillance data, and how we can develop subsequent SPAP's and workstreams that recognise our capacity as a Council but are meaningful and effective.

Community and Wellbeing Committee

16 January 2024

- 2.8 The SPAP also makes specific reference to the Alison Todd Protocol (Appendix 2). This is an assessment tool that looks to identify areas of good practice, and areas of growth for the Council. This would be completed with the support of the Public Health lead for suicide prevention at Surrey County Council and evidences the Council's commitment to Suicide Prevention. It will be used to inform subsequent SPAPs.
- 2.9 In recognition that the SPAP will develop and evolve over time and that this will be in response to the data and intelligence gathered, the plan will span one-year from January 2024-January 2025 before being subject to review. The SPAP will be led by the Council's Community Development Team.
- 2.10 On 23rd November 2023, the (draft) SPAP was presented to the Health Liaison Panel (HLP). The Public Health lead for suicide prevention at Surrey County Council was also in attendance. There was support of the proposed plan, and agreement that the Council continues this important piece of work.
- 2.11 In the Summer of 2023, the Council commenced in setting up the Neighbourhood Board. The Board's purpose is to address the wider determinants of health through collaboration and partnership working. This Board is currently in its infancy and is comprised of the Council and the Primary Care Networks. Membership of the Board is anticipated to grow. The Neighbourhood Board's current workstream is focused on the mental health of residents and as such, the Council's proposed SPAP will support the work of the Board.
- 2.12 At the time of drafting this report, the published data (available up-until 2021) shows a slight decline in the rate of suicide in the borough. One life lost by suicide however remains one life too many.

3 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

3.1 Equality Impact Assessment

3.1.1 The SPAP has been drafted based upon the 6 priorities within Surrey's Suicide Prevention Strategy

3.1.2 Whilst the risk of suicide is greater for certain individuals and groups, it is acknowledged that the risk of suicide does not discriminate and as such, the SPAP seeks to encompass the whole community. As such, there are no current implications pertaining to equality and diversity in the delivery of the plan.

3.1.3 The SPAP is aligned to the Council's current HWBS which prioritises the mental and emotional wellbeing of residents and was approved at committee in late 2019. The HWBS can be located in section 7 below.

Community and Wellbeing Committee

16 January 2024

3.2 Crime & Disorder

3.2.1 No matters arising from this report.

3.3 Safeguarding

3.3.1 The SPAP seeks to enhance the Council's response to suicidality by proposing the workstreams as summarised in 2.8, and as seen in Appendix 1. This is with the aim of helping to safeguard an individual from taking their own life.

3.3.2 Whilst a disclosure of suicidality does not automatically require the Council to raise a safeguarding report, the Council will continue to ensure their statutory duties in relation to safeguarding are upheld whereby there are also concerns pertaining to abuse and neglect.

3.4 Dependencies

3.4.1 The Council will seek the support of statutory partners, the community and voluntary sector, and 'grassroot' community groups in the delivery of the SPAP.

3.4.2 The Council has already secured the support of Public Health at Surrey County Council and intends and to work closely with the lead for suicide prevention in the continued evolution of the SPAP. This will be vital in understanding the data and ensuring impactful and meaningful interventions.

3.4.3 The SPAP will also be reliant on working alongside other council departments/officers, to include the Communications team, IT and our Arts and Culture officer.

3.5 Other

3.5.1 There are no other implications.

4 Financial Implications

4.1 The SPAP is heavily reliant on Officer time with much of the first year being to raise awareness, enhance the Council's own response to suicidality, and gather information and intelligence to help develop subsequent plans.

4.2 Any funding need that arises for bespoke projects throughout the lifespan of the SPAP will be sought from existing revenue budgets or through bid-funding where appropriate.

Community and Wellbeing Committee

16 January 2024

Section 151 Officer's comments: Finance officers will work with colleagues to understand the financial implications of any bespoke projects.

5 Legal Implications

- 5.1 As the Council may be provided with real-time surveillance data, there may be the requirement to enter into a data sharing agreement. Any such request will be subject to the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations and the Council's standard processes in respect of consultation with the legal team.
- 5.2 Any bespoke projects that arise during the rollout of the SPAP, will also adhere to the Council's standard processes and where required, upon delivery of a project by an external partner; the necessary agreements will be but in place in consultation with the legal team.
- 5.3 **Legal Officer's comments:** As above

6 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

- 6.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged:
- The delivery of the SPAP engages Council's priority of Safe and Well
- 6.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is included within the current Service Delivery Plan.
- 6.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** There are no Climate or Environmental Impacts identified in the delivery of the SPAP.
- 6.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** There are no policy or community safety implications identified in the delivery of the SPAP.
- 6.5 **Partnerships:** The Council will seek to work closely with the statutory and voluntary sector, as well as 'grassroot' community groups in the delivery of the SPAP.

7 Background papers

- 7.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

Previous reports:

- The Council's Health & Wellbeing Strategy can be located here:

Community and Wellbeing Committee

16 January 2024

<https://democracy.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/documents/s14025/Health%20and%20Wellbeing%20Strategy%202019-2023%20Annex%201.pdf>

- Health Liaison Panel (draft) minutes – 23rd November 2023.

<https://democracy.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/documents/g1501/Printed%20minutes%2023rd-Nov-2023%2019.00%20Health%20Liaison%20Panel.pdf?T=1>

Other papers:

- None identified.