



Health and Wellbeing Board

22nd September 2021

Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan

Local Needs Assessment 2020-2021



Background

- Sandwell's Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan were drafted at the start of 2020 as the Partnership's route towards achieving the 'Six Promises' in line with national guidance . These promises are:
 1. To fulfil the national Zero Suicides Ambition.
 2. To guarantee the highest quality of care and support.
 3. To encourage a better awareness of suicides within local organisations and communities.
 4. To reduce the chances of suicides in high-risk populations.
 5. To create an open culture where we listen to those with lived experience.
 6. To reduce access to the means of suicide.
- To help us shape a strategy and action plan, it was decided to undertake a Local Needs Assessment that would provide a contemporary picture of the needs in the borough.
- Due to the constraints of the Covid-19 Pandemic, the needs assessment would be carried out through desk-based analysis and virtual sessions.



Methods

We have used a mixed-methods approach by analysing the most recently available data as well as interviews with key partners and those with lived experience. This has allowed us to identify key demographics and trends while understanding the experience of those affected.

We used data from 3 sources to build the statistical picture:

- Public Health England's Suicide Prevention Profile
- Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) (2015-2020)
- Annual Coroner's Summary Report (2019/2020)

We also conducted 1-hour long semi-structured interviews that provided us with the experience from an organisational as well as individual point of view.

Findings

Sandwell's average suicide rate for the last reported period (2017/29) is 10.8 per 100,000. This is statistically similar to the West Midlands (10.2) and England (10.1) averages and has remained fairly constant over the past 20 years, illustrating that suicide continues to be a problem at local, regional and national levels. There also continues to be a much higher rate in males (17.6) than in females (4.5).

These are the key points:

- The most at-risk group for suicide continues to be males aged between 40 and 60.
- Compared to population statistics for the borough, there is an over-representation of those who identify as White (British/Irish/Other) in the Hospital Episode Statistics. At the same time, there is an under-representation of those who identify as Black/Black British, Asian/Asian British or Mixed Ethnicity.
- The most common method and location are hanging at home/ a private residence. The second most common method is through an overdose.

Findings

The themes from interviews with organisation/charity representatives were:

- Awareness of Services
- Accessibility of Services
- Impact of Deprivation
- Impact of Covid-19
- Impact of Training
- Lack of Funding

Findings

The themes from interviews with those with lived experience were:

- Disappointment with Clinical Pathways
- Pro-activity from Services
- Understanding Risk Factors
- Reaction by Communities
- Treatment by the Media

Recommendations

These are the recommendations that will form the core of the Action Plan:

- 1. Raise awareness of suicide prevention and bereavement support through training for all frontline staff through online platform.*
- 2. Pilot town-based, community-led forums.*
- 3. Support community organisations with funding applications.*
- 4. Work with Community Development Workers to identify gaps in accessibility.*
- 5. Encourage referrals from GP's to targeted services and establish an explicit pathway.*
- 6. Expand awareness and access of bereavement support to all First Responder and bereavement-related partners so that an offer of support can be made immediately.*
- 7. Identify and prioritise high-risk populations through working groups.*
- 8. Improve data collation and intelligence gathering.*
- 9. Engage with media organisations to work co-operatively on the reporting of suicides.*
- 10. Commission further assessments, on a larger scale, that considers further populations.*



Next Steps

1. Receive endorsement for the Local Needs Assessment and 10 recommendations for action on Suicide Prevention.
2. Receive endorsement to update the Sandwell Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan based on these recommendations.
3. Present the final Strategy and Action Plan to the Health and Wellbeing Board for approval before official launch in 2022.