

National Suicide Prevention Leadership Group: Initial Delivery Plan

In August of this year the Minister for Mental Health, Clare Haughey, invited me to establish and chair a new National Suicide Prevention Leadership Group.

I am honoured to be taking forward this important work. Whilst drawing together the membership for the group I have spoken with many individuals and organisations involved in suicide prevention. It won't surprise anyone to know that I have found my discussions with those affected by suicide most compelling. I am grateful to those that have been able to share their stories with me. I have been moved by the terrible impact of suicide. I have heard about the pain of losing someone to suicide, the stigma that still endures, the struggle of trying to find support when in crisis and of not knowing where to turn on being bereaved by suicide.

I have learned about some of the good work that we do in Scotland to prevent suicide and also heard the challenge that we must do better as a society and that there are things we can do now to make a difference.

This is why the implementation of the Scottish Government's Suicide Prevention Action Plan, *Every Life Matters*, is so important. It gives all of us - individuals, communities, public, third and private sectors - important roles to play in preventing suicide.

Every Life Matters

Every Life Matters describes a vision of Scotland where suicide is preventable; where help and support is available to anyone contemplating suicide and also to those who have lost a loved one to suicide. It calls on all of us to ensure that no death by suicide is regarded as either acceptable or inevitable and is clear that suicide prevention is everyone's business.

The aims of *Every Life Matters* are to ensure that throughout Scotland:

- People at risk of suicide feel able to ask for help, and have access to skilled staff and well-coordinated support.
- People affected by suicide are not alone.
- Suicide is no longer stigmatised.
- Those bereaved by suicide access better support.
- Through learning and improvement, we minimise the risk of suicide by delivering better services and building stronger, more connected communities.

These are supported by ten specific actions:

1. Establishing the National Suicide Prevention Leadership Group and supporting the development of local action plans.
2. Creating and implementing refreshed mental health and suicide prevention training by May 2019 which will be mandatory for all NHS staff who receive

mandatory physical health training and thereafter available across the public and private sectors.

3. A coordinated approach to public awareness about suicide prevention.
4. Timely and effective support for those affected by suicide.
5. Improved crisis support services for people in distress.
6. Use of digital innovation to improve suicide prevention.
7. Targeted preventative activity for at-risk groups.
8. Ensuring the needs of children and young people are reflected across all the actions in *Every Life Matters*.
9. Ensuring that data, evidence and guidance is used to maximise impact in and improve service planning and delivery.
10. Developing appropriate reviews into all deaths by suicide.

To help drive progress, *Every Life Matters* sets out an ambitious target to reduce the rate of suicide by a further 20% by 2022 (from a 2017 baseline). It explains that 'in 2013, the World Health Organisation adopted a global target for a 10% reduction by 2020. If the Scottish suicide rate decreased by the same amount in the next 5 years as it has over the last decade, then a 14% reduction would be anticipated. To achieve this, the active momentum of suicide prevention work has to continue. By setting a 20% target we commit to even greater additional ambition'.¹

Every Life Matters is the product of extensive engagement - shaped by people affected by suicide, people in local government, mental health and suicide prevention organisations, academics and members of the public. It has been welcomed by a broad range of willing partners who support and are ready to help deliver its vision. Most importantly, *Every Life Matters* reflects the voices of those most directly affected by suicide. I have been inspired by the willingness of those who have been bereaved to be involved in improving things for others.

National Suicide Prevention Leadership Group

The National Suicide Prevention Leadership Group has been established to work with Scottish Government and its partners to support implementation of *Every Life Matters*. We are conscious of our responsibility to those affected by suicide and to each other in collaborating to prevent suicide. We will ensure that the voices of those with lived experience of the effects of suicide continue to be central to our work. They want to see real change. We have moved quickly to build on the momentum created by the publication of *Every Life Matters* and to deliver commitments that the Leadership Group should be established in September and publish a Delivery Plan by December 2018.

Membership of the Leadership Group, agreed with the Minister for Mental Health, reflects contributors to *Every Life Matters* and those who will have a key role in delivering its vision. Members (whose details have been [published](#)), include third sector and local authority delivery partners, Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), the NHS, Health and Social Care Partnerships, the criminal justice sector, clinical practitioners, and most importantly individuals with lived experience of the impact of suicide and who represent young people. We are fortunate to have such experienced and passionate members.

The insight of people affected by suicide is critical and the work of the Leadership Group will continue to be both informed by specific engagement with individuals with lived experience and supported by a newly-established Academic Advisory Group. We are grateful to the Health and Social Care Alliance who have already facilitated opportunities for us to engage directly with individuals with lived experience of the effects of suicide, including a discussion on our draft Delivery Plan.

There will, of course, be many more individuals, groups, communities and organisations who will want to engage with our work and who will have important roles in delivering the ambition of *Every Life Matters*. The Leadership Group is clear that collaboration will continue to be at the centre of our working practice and that making suicide preventable requires commitment across Scottish society. Suicide prevention is complex and we cannot succeed unless, and until, it becomes everyone's business.

Initial Delivery Plan

Every Life Matters requires the Leadership Group to oversee a Delivery Plan of identified actions and priorities. Since September, the Leadership Group has met formally four times to establish our terms of reference and to enable us to produce the attached initial Delivery Plan. This Delivery Plan sets out work towards the vision of *Every Life Matters* and so it describes an initial, sequenced and high-level summary of our work in that context. We believe that this is the right approach to deliver the ten actions in *Every Life Matters*, and we have summarised the work graphically to allow an overview of the next three years. We will provide updates with more detailed information on our work and ideas to be as transparent, collaborative and accessible as we can.

The Leadership Group will bring together partners to help deliver, and oversee, progress in support of the vision to prevent suicide. We will report and make recommendations to Scottish Ministers and also to COSLA on issues that sit within the competence of local government and integration authorities. We will publish an annual report from September 2019. COSLA is represented on the Leadership Group and, as Chair, I will engage regularly with both the Minister for Mental Health and COSLA's Health and Social Care Board.

We will ensure that this evolving Delivery Plan reflects emerging influences, such as the delivery of the Mental Health Strategy (2017-2027), the work of the Children and Young People's Mental Health Taskforce, the report of the Review of the Arrangements for Investigating Deaths of Patients in Hospital for Treatment of Mental Disorder and in due course both the report of the Independent Inquiry into Mental Health Services in Tayside and the expert review of mental health support for young offenders along with other future important developments. We will publish updated versions of the Delivery Plan as appropriate, and also to accompany our annual reports.

Individual members of the Leadership Group will co-sponsor the interdependent actions in the Delivery Plan, informed by evidence, including the voices of people with lived experience of the effects of suicide, and by engagement with relevant delivery partners. *Every Life Matters* specifically commits to taking into account the needs of

people from at-risk groups and the needs of children and young people as well as considering the impact of inequalities on the risk of suicide. These commitments - together with the cycle of evidence, delivery, review and learning - connect and are threaded through the Delivery Plan actions and will inform the development of local action plans. The Delivery Plan is backed by Scottish Government funding of £3 million over the course of the current Parliament and the Leadership Group will make recommendations to Ministers as to how that money should be allocated.

As Chair of the National Suicide Prevention Leadership Group I am convinced that suicide prevention is everyone's business, and that every life does matter. I am hugely impressed by the breadth of engagement in suicide prevention across Scotland and by the passion to deliver real and positive change. We publish this *Every Life Matters* Delivery Plan knowing that this is just the start of our work. We hope that you will work with us and help us to achieve the change that we all know is needed. Over the next three years we want to enable leaders at all levels to make suicide prevention everyone's business and to empower each one of us to help save lives.

Rose Fitzpatrick CBE QPM
Chair
National Suicide Prevention Leadership Group

December 2018

ⁱ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-suicide-prevention-action-plan-life-matters/pages/2/>