

**REPORT TO:** Health and Wellbeing Board

**DATE:** 14<sup>th</sup> January 2015

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Director of Public Health

**PORTFOLIO:** Health and Wellbeing

**SUBJECT:** Halton Suicide Prevention Strategy  
2015-20

**WARDS:** Borough wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the final draft of the Halton Suicide Prevention Strategy 2015-20

### **RECOMMENDATION: That**

- 1. the Board note the contents of the report; and**
- 2. the Board supports the strategy outcomes, objectives, and actions**

## **2.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 2.1 Suicide is a major public health issue, and a major cause of years of life lost. Each suicide in Halton is an individual tragedy and a terrible loss to our local families and communities. The numbers of people who take their own life in Halton each year are low however those ending their own life should be viewed as the tip of an iceberg and locally levels of distress will be much higher.
- 2.2. In times of economic and employment insecurity rates of suicide often increase. This trend has been observed nationally following the 2008 financial crisis when after a decade of falling suicide rates have started to rise. Although it is too early to say whether this national trend is being observed locally it demonstrates the need for continuing vigilance and action and highlights why a new suicide prevention strategy for Halton is required.

### **Halton Suicide Prevention Strategy 2015-20**

- 2.3 Suicide is not inevitable and can be prevented. The Halton Suicide prevention strategy (Appendix A) was written in partnership and sets out evidence-based actions, based upon national policy, research and local insight, to prevent suicide and support those bereaved or affected by suicide in Halton.
- 2.4 This strategy is supported by a detailed action plan outlining actions, responsible leads, timescales and outcomes to be achieved (Appendix B).

The plan will be monitored by the Halton Suicide Prevention Partnership, and outcomes reported to the Safer Halton Partnership, Health and Well Being Board and all other relevant bodies.

- 2.5 The strategy includes background information which sets out the policy context in which the strategy has been developed, considers the factors that influence why a person may take their own life and reviews the evidence on suicide prevention, outlines what we know about suicide in Halton and sets out actions to reduce the risk of suicide in Halton.
- 2.6 The reasons why people may take their own life are complex. The many factors that influence whether someone may feel like taking their own life can be divided into *Risk factors* which increase the likelihood of suicidal behaviour and *Protective factors*: which reduce the likelihood of suicidal behaviour through improving a person's ability to cope with difficult circumstances. The suicide prevention initiatives outlined within this strategy focus on increasing protective factors and reducing risk factors for suicide within Halton.
- 2.7 During the last 5 years in Halton there has been on average 12 suicides per year. Each year an annual suicide audit is undertaken within Halton. Completing the suicide audit improves our understanding of those most at risk of suicide and allows us to target suicide prevention strategies appropriately. Although most suicides in Halton take place in the home, we also have a known suicide 'hotspot' where repeat suicide attempts take place – the Silver Jubilee Bridge (Runcorn and Widnes Bridge). In addition work has recently commenced on a new Mersey Gateway Bridge with an opening date of autumn 2017 expected for the new crossing.

### **Suicide Prevention Strategy - vision, areas for action outcomes and objectives**

- 2.8 **Our vision** is for a community where:
- We understand the root causes of suicide through effective collection and analysis of key information
  - We have created a "listening" culture where it is okay to talk about feelings and emotional wellbeing
  - We pro-actively communicate so that those directly and indirectly impacted by suicide know what support is there for them
  - We provide readily accessible support through services working in partnership with other agencies and organisations
  - We take positive, co-ordinated action to tackle prioritised root cause issues in order to prevent suicides
- 2.9 In order to achieve this vision and based upon national policy, research evidence and local insight 6 areas for action have been identified and agreed. All 6 areas for action have equal priority.
1. Improve the mental health and wellbeing of Halton residents
  2. Promote the early identification and support of people feeling suicidal
  3. Reduce the risk of suicide in known high risk groups
  4. Reduce access to the means of suicide

5. Provide better information and support to those bereaved or affected by suicide
  6. Support research, data collection and monitoring
- 2.10 Based upon national evidence and local intelligence the groups identified as being at high risk of suicide in Halton include:

- Young and middle aged men (for the period 2011-13 80% of suicide deaths were among men).
- People with mental health problems, including those in the care of mental health services (for the period 2011-13 57% of suicides in Halton were by people who had a known mental health problem. Of these 23% were known to mental health services).
- People with a history of self-harm (27% of people who died by suicide in Halton for the period 2011-13 had a recorded history of self-harm).
- People in contact with the criminal justice system (17% of those who died by suicide in Halton for the period 2011-13 had been in contact with the police in the period prior to their death).
- People who misuse drugs or alcohol (50% of those who died by suicide in Halton for the period 2011-13 were known to have a misusing alcohol or drugs at the time of death).
- Children and young people
- Older adults
- Survivors of abuse and violence including sexual abuse
- Veterans
- People living with long-term physical health conditions
- People who are especially vulnerable due to social and economic circumstances (for example due to debt, housing problems or unemployment)
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people

- 2.11 Key actions to prevent suicides in Halton identified within the strategy include:

- Developing a local multi-agency suicide awareness campaign plan
- Developing a local training plan to deliver suicide awareness training for community members, local community groups and key professionals who interact with known groups at high risk of suicide
- Ensuring those identified as being at risk of suicide can access immediate support
- Reducing access to the means of suicide locally
- Continued support of Operation Emblem (a "street triage" service where a police officer and Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN) attend incidents where concerns for safety are identified).
- Commissioning a postvention service to ensure we have effective local responses to the aftermath of a suicide
- Continuing to undertake an annual suicide audit

2.12 The **Halton Suicide Prevention Partnership** will monitor outcomes related to high level indicators included within the Public Health and NHS Outcomes Framework this includes:

- the suicide rate
- self-harm rates
- excess under 75 mortality in adults with a serious mental illness

2.13 The Halton suicide prevention strategy has been developed by a multi-agency group with representation from both Adult and Children's Services at the Council, the Police, service providers, the voluntary and community sector and other key partners.

#### **Halton Suicide Prevention Partnership:**

HBC - Public Health	HBC – Elected Members
Halton Clinical Commissioning Group	Cheshire Police
HBC – Children's Commissioners	Cheshire Fire
HBC – Emergency Planning	Halton Housing Trust
Riverside College	Crime Reduction Initiative (CRI)
5 Borough Partnership NHS Foundation Trust	HBC - Early intervention team
HBC – Health Improvement Team	Halton Citizens Advice Bureau
MIND	Age UK
Samaritans	HBC – Adult social care

2.14 The strategy was informed by the outcomes of a public consultation event and has been informed and influenced by both local need and national policy. A formal public consultation is also being undertaken to enable local people to provide feedback and insight to the final version of the strategy and action plan, although both will be kept under regular review to ensure that they are still relevant and meeting the needs of local people.

2.15 The strategy will be presented to the following boards for further input and discussion:

- Safer PPB
- Children's Trust Board
- Halton Clinical Commissioning Group Executive Board
- CAMHS Board
- HBC Executive Board

### **3.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 The Strategy will set the context for partnership working to prevent suicides and support those bereaved or affected by suicide in Halton. Suicide prevention is a national, regional and local priority. In 2012 the Government published its all-age suicide prevention strategy *Preventing Suicide in England: A cross-government outcomes strategy to save lives* which has informed the development of our local strategy. Locally the *Halton Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2012- 2015* identified the prevention and early detection of

mental health conditions as one of its 5 priority areas for action. Suicide prevention activity is identified as a key action towards this priority.

#### **4.0 OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The actions identified within the strategy will be delivered through existing resources identified within each partner's budget. Some service redesign or an innovative approach to service delivery will be required to better meet the needs of local people.

#### **5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

##### **5.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

Children and young people are identified as a high risk group within the strategy. The strategy outlines actions aimed at promoting the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people in Halton, preventing bullying within our local schools, ensuring the early identification and support of children and young people suffering from emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties, raising awareness of the signs of suicide among staff who work with children and young people in Halton, and ensuring support is available in a time of crisis.

##### **5.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

Suicide is a major public health issue, and a major cause of years of life lost. The economic impact of suicides is also high in terms of lost earnings and potential. It has been estimated that the average cost of a working age adult in England ending their own is £1.67million.

##### **5.3 A Healthy Halton**

This strategy forms a central strand of meeting the commitments to prevent suicide and support those bereaved or affected by suicide locally.

##### **5.4 A Safer Halton**

Suicide prevention is an important aspect of promoting community safety. Locally we have a known suicide hot spot in the Silver Jubilee Bridge (the Runcorn and Widnes Bridge). Responding to suicide threats and attempts places a considerable burden on the time and resources of partners locally. It is also recognized that the police are often the first responders to a suicide attempt. The strategy outlines actions related to promoting community safety which include the continued support and strengthening of Operation Emblem (a "street triage" service where a police officer and Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN) attend incidents where concerns for safety are identified), reviewing best practice evidence related to reducing the risk of suicide at the Silver Jubilee Bridge, advising on suicide prevention interventions planned for the new Mersey Gateway Bridge and other large new developments within the Borough.

## 5.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

As part of the strategy, there is a commitment to reduce access to the means of suicide in the planning of new large developments within the Borough.

## 6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

The key risk is a failure to reduce the suicides among Halton residents. This risk can be mitigated through the regular review and reporting of progress and the development of appropriate interventions where under-performance may occur.

## 7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

The Strategy specifically aims to meet the needs of all residents in Halton to prevent suicides and ensure the adequate support of those bereaved or affected by suicide locally.

## 8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
A) Draft Suicide Prevention Strategy 2015-2020	HBC website	Dr Elspeth Anwar
B) Draft Suicide Prevention Strategy Action Plan, 2015-16	HBC website	Dr Elspeth Anwar