

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ADULT CARE & HEALTH SERVICES

TO: Health & Wellbeing Board

DATE: 24th March 2017

AGENDA ITEM: 8

TITLE: The Berkshire Suicide Prevention Strategy 2017-2020

LEAD COUNCILLOR: Cllr Hoskin

PORTFOLIO: Health

SERVICE: Wellbeing

WARDS: All

LEAD OFFICER: Jo Hawthorne

TEL: 0118 9373623

JOB TITLE: Head of Wellbeing, Commissioning & Improvement

EMAIL: Jo.hawthorne@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The NHS Five Year Forward View for Mental Health sets a target on all NHS agencies and partners to reduce the current level of suicide by 10% by 2020. To achieve this, the Department of Health has recommended, in its 3rd Progress Report on the National Suicide Prevention Strategy, that all top tier local authorities produce suicide prevention actions plans.
- 1.2 In Berkshire, this has been coordinated by a multi-agency suicide prevention group which has overseen the preparation of a strategy including a Berkshire-wide action plan, and local action plans responding to the unique needs and circumstances of each of the six local authorities in Berkshire.
- 1.3 The action plans are reliant on multi-agency working, and partners across the health and public sectors are in the process of endorsing the strategy.
- 1.4 Appendices
 - The Draft Berkshire Suicide Prevention Strategy 2017-2020
 - A copy of the presentation to the Health and Wellbeing Board to be given at the meeting is attached.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

That the Health & Wellbeing Board notes the report and:

- i) Endorses the Berkshire Suicide Prevention Strategy; and
- ii) Agrees the action plan for the Reading Borough contained within the strategy.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 A cross-Government National Suicide Prevention Strategy for England was published in 2012. This included commitments to tackling suicide in six key areas:
- Reducing the risk of suicide in high risk groups;
 - Tailoring approaches to improve mental health in specific groups;
 - Reducing access to means of suicide;
 - Providing better information and support to those bereaved or affected by suicide;
 - Supporting the media in delivering sensitive approaches to suicide and suicidal behaviour; and
 - Supporting research, data collection and monitoring.
- 3.2 In 2016, an independent Mental Health Taskforce presented a report - The Five Year Forward View for Mental Health - to the NHS in England. The Taskforce recommended setting a national ambition to reduce the suicide rate in England by 10 per cent by 2020-21, and that every local area should have in place a multi-agency suicide prevention plan. These local plans are expected to align with local Crisis Care Concordat action plans, and to reflect local ambitions for prevention planning.
- 3.3 The 3rd Progress Report on Preventing suicide in England (published in January 2017) contains further guidance on local suicide prevention plans. Local plans should be in place by 2017, set out targeted actions in line with the national Suicide Prevention Strategy and new evidence around suicide, and include a strong focus on primary care, alcohol and drug misuse. Each plan should demonstrate how areas will implement evidence-based preventative interventions that target high-risk locations and support high-risk groups within their population.
- 3.4 Suicide prevention work is part of promoting good mental health more broadly, and there is an increasing focus on mental health as a vital part of overall wellbeing. This was illustrated at a national level by the Prime Minister's Charity Commission lecture on 9th January 2017. More locally, on 16th January 2017, the Brighter Berkshire (Year of Mental Health) campaign was launched. This is aimed at reducing stigma and improving access to support networks.
- 3.5 Reading's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2017-20 includes 'reducing deaths by suicide' as one of its eight priorities, with a further two priorities complementing this very closely:
- Promoting positive mental health and wellbeing in children and young people
 - Reducing loneliness and social isolation

4. THE PROPOSAL

4.1 Current Position:

Berkshire Authorities had not published a suicide prevention action plan at the time of the 2015 All Party Parliamentary Group inquiry into local suicide prevention plans in England. Action plans were a recommendation of the England Suicide Prevention Strategy published in 2012. Since 2015, a high-level multi-agency steering group has met in Berkshire to plan a local audit of suicides and provide a vehicle for partners to work together on a strategy and action plans for each locality. The draft strategy annexed to this report is the result of this work, and a recommendation of the strategy is that all six local health and wellbeing boards endorse the strategy and their local action plans.

4.2 Options Proposed

Endorse the Strategy and Action Plan for Reading.

This is the recommended option. Members of the Health and Wellbeing Board can make a difference in preventing suicides through the provision and commissioning of evidence-based services and through showing the leadership to achieve this important public health outcome.

4.3 Other Options Considered

Do nothing.

This is not recommended. Councils are expected to have a suicide prevention action plan and the Secretary of State for Health has recently reiterated this desire.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 Reading's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2017-20 (adopted by the Health and Wellbeing Board on 27 January 2017) includes 'reducing deaths by suicide' as one of its eight priorities. Adopting the Berkshire Suicide Prevention Strategy would reinforce the Board's commitment to this priority, and set local plans in the context of partnership working across Berkshire.
- 5.2 Adopting the Berkshire Suicide Prevention Strategy and accompanying Action Plans would also support the Council's Corporate Plan priority to 'safeguard and protect those that are most vulnerable.' Similarly, this would support the Reading Clinical Commission Groups' aim per the Berkshire West Strategic Plan 2014-19 to 'give mental health parity of esteem with physical health through the commissioning of high quality evidence-based mental health services which reflect the national mental health strategy and other key guidance'.
- 5.3 The Berkshire Suicide Prevention Strategy is an important public health strategy which seeks to save lives lost to suicide through its prevention, and to improve the health and wellbeing of those bereaved by suicide. It also includes more general whole-population actions aimed at improving mental health and wellbeing as contributing factors that prevent suicide. The strategy highlights and action plans prioritise certain population groups which have greater risk factors for suicide, and thus contributes to narrowing inequalities.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 6.1 The Berkshire-wide steering group is made up of stakeholders from across the area representing all sectors. They have consulted their organisations, some of whom will endorse the strategy formally. This is the first iteration of the strategy and it would be expected that with each new iteration, further organisations will be able to formally endorse it.
- 6.2 During a public consultation on Reading's draft Health and Wellbeing strategy for 2017-20, local residents commented that there was a need for a more explicit reference to adult mental health and emotional wellbeing in order for the Strategy to set the basis of a properly holistic approach. It was in direct response to this feedback that suicide reduction was added as a priority in the final (adopted) version of the strategy, and the final strategy made more explicit that the priority on reducing loneliness and social isolation incorporates developing personal resilience.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 The Berkshire Suicide Prevention Strategy follows national guidance which includes due consideration of equalities issues and assesses these in relation to the evidence base regarding the risk of suicide. Some groups with 'protected characteristics' as defined in the Equality Act are at increased risks of suicide, such as lesbian gay, bisexual and transgender people, and targeted approaches are proposed in relation to groups facing higher risks. Adopting the Strategy is therefore intended to have a differential impact on some protected groups, but this would be a positive rather than a negative differential impact. A full Equalities Impact Assessment is not therefore required.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The council has the power enshrined in the 2012 Health and Social Care Act to undertake necessary action as required to discharge its new public health duties, to improve health and protect the health of the local population.
- 8.2 Members of the Health and Wellbeing Board are under a legal duty to comply with the public sector equality duties set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act (2010). In order to comply with this duty, members must positively seek to prevent discrimination, and protect and promote the interests of vulnerable groups. Some groups of residents identified in the draft Suicide Prevention Strategy as facing a higher suicide risk will be in possession of 'protected characteristics' as set out in the Equality Act, and the Strategy and Action Plans therefore have the potential to be vehicles for promoting equality of opportunity.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 No specific new funds are required. The local action plan will be delivered through local partners and co-ordinated by the Council's Wellbeing Team working within the constraints of existing budgets.
- 9.2 Value for Money (VFM) - The economic and social cost of a suicide is substantial. The average cost of suicide in someone of working age in England is estimated to be £1.67 million.
This includes direct costs of care, indirect costs relating to loss of productivity and earnings, and the intangible costs associated with pain, grief and suffering of those bereaved or affected by suicide. For every person who dies by suicide at least 10 people are directly affected.

10. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Draft Berkshire Suicide Prevention Strategy 2017-2020. Public Health Services for Berkshire. 2017.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Office for National Statistics. Suicides in the UK in 2014. London: Office for National Statistics; 2016.

HM Government. Preventing suicide in England: A cross government strategy to save lives. London: Department of Health; 2012.

NHS England Mental Health Taskforce. The five year forward view for mental health. NHS England; 2016.

All-Party Parliamentary Group on Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention. Inquiry into local suicide prevention plans in England. All-Party Parliamentary Group on Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention; 2015.

HM Government. Preventing suicide in England: Third progress report of the cross-government outcomes strategy to save lives. London: Department of Health; 2017.

Public Health England (PHE). Local Suicide Prevention Planning, A Practical Resource. Public Health England; 2016.