

Supporting the Prevention of Suicide Policy

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Author	HR Advisory Team

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Version 1.2	Draft incorporating Trade Union, Public Health and Education comments – June 2026

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RBC Supporting the Prevention of Suicide Policy

1. Introduction

This policy sets out the Council's approach to supporting the prevention of suicide, identifying and supporting individuals at risk, and responding effectively to suicide-related incidents affecting staff. This policy aims to create a safe and supportive workplace where staff feel able to seek help and support others. It sets out clear roles and responsibilities including those for leaders/managers and employees.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, workers, casual staff, and agency workers as well as to elected members.

This policy will be used as the basis of a consultation with school leaders on the agreement of a schools – specific policy.

3. Aims of this policy

- To promote a “whole organisation” approach to suicide prevention, ensuring confidentiality, dignity and respect at all times
- To encourage open, stigma-free conversations about mental health
- To provide timely and proportionate support to staff
- To ensure managers and staff are able to develop the skills to recognise and respond to suicide risks

3. Definitions of terms used in this policy

- **Suicide prevention:** Actions to reduce risk and support wellbeing
 - **Intervention:** Responding to warning signs or disclosures of suicidal thoughts
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4. Roles and Responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities are as follows:

Chief Executive / Corporate Management Team: provide leadership and oversight and ensure relevant resources and arrangements are in place

HR & Organisational Development: responsible for developing this policy and guidance, ensuring appropriate guidance and training is in place, monitoring workforce data and assessing learning (where appropriate)

Line Managers are responsible for identifying early warning signs through holding regular 1:1s and encouraging openness and having supportive conversations with staff, understanding the support available to staff and signposting them towards it where necessary, escalating concerns appropriate

Employees are responsible for looking after their own wellbeing, raising concerns about themselves or colleagues, engaging with training and support opportunities

5. Suicide Prevention:

The council will embed suicide prevention within its wider wellbeing and health & safety framework by:

a) Creating a supportive culture

- Promoting trust, respect, and a “no blame” culture
- Working to reduce stigma around mental health
- Encouraging flexible working and work-life balance

b) Early identification of risk

Providing training and toolkits etc to enable managers to identify concerns including relating to burnout, stress, behaviour changes or withdrawal and providing them with the necessary tools to support their team including through 1:1s and performance reviews, provision of occupational health support and the Employee Assistance Programme, stress risk assessments and return-to-work discussions

c) Training and awareness

- Suicide First Aid and/or Mental Health First Aid training
- Awareness campaigns (e.g., Mental Health Awareness Week, Suicide Prevention Week)
- Guidance tools for staff including the Suicide First Aid Toolkit

d) Access to support

- Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)
- Occupational Health
- Peer support / Mental Health First Aiders

6. Responding to Risk (Intervention)

Where a staff member may be at risk:

Managers should: act immediately and take concerns seriously. Depending on the nature of the concern, they should consider speaking to the individual in a private, supportive setting, listen without judgement and encourage the individual to seek help including via our Employee Assistance programme, their GP or by making a referral to the Council’s Occupational Health provider. If there is an immediate risk, to contact the emergency services.

- Managers will need at all times to consider the confidentiality required whilst ensuring appropriate documentation is completed confirming actions taken. Support is available to managers via the HR Advisory team. If relevant concerns should be reported (e.g., incident/reporting forms)
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7. After a Suicide or Attempt

Where appropriate, the council will provide a coordinated response to support staff and services:

Immediate actions may include activating critical incident procedures, liaison with senior leadership/ HR&OD and ensuring accurate, sensitive internal communication if applicable. Longer terms actions may include reviewing the support available, reviewing learning and identification of improvements.

Staff support may include access to counselling and EAP as well as time off or adjustments.

8. Support and Signposting

The council will promote access to external support services, including:

- **Samaritans** – 24/7 confidential support
 - **Papyrus HOPELINEUK** – support for young people
 - Bereavement support organisations
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9. Data, Monitoring and Governance

As part of its regular monitoring mechanisms RBC will continue to monitor absence, wellbeing data, and trends using data and insights to inform any changes needed to the preventative actions identified in this policy. Data available via RBC's Employee Assistance provider and Occupational Health provider will be used to further inform provision and preventative actions.

11. Review

This policy will be reviewed initially in 6 months (then to be reviewed every 2 years) , or sooner following:

- A serious incident
- Changes to legislation or national guidance