

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Adults and wellbeing scrutiny committee</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b>	<b>Monday 21 September 2020</b>
<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Suicide Prevention Strategy implementation</b>
<b>Report by:</b>	<b>Head of Community Commissioning</b>

## **Classification**

Open

## **Decision type**

This is not an executive decision

## **Wards affected**

All wards

## **Purpose**

To consider the attached presentation on suicide prevention from the Adults and Communities Directorate and to determine any recommendations the committee wishes to make.

## **Recommendation**

**That the committee:**

- (a) considers the presentation on suicide prevention (appendix A) by the Adults and Communities Directorate; and**
- (b) determines any recommendations it wishes to make to the executive.**

## **Alternative options**

1. It is a function of the committee to review and scrutinise any matter relating to the planning, provision and operation of the health service within its area. The committee also has the function to make recommendations on any matter it has reviewed or scrutinised, and to make reports or recommendations to the executive with respect to the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the executive. As such, there are no alternative options.

## Key considerations

2. The adults and wellbeing scrutiny committee has powers including the review and scrutiny of any matter relating to the planning provision and operation of council, public health or health services (not reserved to the children and young people scrutiny committee) affecting the area and to make reports and recommendations on these matters.
3. Suicide prevention is a national priority for government and each local area is expected to develop and implement a local suicide prevention approach. Herefordshire's Suicide Prevention Strategy for 2019/23 was adopted by Cabinet in July 2019. The strategy and its implementation depend on a whole partnership approach with key partners from the public sector and voluntary and community organisations working together and sharing accountability for making progress. An action plan was developed in 2019 to implement the strategy. There are significant opportunities through the Talk Community programme to implement the strategy in partnership with communities and so addressing the ambition in the County Plan to strengthen communities to ensure everyone lives well and safely together.
4. The Suicide Prevention Strategy and action plan are monitored and supported by the Mental Health Partnership Board, comprising representation for the council, NHS, Police and a wide range of voluntary organisations, along with individuals with lived experience of mental health. The board is required to report on suicide prevention but has not yet had an opportunity to report, in view of the flood and Covid-19 emergencies.
5. There are challenges in interpreting facts and figures relating to suicide, arising in part from the very small numbers involved. To 2018, the number of deaths has been stable and slightly reducing, against an increasing trend of suicides nationally. A key national expectation is that local areas will establish real time reporting of suicides, which offers potential benefits in prevention, planning and intervention. The strategy implementation includes real time data and development of local intelligence around suicide, working with partner agencies.

6. The strategy sets out seven key priorities;

The media	Bereavement support	Communities
Self Harm	Mental health services	Limiting access to means
High risk groups		

The strategy also adopts the three highest risk factors for suicide, which are;

Self Harm	Experience of mental health services	Men
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7. Funding has been secured from the NHS executive for suicide prevention work in the STP area. In Herefordshire, the focus is on rural isolation and the farming community. Wider work around mental wellbeing is being undertaken with farmers and farming representatives, along with military veterans and other communities.

## Community impact

9. In accordance with the adopted code of corporate governance, Herefordshire Council achieves its intended outcomes by providing a mixture of legal, regulatory and practical interventions. Determining the right mix of these is an important strategic choice to make sure outcomes are achieved. The council needs robust decision-making mechanisms to ensure its outcomes can be achieved in a way that provides the best use of resources whilst still enabling efficient and effective operations and recognises that a culture and structure for scrutiny are key elements for accountable decision making, policy development and review.
10. This scrutiny activity contributes to the corporate plan – county plan 2020-24 ambition ‘strengthen communities to ensure everyone lives well and safely together’.
11. The suicide prevention strategy contributes specifically to this community ambition by working to reduce the incidence and impact of suicide through the involvement of communities.
12. There are no particular implications of this report for the council’s role as corporate parent. There are no general implications for the environment arising from the report. However, some issues taken up by partner agencies relating to access to means of suicide may involve local environment features, including access to rivers etc.
13. There are no specific implications for the council relating to health and safety arising from this report. There may be health and safety implications for partner agencies in addressing concerns around access to means and other priority issues.

## Equality duty

14. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the ‘general duty’ on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
  - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
15. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying ‘due regard’ in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. All Herefordshire Council members are trained and aware of their Public Sector Equality Duty and Equality considerations are taken into account when serving on committees.
  16. The suicide prevention strategy has implications for people sharing protected characteristics who are notable risk of suicide. In particular some people with mental health needs will be at risk of suicide and they are part of the wider group of disabled people sharing a protected characteristic. The strategy will help reduce risks of suicide for

people experiencing mental health services, including where they are in hospital and following discharge from hospital. The strategy implementation will also raise wider awareness amongst communities and professionals around mental health crisis and suicide which will be beneficial to people sharing this protected characteristic. In relation to gender, the strategy will also have potentially positive implications for men, who are at greatly higher risk of suicide than women currently. Resources and information will be directed particularly to identifying and supporting men at risk. There may be implications for women from potential national changes to the way suicides are recorded officially. These may have the effect over time of increasing the number of deaths of women recorded as suicides.

17. An equality impact assessment relating to the Suicide Prevention Strategy was prepared at the time of its adoption by Cabinet in 2019.

## **Resource implications**

18. There are no resource implications associated with the recommendations. Suicide prevention depends on contributions and accountability across a wide range of organisations and there are no council resources directed towards it.

Funding from the NHS executive towards suicide prevention work is being administered by Public Health in Worcestershire County Council, which is managing the employment of staff and associated costs. There is continuing exploration of external funding opportunities to support suicide prevention work, including in relation to bereavement support and community based interventions.

## **Legal implications**

19. The Council's Suicide Prevention Strategy was implemented in 2019 following compliance with the Government's 2012 national strategy.
20. The role of the Adults and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee, amongst other things, includes scrutiny of Health and Wellbeing Board which has ultimate responsibility for suicide prevention.
21. The powers include the review and scrutiny of any matter relating to the planning, provision and operation of health services affecting the area and to make reports and recommendations on these matters.

## **Risk management**

22. None in relation to this covering report; scrutiny is a key element of accountable decision making and may make recommendations to certain NHS bodies with a view to strengthening mitigation of any risks associated with the proposed decisions. The committee may make reports and recommendations to certain NHS bodies and expect a response within 28 days.

## **Consultees**

23. A wide range of local groups and organisations are involved in the implementation of the suicide prevention strategy. No formal or public consultation has been conducted to date. It is expected that the Wellbeing Survey planned for New Year 2021 will incorporate some questions about suicide prevention.

24. Councillors and members of the public are able to influence the scrutiny work programme by suggesting a topic for scrutiny or by asking a question at a public meeting, for further details, please see the 'get involved' section of the council's website:

[Get involved](#)

## **Appendices**

Appendix A      Presentation on Suicide Prevention Strategy

## **Background papers**

None identified.