



APPENDIX TWO

Editorial –

This newsletter has been compiled to mark World Suicide Prevention Day. I am writing this editorial from a number of perspectives; as the Chair of the Somerset Suicide Prevention Advisory Group, as a social care professional who has worked in mental health services for many years and as someone who has witnessed the devastating impact of suicide on the lives of people I have known personally over a number of years. I suspect many of you reading this briefing will also have lost a family member, friend or colleague from suicide, yet despite the prevalence of suicide, it continues to be surrounded by stigma.

The statistics are shocking.

- Men 20 to 49 years are more likely to die from suicide than any other cause of death
- More than 6,000 people in the UK die from suicide each year or one person every two hours across the whole of Europe
- In Somerset, we have around 50 deaths per year with a ratio of 3:1 suicides being completed by men. This is roughly one suicide every week

The reasons for this are complex, and include socio-economic and health problems such as poverty, relationship breakdown, isolation, chronic ill-health and drug and alcohol misuse. Stigma is arguably one of the biggest contributory factors. We know that men are less likely to ask for help than women. We

also know that talking is a very powerful way of helping people when they are experiencing emotional distress. If you haven't seen the Channel 4 documentary 'The Stranger on the Bridge' I recommend it. It shows how a total stranger saved the life of a young man, Jonny Benjamin, by talking to him on London Bridge. Talking to someone about how they are feeling does not increase the risk of suicide. This is a myth. Talking can help.

I hope to be able to provide future briefings but in the meantime, please do reflect on what you might be able to do to help reduce suicide both in your workplace and community. Most importantly, do stop to take the time to talk with people who may be struggling with their emotional wellbeing and the pressures of modern life.

With thanks Carolyn Smith

Strategic Manager Mental Health & Safeguarding and Chair, Suicide Prevention Advisory Group.

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Suicide and Mental Health in the Media

An inspiring workshop took place for local media and champions to learn about the latest research and media approaches to reporting on suicides and mental health.



Speakers at the workshop from L to R: Ben McGrail from ITV News West Country; Lorna Fraser, Samaritans and Sue Baker OBE, Time To Change



What is World Suicide Prevention Day?

World Suicide Prevention Day is held each year on 10 September. It's an annual awareness raising event organised by [International Association for Suicide Prevention \(IASP\)](#) and the [World Health Organisation \(WHO\)](#). This year's theme is about connecting with others and letting people know that #ITSOKAYTOTALK.

Why is it important

More than 800,000 people take their lives each year across the world.

Reaching out to people who are going through a difficult time can be a game changer. People who are feeling low or suicidal often feel worthless and think that no-one cares. Small things like hearing from friends or family, feeling listened to or just being told that 'it's ok to talk' can make a huge difference.

What you can do

Start a conversation today if you think a friend, colleague or family member may be struggling. You can also join us on Twitter to spread the word.

World Suicide Prevention Day 10th September 2017 in Taunton

Sunday was a windy cloudy day but this did not stop a brave group of volunteers setting up their stall on Taunton High Street to mark World Suicide Prevention Day. The Suicide Bereavement Support Service Focus Group wanted to mark the day with a stall to raise awareness of the issues and support that is available. Volunteers from Cruse, Samaritans and Mind in Taunton and West Somerset, joined the Focus Group members. Despite the weather, volunteers spoke meaningfully to about sixty people, some of whom were in need of emotional support. The general feedback was that people were grateful to be informed about something they knew very little about in all its forms. It highlighted the need for more community awareness and a need to promote what support is available.

Thanks to Taunton Deane Borough Council for their support on the day





Samaritans from Taunton and Yeovil branches work closely with the Suicide Prevention Advisory Group to raise awareness and support people who are in emotional distress. Our two branches took over 82,000 calls last year and responded to 4920 emails and 1960 texts, demonstrating our continuing commitment to suicide prevention.

Some highlights of Samaritan projects this year:

- ✓ **GP Surgeries** – with the support of the Somerset Clinical Commissioning group, distributed Samaritan information to all GP surgeries. GP's with a patient's permission, can also arrange a call back service for additional emotional support
- ✓ **Postvention** – this provides support for schools and Colleges that have experienced a suicide; our work there helps all of those affected and is aimed at preventing further suicides. Somerset has been leading the way with this work.
- ✓ **Emergency Department presence** - Yeovil branch offers emotional support at Yeovil District Hospital Accident and Emergency Department. Our volunteers spend time listening to concerns and anxieties which includes talking to people who have self-harmed or tried to kill themselves
- ✓ **HMP Guy's Marsh** – Yeovil branch train and support the Listener team at HMP Guy's Marsh, visiting the prison weekly for their debrief.
- ✓ **Bereavement support** - Yeovil branch has a partnership with Cruse and Somerset Suicide Bereavement Service, supporting clients whilst they are waiting for this specialist bereavement support.
- ✓ **Campaigning** - 24th July (24/7) represents the round the clock support Samaritans offer. This year we:
 1. Lit up County Hall as a visual reminder of the emotional support we offer
 2. Held a 'Big Listen' event at Taunton Railway station. Listening tips were shared via the press and social media and, at stations, rail users were engaged by volunteers throughout the day. The message was simple; take a moment to speak to family, friends, colleagues or even a stranger and concentrate on listening and listening well. Knowing how to listen can make a real difference and perhaps save a life.

Railways - Samaritans has been working with Network Rail, the British Transport Police (BTP) and the rail industry for the past seven years to prevent suicide on the railway. Some 15,000 people in the industry have completed the suicide prevention course offered to staff through the programme and a good number of these have gone on to save lives on the rail network. A course was held for local rail staff and BTP officers at the Taunton branch of Samaritans.

Contact Samaritans on 116 123 or email jo@samaritans.org



Somerset Public Health was the first in the South West to offer ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills

Training) training back in 2009. It is the most widely used suicide intervention model in the world, developed in Canada by LivingWorks Education. Public Health has worked in partnership with Somerset Partnership NHS Foundation Trust who has released staff to be trained as ASIST accredited trainers and to then deliver local courses.

ASIST will provide practical training for caregivers and is suitable for anyone in a caring role, working with vulnerable people, from teenagers upwards.

The Suicide Intervention Model improves the quality of information and communication between agencies and individuals, especially where referrals to secondary health services are necessary. Post course evaluations have taken place and have shown that the training increases knowledge and confidence to respond to a person at risk and intervention skills are retained over time and are put to use to save lives.

Quotes from course participants

"If it wasn't for the course I would have probably avoided the question and just skated around the edges, thinking I was doing a good job, but not really getting to the core."

"Two days after finishing the course I had concerns for a young person I was working with who had run off from an appointment...I eventually caught up with him I was able to ask the question and use the framework (to keep him safe)."

Email: louise.finnis@somerset.nhs.uk

SOMERSET BEREAVEMENT NETWORK

The effects of bereavement on mental health are well documented, and yet bereavement is a topic that often does not get a lot of focus. Two years ago a new Bereavement Network was set up in Somerset to give organisations that deals with bereavement an opportunity to come together and share and support each other. The meetings are a mixture of topic based discussions and 'open' space to share experiences, working practises and insights.

Themed meetings bring a greater depth to the conversations without detracting from the openness of sharing about individual services, practises or client base.

Topics covered include;

- Children and young people
- Helping men to grieve
- Peer support groups
- Disenfranchised and ambiguous loss
- Bereaved by suicide
- Loneliness after a bereavement – especially in the older community

The themed topics are usually delivered by network members. The meetings have been quarterly. Membership is very diverse from Marie Cure Cancer Care to Winston's Wish for children.

The group has produced a leaflet of known bereavement services in Somerset. To join the mailing list for future events and or receive a copy of the **Bereavement Leaflet**, please email **Susan Hoyle** at bereaved@mindtws.org.uk



The Farming Community Network (FCN) is a national charity working alongside the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institute (RABI) and the Addington Fund to help farmers and their families who are going through difficult times. FCN is available to anyone in the farming community. We listen to concerns whatever they may be. We respond quickly and confidentially to any requests of help. FCN gives pastoral and practical help, RABI gives domestic grants and the Addington Fund helps with housing in retirement and emergencies. All our volunteers have farming experience and pastoral understanding.

FCN is a member of the local Suicide Prevention Advisory Group. Farmers are a targeted group for suicide prevention work. Farming is a unique way of life and everything is tied up on the farm – it is a farmer's business and livelihood, their identity and lifestyle. Their home is on the farm so is difficult to get away from their problems, and family relationships can often become very difficult. Financial, inheritance or health problems can put an enormous strain on the whole family and have a huge effect on the mental wellbeing of everyone. It is also a very isolated, and isolating, occupation. Often the partner has to work outside the farm and the farmer can spend all day completely on their own with no one to share their thoughts and worries. They may get up in the morning feeling tired, depressed and unable to make decisions.... And the downward spiral begins.

FCN is seeing an increase in stress and mental illness. We are there to listen to any concerns farmers may have and help with practical problems. We are able to act as a third party in resolving issues with cattle passports and animal health inspections with the British Cattle Movement Service. We talk to the Rural Payments Agency when the subsidies, which farmers now rely on, have not been paid. We negotiate with Trading Standards and RSPCA when animal health issues arise. We mediate with bank managers when there are financial or overdraft problems. We talk to utility companies and animal feed merchants to help with payment plans when farmers are unable to pay their bills.

Funding is difficult in many organisations at the moment so we find working together with agencies like Somerset Village Agents, Somerset Community Foundation, CAB, the National Farmers Union, MIND and others can provide huge benefits for all.

Recently we supported a young father whose relationship had broken down with his wife and child due to the excessive working hours. He was in a desperately dark place saying he could not go on living, feeling so worthless, rejected and alone. All day these dark thoughts were going through his mind as he was crying in his tractor cab with no-one to share his misery. FCN volunteer supported him and talked to him while in his cab and worked with the GP and local church. Now he has become stronger and able to make decisions. He has given up working on his own and is now working with a family member.

FCN national helpline is available 7am – 11pm.
Tel: 03000 111 99

*Written by Suzie Wilkinson, Local Co-ordinator,
Farming Community Network*

Somerset Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

Suicide Prevention Work – 48 hour follow up:

Somerset Partnership NHS Foundation Trust provides mental health services across the county from Talking Therapies and Community Mental Health Teams through to Home Treatment Teams and Psychiatric In-patient units. The assessment and management of suicide risk is central to the work of all of these services and we are constantly looking to learn and improve the way we engage with our patients and their families to help them keep themselves safe and to prevent future suicides.



One important piece of work taking place between the in-patient ward and the Home Treatment Teams has been the 48 hour follow up after discharge. This is a direct response to the evidence from the National Confidential Inquiry that found that the risk of suicide was greatest for patients in the two days after discharge from hospital. In response our Home Treatment Teams have implemented new criteria to identify those at highest risk and to ensure that the right level of support is provided to patients at that most vulnerable time.

We know that there are a range of factors that increase risk and the in-patient and community teams work together to build a comprehensive picture. Some of the factors that might indicate an increase in the risk include:

- Men between 45 and 55
- The misuse of alcohol
- Living alone (40% of completed suicides are by people who live alone);
- Financial difficulties/pressures;
- Social isolation including disengaging from society and
- Chronic physical illness.

While the teams are guided by the evidence and broader risk indicators they will work closely with patients and those close to them to understand their individual circumstances and needs.

Laura Hopkins, Team Manager of the Taunton Home Treatment Team, has been involved in rolling out the new way of working. She explained: 'the 48 hour follow ups seem to be working well. Patients have told us that they can often find the transition from hospital back home again really daunting, particularly after a longer admission. Knowing that they will be seen by our staff within two days provides them with a lot of reassurance and the feedback we have had so far suggests that it is appreciated'.

Claudine Brown – chair of the Somerset Partnership Trust Suicide Prevention Steering Group
Claudine.Brown@sompar.nhs.uk

Local Suicide Prevention Planning

The recent, Five Year Forward View for Mental Health, set a target to reduce suicide by 10 per cent by 2020/21. Somerset local suicide prevention planning is co-ordinated by Public Health, Somerset County Council, through the Suicide Prevention Advisory Group. It is made up of over twenty different statutory and voluntary organisations since 2008. The local strategy is based on the government's national strategy for England, '*Preventing suicide in England: a cross governmental outcomes strategy to save lives*'. The strategy is based on the latest evidence and emphasises the importance of working together, as no one agency has the sole responsibility to manage suicide prevention plans.

The **Somerset Suicide Prevention Strategy aims** are; to achieve a reduction in the suicide rate in the general population in Somerset and to provide better support for those bereaved or affected by suicide.

To support the aims, there are six overarching areas of action. Below are some highlights of activities in the last year:

1.Reduce risk of suicide in high risk groups

- Somerset Partnership NHS Foundation Trust carrying out weekly safety audits within patient settings and meeting 48 hour follow up visits after discharge. The suicide prevention in-house action plan is reviewed and monitored regularly.

- Men and Boys mental health network launched with series of activities and training.

- Farming Community Network working with Somerset Partnership to identify a link worker with a background in farming.

2.Tailor approaches to mental health support in specific groups

-*Positive Mental Health for Somerset* strategy has been approved by the Health and Wellbeing Board

- Eighty GP's undertook suicide awareness training. Risk assessment tools for primary care are being developed.

3.Reduce access to the means of suicide –

-Revised national guidance on 'Preventing suicides in public places' has been circulated.

- Focus on signs at pedestrian railway crossings, and the Environment Agency on waterways access.

4.Provide information and support to individuals bereaved by suicide

- Somerset's bespoke Suicide Bereavement Support Service has been available since 2012. This service was one of the first in the region.

-A new Focus group of people bereaved by suicide set up to inform the action plan and carry out community awareness activities.

5.Support the media to report appropriately on incidents of suicide

- On-going monitoring of local media reporting and Suicide and Mental Health in the Media workshop organised with national speakers and chaired by Ben McGrail West Country ITV.

6.Implement research, data collection and monitoring

- Somerset Public Health Department is responsible for the local audit process. The Somerset Suicide Prevention Audit Group meets throughout the year to review available information and initiate action. In addition, official data is analysed annually, providing trend patterns.

Contact Louise Finnis lfinnis@somerset.gov.uk
Health Promotion Manager – mental health



Somerset Suicide Bereavement Support Service

For every suicide it has been estimated that ten people will experience intense grief, which extrapolates to around 35,000 persons in the UK annually. Promoting the mental health of people bereaved through suicide is a key aim of the national and local Suicide Prevention Strategy.

Bereavement after suicide can be particularly difficult to cope with, and many people who are bereaved in this way find it hard to get the help and support they need. The loss of someone through suicide often results in different responses and emotions. Bereavement by suicide is prolonged. Shock, social isolation and guilt are normal emotional responses. Stigma and shame can also come into play leaving people feeling very isolated. There is often unwanted media attention and practical matters to deal with. People bereaved by suicide are also recognised as a group who are at risk of suicide themselves. The provision of early and appropriate support following bereavement by suicide is essential to facilitate the complex bereavement process but also to reduce the long term risks of on-going mental health problems.

"After watching a documentary on television I realised that my Dad's suicide had an impact so deeply traumatic to me that it was affecting my relationship with my son. After the support you got for me and staying with me through the journey we are now on a wonderful path together"

Public Health commissioned a bespoke Somerset Suicide Bereavement Support service back in 2012. The service is coordinated by Mind in Taunton and West Somerset (MindTWS) and supported by Cruse and the Samaritans. Overall outcome for the service is that people directly affected by a suicide will feel supported and show signs of less distress.

"You helped me in the beginning to get support when he first killed himself and a year on you are still around helping me with the inquest."



Features of the service include:

- ❖ Telephone Service. They have the option to stay on the line and talk to Samaritans out of hours.
- ❖ One to one or group support by phone or in person to talk through any emotional or practical issues
- ❖ One to One bereavement support via Cruse
- ❖ Monthly Peer Support Group
- ❖ Somerset Suicide Prevention Community Group
- ❖ Bereavement Network
- ❖ Resources and Contacts
- ❖ Monitoring media reporting
- ❖ Member of Southwest and National Suicide Prevention Alliance

The approach of the service is to listen and support people as they work through their grief and mixed emotions. The service will attend meetings with clients, including the inquest and act as an advocate when talking to agencies such as schools or employers. The service will also talk to community groups affected by a suicide which may include friendship groups.

Contact Susan Hoyle bereaved@mindtws.org.uk

"Thank you for dealing with the complicated family issues that followed after my husband took his own life. Without such delicate handling of all family issues I am sure we all would still be very stuck, hating and blaming each other and suffering"

Suicide Bereavement Support Group – a personal reflection

I had a tortuous journey trying to find a suicide bereavement support group. I phoned various numbers only to be told to redial another number. Or was told due to funding cuts the groups are no longer functioning. Eventually I found Taunton Suicide Bereavement Group and thank goodness because it has been my life line.

The support group is the only opportunity I have to talk about my feelings about the loss of my loved one by suicide. It provides me with the opportunity to meet and listen to others who have also lost loved one from a suicide. I no longer feel so lonely and isolated by this experience because of the support from the group meetings. The group meetings have helped improve my emotional and psychological wellbeing. The group facilitators understanding and gentle guidance supports us to inch a little more forward each time. I hope no one experiences the loss of their loved one from a suicide, but if they do, the need for help from such groups has Taunton Suicide Bereavement Group is so crucial. The shock, pain, turmoil, mental anguish has our world has just turned upside down is only made bearable with life line support from Taunton Suicide Bereavement Group.

Suicide Bereavement Support Group is part of the Suicide Bereavement Support Service.

The support group meets the first Thursday of the month 19:30- 21:30,

Tel: 0300 330 5463

Email@ bereaved@mindtws.org.uk

Helplines and support

- [Farming Community Network](#)
03000 111 999
- [Mindline Somerset](#)
01823 276 892
- [Somerset Integrated Domestic Abuse Service](#) 0800 69 49 999
- [Somerset Suicide Bereavement Support Service](#) 0300 330 5463
- [Samaritans](#) (116 123) operates a 24-hour service available every day of the year. If you prefer to write down how you're feeling, or if you're worried about being overheard on the phone, you can email Samaritans at jo@samaritans.org.
- [Childline](#) (0800 1111) runs a helpline for children and young people in the UK. Calls are free and the number won't show up on your phone bill.
- [PAPYRUS](#) (0800 068 41 41) is a voluntary organisation supporting teenagers and young adults who are feeling suicidal.
- [Students Against Depression](#) is a website for students who are depressed, have a low mood or are having suicidal thoughts.
- A support group called the Campaign Against Living Miserably ([CALM](#)) is an excellent resource for young men who are feeling unhappy. As well as their website, CALM also has a helpline (0800 58 58 58).
- [Somerset Partnership NHS Trust](#)

A varied collection of some useful Mental Health apps*



Stay Alive **Free to use.** This app is a pocket suicide prevention resource, packed full of useful information to help you stay safe. You can use it if you are having thoughts of suicide or if you are concerned about someone else who may be considering suicide.



Elefriends **Free to use. For over 17's only** Supportive online community from the mental health charity Mind. We all know what it's like to struggle sometimes, but now there's a safe place to listen, share and be heard. Whether you're feeling good right now, or really low, it's a place to share experiences and listen to others. Moderated by the 'Ele handlers' from 10am until midnight.



Happier **Free to use** Happier helps you stay more present and positive throughout the day. Its Apple Watch app is like your personal mindfulness coach -- use it to lift your mood, take a quick meditation pause, or capture and savour the small happy moments that you find in your day. Connect with other happier users in a positive and supportive environment

Did you know... Business in the Community has teamed up with Public Health England to produce [Reducing the risk of suicide: a toolkit for employers](#). This toolkit offers best practice support and should be used in conjunction with the Public Health England-Business in the Community [Mental health toolkit for employers](#) as an effective way to prevent and manage mental health and suicide at work.

Mental Health Recovery Guide



Free to use.

There are 17 essential things you need to know to fast track your recovery from mental illness. The Mental Health Recovery Guide (MHRG) will tell you what they are.

If you suffer from depression, schizophrenia or bipolar disorder, and if you are a mental health outpatient, or a newly discharged psychiatric in-patient at the UK's NHS or elsewhere in the world, MHRG will help you to get well and stay well.



What's Up **Free to install** but include in-app purchases

What's Up? is a popular free app utilising some of the best CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy) and ACT (Acceptance Commitment Therapy) methods to help you cope with Depression, Anxiety, Anger, Stress and more! With a beautiful, modern design, simple heading and easy-to-follow methods, you can get to what helps you the most in seconds!

***Whilst these apps may be useful, they are not a replacement for seeking medical advice if you have concerns about symptoms you may be experiencing.**

Keeping safe on line

Here are some useful on-line safety tools related to mental health aimed at children, parents, carers and professionals.

Child Exploitation and On-line Protection ['Think You Know' guide to online safety](#). [MIND's online safety page](#) that contains helpful advice as well as their ['How To' Stay Safe Online B](#)

10 things everyone needs to know about suicide prevention

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|---|--|
| Suicides take a high toll | There were 4,882 deaths from suicide registered in England in 2014 and for every person who dies at least 10 people are directly affected. |
| There are specific groups of people at higher risk of suicide | Three in four deaths by suicide are by men. The highest suicide rate in England is among men aged 45-49. People in the lowest socio-economic group and living in the most deprived geographical areas are 10 times more at risk of suicide than those in the highest socio-economic group living in the most affluent areas. |
| There are specific factors that increase the risk of suicide | The strongest identified predictor of suicide is previous episodes of self-harm. Mental ill-health and substance misuse also contribute to many suicides. |
| Preventing suicide is achievable | Agencies across the public and voluntary sector, need to work together to build robust plans to promote mental health and prevent mental illness. Working together to offer services that build community resilience and target groups of people at heightened risk of suicide can help reduce suicides. Support is needed at the highest level within all organisation. |
| Suicide is everybody's business | A whole system approach is required, with local government, primary care, health and criminal justice services, voluntary organisations and local people affected by suicide having a role to play. |
| Restricting access to the means for suicide works | This is one of the most evidenced aspects of suicide prevention and can include physical restrictions, as well as improving opportunities for intervention. |
| Supporting people bereaved by suicide is an important component of suicide prevention strategies | Compared with people bereaved through other causes, individuals bereaved by suicide have an increased risk of suicide and suicidal ideation, depression, psychiatric admission as well as poor social functioning. |
| Responsible media reporting is critical | Research shows that inappropriate reporting of suicide may lead to imitation or 'copycat' behaviour. |
| The social and economic cost to suicide is substantial and adds to the case for suicide prevention work | The economic cost of each death by suicide of someone of working age is estimated to be £1.67 million. This covers the direct costs of care, indirect costs relating to loss of productivity and earnings, and the intangible costs associated with pain, grief and suffering. |
| Local suicide prevention strategies must be informed by evidence | Local government should consider the national evidence alongside local data and information to ensure local needs are addressed. |

The newsletter has been produced by Somerset Suicide Prevention Advisory Group
 Email@ bereaved@mindtws.org.uk.

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