

Response to Request for Information

Reference FOI 000049
Date 7 April 2016

Suicide Prevention

Request:

With reference to the Department of Health document 'Preventing suicide in England: A cross-government outcomes strategy for saving lives', published in September 2012, I would like to find out what activity relevant to suicide prevention is occurring at a local level.

I would therefore like to ask the following questions:-

1. What level of understanding of suicide do local councillors and council staff working within Public Health have?

The Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing has been briefed on the work of the suicide prevention stakeholder forum. Members of the Public Health Senior Management Team have all been briefed on the suicide prevention needs assessment and action plan. A presentation to the Health and Well-Being Board is scheduled for 27th April 2016. 16 members of staff attended suicide prevention training in March alongside participants from a range of organisations across the city. A calendar of awareness raising events is being developed by the suicide prevention stakeholder forum and this will include events for staff and councillors. At a West Midlands Combined Authority level, (see <https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.org.uk/about/whos-included/> for a full list of councils included) a mental health commission is currently underway. This commission is working to understand the impact of poor mental health and wellbeing and its future within public services. A report on its findings will be available in a few months' time and will be made available to all councillors and staff.

2. What is the rate of suicide among the general population in the local authority area?

In respect of your question 2, it has been established after careful consideration that the Council does not hold the above information. Consequently, we are unable to provide any information relating to the above, and are informing you as required by Section 1(1) (a) of the Act, that states:

"Any person making a request for information to a public authority is entitled to be informed in writing by the public authority whether it holds information of the description specified in the request".

I can advise you that this information would be held by Public Health England and is

within the public domain accessible via the following link:

<http://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile-group/mental-health/profile/suicide>

3. Is this rate higher or lower than the general population rate for England of 7.9 deaths per 100,000 population in 2008-10? What is the current trend in suicide rates showing?

In respect of your question 3, it has been established after careful consideration that the Council does not hold the above information. Consequently, we are unable to provide any information relating to the above, and are informing you as required by Section 1(1) (a) of the Act, that states:

"Any person making a request for information to a public authority is entitled to be informed in writing by the public authority whether it holds information of the description specified in the request".

I can advise you that this information would be held by Public Health England and is within the public domain accessible via the following link:

<http://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile-group/mental-health/profile/suicide>

4. Is information available on the rate of suicide among different groups and gender, e.g. middle-aged men?

In respect of your question 4, it has been established after careful consideration that the Council does not hold the above information. Consequently, we are unable to provide any information relating to the above, and are informing you as required by Section 1(1) (a) of the Act, that states:

"Any person making a request for information to a public authority is entitled to be informed in writing by the public authority whether it holds information of the description specified in the request".

I can advise you that this information would be held by Public Health England and is within the public domain accessible via the following link:

<http://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile-group/mental-health/profile/suicide>

5. What steps have been taken locally to monitor and take action to reduce the rate of suicide within the local authority area? For example, is there a specific and agreed reduction in the rate of suicide that the local authority will aim to achieve? A needs assessment has been completed in 2015 specifically examining the needs of Wolverhampton residents in relation to suicide prevention and recently a draft action plan has been developed from this information. No target reduction has been set but it has been identified that the monitoring of suicides and attempted suicides and the work of the suicide prevention action plan should be embedded within the crisis concordat and work has commenced to make this happen.

6. Is suicide prevention included in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessments and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy?

Not currently in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) although the JSNA is currently being revised. The Joint Health & Well-being Strategy is also currently being re-written and will include a priority on Children & Adolescent Mental Health.

7. Is there a local group or network established to oversee suicide prevention activity in the locality? - **Yes**

If so:

a) Who leads this group? Is it the Clinical Commissioning Group, local government, public health or joint arrangements?

Local authority, chaired by Wolverhampton Samaritans, with multi agency membership.

b) Is there a local councillor with specific responsibility for suicide prevention?

Suicide prevention cuts across a number of portfolios including Public Health & Wellbeing, Adult Social Care and Children & Young People.

c) What other local agencies and partners are members of this group or network, or are consulted as part of any suicide prevention activity (e.g. police)?

Membership includes: different teams within the local authority, CCG, a range of voluntary sector organisations, police, Network Rail, British Transport Police, local health trusts.

d) Does this involve GPs or other professionals working in primary care settings? - **No**

If not, how do they input into activities or actions to prevent suicides locally?

GPs were consulted as part of the needs assessment referred to in 5). A CCG representative is included in the suicide prevention forum membership. Feedback to the GPs following the completion of the needs assessment is planned for this year as well as embedding training on suicide prevention to student GPs.

e) How do these groups or work link with wider local public health and health improvement activities?

This work is informing wider mental health work within public health and other directorates of the Council and the transformation work that has begun on Children and Adolescent Mental Health services. It is also informing work that Public health is undertaking to reduce the harm from drugs, alcohol and tobacco.

f) How do these groups or work link with local safeguarding arrangements?

There is representation from Children's Services and Adults Services on the suicide prevention stakeholder forum as well as the Multi-Agency safeguarding hub.

g) What governance arrangements are in place?

The suicide prevention stakeholder forum ultimately reports to the Wolverhampton Health and Wellbeing Board.

h) Does the group or network undertake a local analysis of suicide data and/or participate in local suicide audits?

Yes – see response to question 5 above.

i) Does this include the identification of particular high-risk groups?

Yes – see response to question 5 above.

j) Does the group or network produce an action plan on local suicide prevention activity and is this monitored?

Yes

k) Does the action plan include the need to consider developing suicide prevention awareness and skills training for professionals in primary care and local government (housing, environmental health, social care, benefits, etc) and other services that may come into contact with individuals at risk of suicide? If so, what groups of front-line staff have had such training?

Yes the action plan includes this action. Training was offered in March and it included representation from environmental health, licensing, safeguarding, human resources, housing, customer services, early help and public health alongside a wide range of other voluntary sector organisations.

l) Does it involve the local community?

Through voluntary sector groups representation.

8. Do Joint Strategic Needs Assessments adequately identify action to support people at risk of suicide or suicidal behaviour within the local population?

Not currently – in development during 2016/17 (see response to question 6 above).

9. Has the local authority or other agency identified any specific locations which provide opportunities for suicide and/or where suicides/attempted suicides have occurred (such as a bridge, cliff or rail crossing)?

A key specific location had been identified previously and remedied. No specific locations have been identified in the 2015 needs assessment but British transport police and Network Rail are part of the multi-agency group and are there to highlight any changes to this situation should it arise.

10. What steps have been considered or taken to reduce the risk of suicide at such locations?

Links are being established with the planning team in the Council to ensure a systematic approach to considering suicide risk for new planning applications.

11. What other agencies are involved in supporting this preventative action at high-risk places?

No other agencies as yet.

12. Does the local coroners' office support preventative action at local level?

Not yet – dialogue between the director of public health and the local coroners' office to improve preventative action is part of the suicide prevention action plan.

If so:

a) Are coroners formal members of any groups or networks that exist?

b) Do they provide access to coroners' records of inquests for local analysis or audit purposes?

c) Do they involve or inform the local authority or Director of Public Health if they identify (at inquest proceedings or earlier) particular areas of concern, e.g. locations used for suicide, possible clusters of suicide, increase in a particular method or new and emerging method of suicide?

13. What support is available within the local authority area for those affected by a suicide?

I can confirm that the City of Wolverhampton Council holds this information. The information you have requested is exempt under Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), because the information is accessible to you, as it is already in the public domain. Please see link below:

http://forwardforlife.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/WolvesResourceList_2014_SPrevention.pdf

Note this list is currently being updated.

14. What agencies provide this support?

See response to question 13 above.

15. Is any data collected on attempted suicides within the local authority area?

Data on attempted suicides amongst young people is collected.

16. If so by whom?

By children's services.

17. Is this data shared with other agencies?

This data was shared at the last suicide prevention stakeholder forum and will inform the suicide prevention action plan.