

Somerset Suicide Prevention Strategy 2024-2029

Background

Suicide is not inevitable and we all have the ability to help save lives. Throughout history there has been stigma associated with suicide and there continues to be stigma surrounding suicide. Stigma stops people from seeking help and can stop people from offering help. The circumstances leading to someone dying by suicide are often complex and it's rare that one single cause is identified. It is imperative that communities work together to support individuals, it is not something that can be solved by one individual or organisation.

Context

When looking at statistics it is important to remember that each of these numbers relates to a person, with their own set of complex circumstances behind their decision, who leave behind many dealing with that tragic loss. Nationally (England and Wales), in 2020-22 there were 15,419 deaths with a rate (per 100,000) of 10.3, in the South West region there were 1802 deaths with a rate of 11.9 and in Somerset there were 191 deaths with a rate of 12.7. The suicide rate in Somerset has been above the national average since 2001 and above the regional average consistently since 2015. 2020-22 saw the first drop in the suicide rate in Somerset since 2014-16.

Vision for Suicide Prevention in Somerset

Our vision is that everyone in Somerset knows that it is safe to talk about suicide and has the confidence to do so, acknowledging that everyone has a role in suicide prevention. As a County we are committed to reducing the number of lives lost to suicide in Somerset and ensuring that nobody feels like suicide is their only option.

To support this vision the multi-agency suicide prevention partnership aspire to deliver services that are simple and accessible to everyone and to offer help that meets a diverse range of needs. The partnership is committed to using various forms of quality local data and the voice of lived experience to identify learning opportunities and respond quickly to emerging trends. Data and learning are used to directly influence the improvement of services, deliver effective suicide prevention projects and promote positive wellbeing across priority groups.

National Strategic Priorities

1. Improving data and evidence to ensure that effective, evidence-informed and timely interventions continue to be developed and adapted.
2. Tailored, targeted support to priority groups, including those at higher risk, to ensure there is bespoke action and that interventions are effective and accessible for everyone.
3. Addressing common risk factors linked to suicide at a population level to provide early intervention and tailored support.

Somerset Suicide Prevention Strategy 2024-2029

4. Promoting online safety and responsible media content to reduce harms, improve support and signposting, and provide helpful messages about suicide and self-harm.
5. Providing effective crisis support across sectors for those who reach crisis point.
6. Reducing access to means and methods of suicide where this is appropriate and necessary as an intervention to prevent suicides.
7. Providing effective bereavement support to those affected by suicide.
8. Making suicide everybody's business so that we can maximise our collective impact and support to prevent suicides.

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Somerset Suicide Prevention Strategy 2024-2029

Aims and Objectives

Overarching Aim	National Objective	What this will look like in Somerset (local objectives)
<p>Use an evidence informed approach to suicide prevention activities, built on data and the voice of lived experience.</p>	<p>Improving data and evidence to ensure that effective, evidence-informed and timely interventions continue to be developed and adapted.</p> <hr/> <p>Tailored, targeted support to priority groups, including those at higher risk, to ensure there is bespoke action and that interventions are effective and accessible for everyone.</p>	<p>A robust Real Time Surveillance System (RTSS) is in place to monitor suspected suicides.</p>
		<p>A suicide audit group meets bi-annually to discuss learning from deaths.</p> <p>There is a process established for all services to share their learning with public health around suicide attempts including risk factors and locations.</p> <p>A newsletter is shared with professionals & volunteers working with high risk/priority groups bi-annually to raise awareness of current support services, helpful resources, training and events.</p> <p>Service's utilise a standardised evaluation framework to ascertain the effectiveness, engagement and accessibility.</p> <p>Insights from the suicide audit are shared with commissioners to inform decision making around funding of services and targeted support.</p>

Somerset Suicide Prevention Strategy 2024-2029

	<p>There is a clear and well understood pathway to support for individuals of all ages who self-harm.</p>
	<p>There is a good understanding of what support is available within the community for those who self-harm.</p>
	<p>Targeted suicide prevention campaigns are developed using insight from the suicide audit and RTSS.</p>
	<p>Insight from the suicide audit and RTSS is used to better understand local population risk factors and this information is used to inform training delivery, campaigns and promotion of services.</p>
<p>Addressing common risk factors linked to suicide at a population level to provide early intervention and tailored support.</p>	<p>The suicide prevention partnership forum utilise a life course approach to suicide prevention.</p>
<p>Reducing access to means and methods of suicide where this is appropriate and</p>	<p>The voice of lived experience is incorporated into all suicide prevention activity, including those who have been bereaved by suicide and those that have survived suicide attempts.</p> <p>There is a process established for all services to share their learning with public health around suicide attempts including method, risk factors and locations.</p>

Somerset Suicide Prevention Strategy 2024-2029

	<p>necessary as an intervention to prevent suicides.</p>	<p>The RTSS is used to respond quickly to any emerging trends in methods used. Insight from the suicide audit is used to inform action to reduce access to means where possible.</p>
<p>Engage people of all ages in Somerset; including education settings, businesses and media outlets in suicide prevention, with the message that together we can make a difference.</p>	<p>Promoting online safety and responsible media content to reduce harms, improve support and signposting, and provide helpful messages about suicide and self-harm.</p> <p>Making suicide everybody's business so that we can maximise our collective impact and support to prevent suicides.</p>	<p>Somerset's RSHE curriculum includes lessons on online safety linked to self-harm and suicide.</p> <p>The Samaritans Media Guidelines and Language Guides for reporting suicides are shared annually with local media outlets. Public health will monitor reports and contact news agencies if they have not adhered to guidelines.</p> <p>Information is shared with parents and carers around online safety linked to suicide and self-harm in children and young people.</p> <p>There is a Somerset Suicide Prevention Pledge for local organisations to sign up to, which incorporates commitments to suicide prevention training and the Orange Button Community Awareness Scheme.</p>
	<p>Providing effective bereavement support to those affected by suicide.</p>	<p>Services are subject to the Open Mental Health Exec Group & Partnership Board</p>

Somerset Suicide Prevention Strategy 2024-2029

Use a robust evaluation system to ensure that services meet the needs of the population, are impactful and sustainable.

Providing effective crisis support across sectors for those who reach crisis point.

via monthly narrative reporting.

Data is presented via Power BI dashboards, accessible by all stakeholders via a URL.

Lived experience feedback is used to inform the development of the service. Including development of community element of support (including peer support groups) and the development of advocacy support to guide families through the inquest process.

The service will engage with an external evaluation process for an objective measure of meeting need and cost effectiveness.

The service will ensure that resources are available in accessible format for those that are neurodivergent.

Crisis Safe Space services are subject to Open Mental Health Exec Group & Partnership Board via monthly narrative reporting.

Data is presented via Power BI dashboards, accessible by all stakeholders via a URL.

Open Mental Health use Patient Reported Experience Measures (PREM)

Somerset Suicide Prevention Strategy 2024-2029

across all services (SFT & VCFSE). This information is used to inform service delivery.

The Mental Health Ambulance service is active and providing support to people in a mental health crisis, linking those in need into timely & appropriate support and reducing A&E attendances.

There is a clear and well understood pathway to support for children and young people in crisis.

Work towards these objectives will be completed through the multi-agency Suicide Prevention Partnership Forum workstream structure and monitored at the quarterly Suicide Prevention Partnership meetings. An annual action plan will be produced to outline how each of these objectives will be met over the next 5 years. An annual report will be produced by Public Health to demonstrate progress made towards objectives during the previous year.

Somerset Suicide Prevention Strategy 2024-2029

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