

SAMH'S VIEW:

SUICIDE PREVENTION

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POLICY LEAD
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ABOUT THE SAMH'S
VIEW SERIES

SAMH's View statements set out SAMH's position on a particular policy topic. They are produced by the Public Affairs team.

Context

In Scotland the national framework for suicide prevention activities is the Scottish Government's Suicide Prevention Action Plan: Every Life Matters.¹ The National Suicide Prevention Leadership Group (NSPLG) will support the delivery and development of suicide prevention activities. It brings together services and stakeholders, including the third sector and people with direct experience of suicide.² The NSPLG is jointly responsible to the Scottish Government and COSLA. The Scottish Government has a target to reduce the rate of suicide by 20% by 2022.

Key Points

- An average of two people per day die by suicide in Scotland.
- There were 680 deaths by suicide in Scotland in 2017.³
- Scotland's suicide rate is the second highest in the UK behind Northern Ireland.⁴
- The suicide rate fell by 20% between 2002-2006 and 2013-2017,⁵ but was still 12.5 per 100,000 population in 2017.⁶
- In 2017 the suicide rate for men was more than three times than for women and more than two-and-a-half times higher in the most deprived tenth of the population compared to the least deprived.⁷ Men aged 35-54 are at particular risk.⁸
- Fifty nine per cent of those who died by suicide between 2009-15 had been prescribed a mental health medication died in the year prior to their death; 7% had a mental health outpatient appointment in the 30 days prior to their death and 27% had attended A&E in the month prior to their death.⁹
- Responses to crisis and distress are inadequate. People presenting in distress to emergency services too often receive a stigmatising response.¹⁰ We welcome the announcement of a Scottish Crisis Care Agreement.
- The Scottish Government have committed £3 million of additional resource announced between 2018-2021 to support the delivery of the Scottish Government's Suicide Prevention Action Plan, transparency is required on how this will be spent locally.
- National mental health and suicide prevention training is to be refreshed by May 2019.¹¹
- The National Action Plan commits to developing reviews into all suicides of all deaths by suicide to facilitate shared learning.



SAMH calls for:

- Transparency of local suicide prevention spending and action plans. With the NSPLG facilitating shared learning of good practice and providing recommendations on local delivery.
- Refreshed national mental health and suicide prevention training to retain Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) with its focus on providing skills to intervene to support someone in crisis.
- National roll out of Community Triage following the successful pilot in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde.¹² Community triage provides police officers direct access to mental health professionals to support decision making and reduce inappropriate detentions of people in psychiatric distress or crisis.
- Local suicide prevention plans must include reference to and be informed by the proposed Scottish Crisis Care Agreement.
- Health and Social Care Partnerships, informed by the NSPLG to commission evidence-based, gender and age sensitive services, including peer support and activity based services, to tackle health inequalities impacting men and suicide. These should be targeted in areas of deprivation.
- The NSPLG to work with See Me to tackle suicide related stigma with the public and within healthcare settings.
- The new suicide review process should be multi agency and fully include the family bereaved by suicide. As a first step change made in 2017 which means NHS boards no longer need to provide complete suicide review reports to Healthcare Improvement Scotland, only summaries, should be reversed.¹³

Further detail:

STATISTICS

- [ISD Scotland Scottish Suicide Information Database \(August 2016\)](#)
- [Scottish Public Health Observatory Suicide: Key Points](#)
- [University of Manchester National Confidential Inquiry into Suicide and Homicide by](#)

FURTHER READING

- [SAMH Ask Once Get Help Fast 2016](#)
- [Scotland's Suicide Prevention Action Plan Every Life Matters \(2018\)](#)
- [Choose Life website](#)
- [The Samaritans Men and Suicide \(2012\)](#)



[People with Mental Illness \(October 2016\)](#)

Notes

¹ Scottish Government [Suicide prevention action plan: every life matters](#) 2018

² Scottish Government [Suicide prevention action plan: every life matters](#) 2018

³ ScotPHO [Suicide Key Points](#) 2018

⁴ University of Manchester [National Confidential Inquiry into Suicide and Homicide by People with Mental Illness](#), October 2017

⁵ Scottish Government [Suicide prevention action plan: every life matters](#) 2018

⁶ ScotPHO [Suicide: Scottish Trends](#) 2018

⁷ ScotPHO [Suicide: Scottish Trends](#) 2018

⁸ ISD Scotland [A profile of deaths by suicide in Scotland 2009-2015](#) 2017

⁹ ISD Scotland [A profile of deaths by suicide in Scotland 2009-2015](#) 2017

¹⁰ Alliance et al [Suicide Prevention Strategy Report](#) 2018

¹¹ Scottish Government [Suicide prevention action plan: every life matters](#) 2018

¹² Police Scotland & NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde [Community Triage – NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Crisis Out of Hours CPN\(Community Psychiatric Nurse\) Service Pilot Evaluation Report](#) (2015)

¹³ Healthcare Improvement [Scotland Suicide review community of practice](#) [accessed April 2018]