

Committee	Dated:
Health and Wellbeing Board	13/09/2024
Subject: Suicide prevention in the City of London Annual Update	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1,2,12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	£
What is the source of Funding?	
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Sandra Husbands, Director of Public Health	For Information
Report author: Claire Giraud, Senior Public Health Practitioner	

Summary

In 2017, the City of London Corporation established a multi-agency suicide prevention group, in accordance with best practice recommendations, and published a Suicide Prevention Action Plan containing numerous initiatives aimed at reducing the number of suicides in the Square Mile. This report provides an update on the suicide prevention action plan as well as on the number of attempted suicides and suicides occurring in the City of London.

Suicide figures for the City should be interpreted with caution, as they are extremely low – this means that any variations may not be statistically significant (i.e. the figures may be due to chance fluctuation); and additionally, recording practices have changed during the reporting period, which may impact upon the figures.

Recommendations

Members of the Committee are asked to:

- Note the progress made on the Suicide Prevention Action Plan
- Note the most recent data for suicide in the City of London

Main report

Background

1. Suicide is the act of intentionally ending one's own life. It is often the end result following a complex range of risk factors, mental illness and significant negative life events; however suicide is preventable, rather than an inevitable event. Suicide is the biggest killer of people under the age of 35 and the biggest killer of men under the age of 50. It is the leading cause of death in the UK for 10-19 year olds, with 5,642 reported people dying in this way in 2022. It is estimated that each suicide further impacts between 6 and 60 people. Within the UK, suicide shows significant gender and social inequalities, and is associated with stigma for families affected by it.
2. Over the last 8 years, a number of key policies and reports have been published to improve suicide prevention nationally and locally. In the City, a local audit, suicide prevention action plan and multi-agency suicide prevention group was established in accordance with best practice recommendations.
3. The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID - previously Public Health England) recommended several priority action areas to include in local suicide prevention plans:
 - Reducing risk of suicide in men
 - Preventing and responding to self-harm
 - Mental health of children and young people
 - Treatment of depression in primary care
 - Acute mental health care
 - Reduce suicides at known 'high risk' locations
 - Reducing isolation
 - Bereavement support for those affected by suicide

Overview for the City of London

4. Between 1st of July 2023 and 30th of June 2024, there have been less than 5 suicides, with a total of 103 attempted suicides.
5. Between 1st of July 2023 and 30th of June 2024, there had been a total of 110 incidents whereby the subject had contemplated suicide or had suicidal

thoughts.

Emerging Trends throughout 2023

Timing and Location

6. Data from the City of London refers to events occurring within its geographic area. The majority of incidents will therefore involve individuals resident elsewhere in London and the country.
7. Over 68% of the attempted suicides occurred during the night and the peak days were Wednesday and Thursday.
8. Bridges remain the most common location type for suicide attempts within the City, with 74% attempted suicides occurring on bridges. The second most common location was on the street with 16%.
9. The qualitative analysis shows that 51% of individuals had a direct journey from their home address to the incident location, meaning it only required one mode of transport and one direct route.

Demographics at the end of 2023

10. Data from the City of London Police is provided in the table below, and covers the period subsequent to the previous City Suicide Prevention Annual Report in 2023. The data covers both completed and attempted suicides. Please note that the most recent data from the coroner was not available for this report.
11. **Age range:** Similar to the year 2022, there was a mixed aged range for attempts: 26 individuals aged under 18 (17%), 65 were aged 18 to 29 years of age (43%), 32 in their 30s (21%), 19 in their 40s (12%), and 9 in their 50s (6%). There was one count of an individual aged 60 and another who was aged 70.

Completions were also mixed in 2023 (between ages 26 and 62).
12. **Gender:** Males represented 53% of attempted suicides, females represented 44% and those of unknown gender represented 1%.
13. **Home Address:** The majority of individuals travelled into the City from their home address where suicide was completed or attempted.

Summary for Period 1 January 2022- 30 June 2024

Year	Attempts	Contemplations	Completions
2021	127	119	<10
2022	129	132	< 5
2023	144	145	< 10

2024 to date (30/6/24)	42	41	< 5
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*data up to XXXX 2024

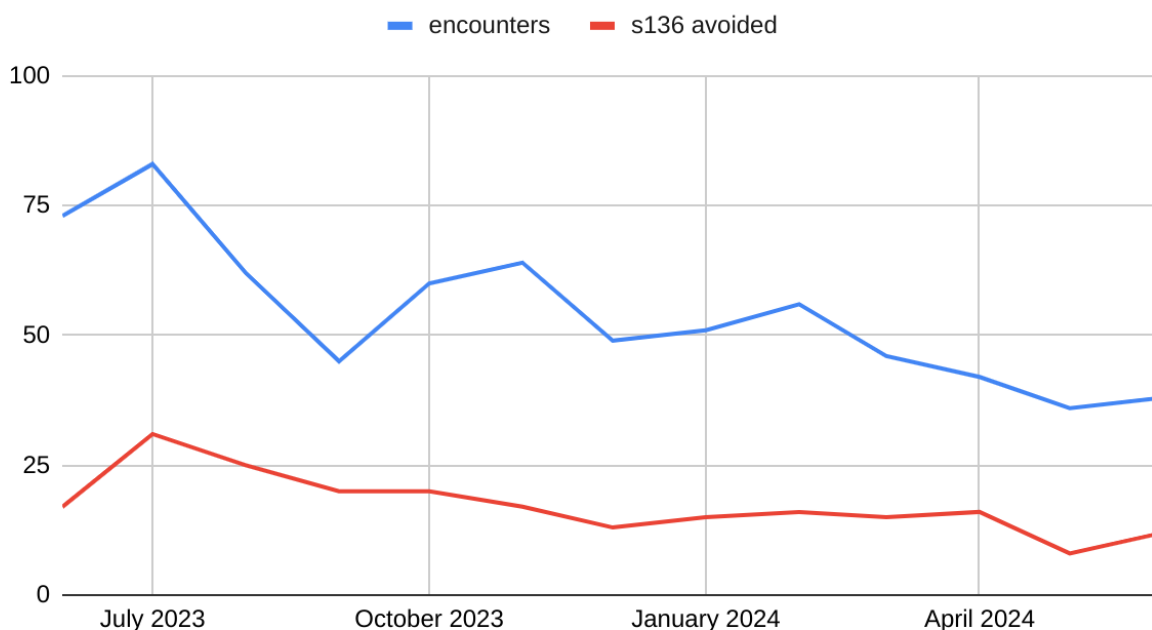
Mental Health Street Triage

14. The Mental Health Street Triage (MHST) was operating 7 days a week from 5pm to 3am since May 2018.

15. New core hours for the service became 3pm to 3am. This new model started on October 4th 2022 and is operating well.

16. MHST Activity levels July 2023 - June 2024:

MHST Number of Encounters and s136 Avoided



17. A key function of MHST is to avoid the use of s136¹. In total, MHST responded to 310 incidents that were potential incarcerations under section 136 from 1st of July 2023 to 30 June 2024. As a result, an estimated 71.6% of potential s136 detentions were avoided.

18. Since starting in 2017, this proportion has varied between 65% and 76%.

19. The MHST team received a police commendation in July 2024 for their professionalism, commitment and outstanding work supporting members of the

¹ Section 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983 allows a constable to remove or keep a person who appears to be suffering from mental disorder and in need of care or control.

public and the City of London Police through crisis incidents, interventions and a great support mechanism.

Bridge Watch

20. The bridge watch volunteer patrol programme is now stood up. It is operating as part of the Ascension Trust, a charitable project funded by grants.
21. The seed funding for the first two years was granted by City Bridge Foundation in early 2023. The programme lead was recruited in July 2023. Volunteer onboarding started soon after, volunteers undergo at least 35 hours of training (safeguarding, throw bag, suicide awareness and intervention, etc).
22. Patrols started in December 2023 on Tower and London Bridge and then expanded to all five bridges by March 2024.
23. Partners include members of the Tidal Thames Water Safety forum (Royal National Lifeboat Institute, London ambulance service, London Fire Brigade, HRM Coast guards, City of London Police, City and Hackney Public Health), City Bridge Foundation, Beachy Heads Chaplaincy, park guards, Thrive LDN.
24. Thrive LDN has generously filmed a promotional video for Bridge watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rnN5IVE8AGw&t=2s>
25. The bridge watch website is now live: <https://bridgewatch.uk/>
26. Some key data:
 - 559 hours of patrol from December 4th 2023 to 30 June 2024.
 - 33 interventions
 - 4 clearly expressed threats of jumping
 - 12 suicidal people
 - 12 MHST intervention, 8 section 136
 - The volunteers have helped find a missing vulnerable person and a missing child
 - 38 volunteers trained and patrolling in July 2024, 17 to be trained over the summer of 2024
 - Volunteers were trained in naloxone in July 2024
27. The development group (composed of most of the above partners) is exploring alternative funding sources for additional funding to provide administrative support for the programme lead and to offer volunteers incentives (daily rate/travel costs to increase coverage at night).

28. Bridge Watch has successfully bid for a Public Health Intervention Responsive Studies Teams (PHIRST) evaluation, provided by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR). This will provide an academically rigorous piece of research to better understand Bridge Watch as a public health intervention. These evaluations are only offered to a small number of programs, and it is a significant achievement to secure this opportunity. The outputs will help develop the service and allow better informed decisions for the future of the program. Work on the evaluation started in February 2024 and will conclude at the end of 2025.

Action Plan Progress Summary

29. Overall, 65 actions have commenced since the launch of the action plan, of which 10 are completed, 55 are in progress.

30. No new actions have commenced since the last annual report to the Health and Wellbeing Board but enhanced actions have been scoped out and will start soon (please see paragraph 34).

31. Significant milestones include:

- Training in Suicide Awareness and Prevention of City workers through the Business Healthy network still sees high uptake. Since 2016, 31 sessions have been delivered (up until April 2024) and 470 people have been trained, representing over 135 organisations. An additional 2 sessions are planned for 2024-25 to empower even more City workers to be the eye and ears of the emergency services. Ad hoc training is also delivered to businesses who have had incidents.
- The Bridge Watch programme (volunteer patrols on the bridges) is now operating.
- The Safe Havens network (“A place of temporary refuge for a person to facilitate their onward journey”) is now in place, with 60 locations (shops, cafes, pubs, libraries), and growing.

RAG Status Key and Summary

Status of Actions	
Major Problems	0
Minor Problems	7
In Progress/ongoing	45
Completed	12

32. The majority of actions are green, either underway or on track to deliver. One action that has progressed but with delay (thus is amber) is the secure city programme.

33. No actions have failed to progress as originally envisaged (aka Red rating)

Enhanced Suicide Prevention Action Plan

34. A report *Suicide Prevention Measures in the City of London* was published on 26 October 2023. ([Full report can be accessed at this link](#) as Appendix 2).
35. The report summarised suicide prevention measures in the Square Mile, with a view of celebrating good practice, improving partnership working and identifying gaps and opportunities across local suicide prevention networks.
36. At the request of Members, a one-day conference on suicide prevention was also organised, the *City Hope Conference* and held on 26 October 2023.
37. This event gathered 156 senior professionals from more than 100 organisations in suicide prevention and mental health to review progress, learn from past actions, and discuss future initiatives.
38. Out of this conference came four widely agreed suggestions which were approved by the Policy and Resources committee in July 2024. They are:
 - The appointment of a suicide prevention planning officer in the City Corporation to work alongside public health, police and City Bridge Foundation colleagues.
 - The development of a Suicide Prevention Charter setting out the duties and responsibilities of all departments and institutions in the City Corporation to prevent suicide.
 - More focused engagement with Financial and Professional Services in the Square Mile, targeting males as they represent 85.4% of suicide completions in the Square Mile.² Through the formation of a **City-led private sector suicide prevention network**. The network will bring together private sector partners to promote best practice, share effective strategies and lever in additional resources. The network will promote collaborative efforts to address mental health challenges, particularly in high-pressure work environments.
 - **Continue to work with City Bridge Foundation to assess and review suicide-prevention measures on CBF bridges.** This aligns with the City Bridge Foundation's commitment to study a report from the Bridge Owners Forum's work on suicide prevention measures and their commitment to return to this discussion in future looking at data from CBF-funded initiatives such as Bridge Watch and the charity's £10m Suicide Prevention Funding Programme.

² City of London Suicide Audit 2023 (2017 – 2022)

Conclusion and Recommendations

39. The past year has seen significant progress in the area of suicide prevention across the Corporation and its partners. Bridge Watch has started operating and enhanced initiatives have come out of the *Suicide Prevention Measures in the City of London* report and the October 2023 conference.

40. The action plan has moved forward since its review, new actions have been added and many of the older actions are either complete or in progress.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Suicide Prevention Action Plan for 2022–25

Appendix 2 - Suicide Prevention Measures in the City of London, October 2023

Report Authors

Claire Giraud

Public Health Senior Practitioner, City of London and Hackney Public Health Team

Andrew Trathen

Consultant in Public Health, City of London and Hackney Public Health Team

Contact: claire.giraud@cityandhackneyph.hackney.gov.uk