

Committee	Dated:
Health and Wellbeing Board	19/09/2025
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?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Dr 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.

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 6,069 reported people dying in this way in 2023. 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 9 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 January 2024 and 31st of March 2025, there have been 11 suicides, with a total of 140 attempted suicides.
5. Between 1st of January 2024 and 31st of March 2025, there had been a total of 116 incidents whereby a person had contemplated suicide or had suicidal thoughts.

Emerging Trends throughout 2024

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 59% 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 84% attempted suicides occurring on bridges. The second most common location was on the street with 8%.
9. The City of London Police qualitative analysis shows that 46% 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 2024

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:** Most individuals for attempts were aged between 18 to 29 years of age: 12 individuals were aged under 18 (12%), 54 were aged 18 to 29 years of age (52%), 19 in their 30s (18%), 16 in their 40s (15%), and fewer than 5 in their 50s (2%). There were also fewer than 5 individuals aged 60 or over.
12. People completing suicide in 2024 were aged between 17 and 57, although most were aged in their 20s (40%).
13. **Gender:** Females represented 53% of attempted suicides, and males represented 47%. This proportion has typically been higher for males in previous years.
14. **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 - 14 July 2025

Year	Attempts	Contemplations	Completions
2022	129	132	< 5
2023	149	146	< 10
2024	104	97	10
2025 to date (14/7/25)	65	41	< 10

*data up to 14 July 2025

Bridge Watch

15. The Bridge Watch volunteer patrol programme was stood up in July 2023. It is operating as part of the Ascension Trust, a charitable project funded by grants.
16. Patrols started in December 2023 on Tower and London Bridge and then expanded to all five bridges by March 2024.
17. 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 (CBF Beachy Heads Chaplaincy, park guards, Thrive LDN.

18. Thrive LDN has generously filmed a promotional video for Bridge watch:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rnN5lVE8AGw&t=2s>

19. The bridge watch website is: <https://bridgewatch.uk/>

20. Some key data:

- 1005 hours of patrol from December 4th 2023 to 31st May 2025.
- 85 interventions
- 7 clearly expressed threats of jumping and 1 jumper
- 25 self declared suicidal people
- 35 potential s136, over 17 MHST intervention, over 13 section 136
- The volunteers have helped find a missing vulnerable person and a missing child
- 56 volunteers trained and patrolling as of July 2025, 4 to be trained over the summer of 2025
- Volunteers have been trained in Making Every Contact Count and self defence in June 2025.

21. 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).

22. 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 August 2025. A plan to disseminate findings and engage professionals and the public is currently being finalised in partnership with NIHR colleagues.

Action Plan Progress Summary

23. Overall, 69 actions have commenced since the launch of the action plan (appendix 1), of which 12 are completed, 57 are in progress.

24. Five new actions have commenced since the last annual report to the Health and Wellbeing Board in September 2024:

- 1.8 about CBF's £10 million grant funding for Suicide Prevention charitable projects.
- 3.13 on maintaining water safety equipment and infrastructure.

- 3.14 about Tower Bridge's Security Teams' patrols.
- 3.15 about CBF's review of security and surveillance equipment and procedures.
- 6.12 concerning the creation of a river incident database with riparian partners) and the enhanced actions have commenced (please see paragraph 34).

25. Significant milestones include:

- Training in Suicide Awareness and Prevention of City workers through the Business Healthy network still sees high uptake. Since 2016, 35 sessions have been delivered (up until May 1st 2025 included) and 527 people have been trained, representing over 138 organisations. In addition to the quarterly sessions, 3 more sessions were delivered in 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 and the interim qualitative report by the National Institute for Health and Care Research states that Bridge Watch is having a positive impact in terms of saving emergency services' resources, fighting the stigma around suicide and preventing people entering the water.
- The CoL suicide's prevention lead has supported the development of a cluster response protocol for the North East London integrated Care Board Suicide Prevention Group. This will be the basis of a CoL specific protocol, to be developed in 2025 with the support of the suicide prevention steering group.

RAG Status Key and Summary

Status of Actions	
Major Problems	0
Minor Problems	5
In Progress/ongoing	52
Completed	12

26. 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.

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

Enhanced Suicide Prevention Action Plan

28. 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. 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 CBF colleagues. This has now taken place, the new officer started in late April 2025.
- 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. Work on this has commenced, the draft is with the design team before it gets socialized to the different teams in the corporation.
- 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 Mile¹, through the formation **of a City-led private sector suicide prevention network**. Work has started in collaboration with the City Belonging new Mental Health Network launched mid May 2025 and the Business Healthy network.
- **Continue to work with CBFn to assess and review suicide-prevention measures on CBF bridges**. Regular meetings between the Managing Director (Acting) CBF and the Director of Port Health and Public Protection (as the Senior Responsible Officer) are in place to consider this action.

Conclusion and Recommendations

29. The past year has seen significant progress in the area of suicide prevention across the Corporation and its partners. Bridge Watch has been operating for over a year and the enhanced initiatives that have come out of the *Suicide Prevention Measures in the City of London* report and the October 2023 conference are being actioned.

30. 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

Report Authors

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¹ City of London Suicide Audit 2023 (2017 – 2022)