

Committee(s):	Dated:
Health and Wellbeing Board	27 January 2016
Subject: Suicide Prevention Action Plan Annual Update	Public
Report of: Director of Community and Children's Services	For Decision
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Summary

This report provides an update on the progress of the City of London Suicide Prevention Action Plan, one year after it was approved by the Health and Wellbeing Board. It suggests that the Action Plan be refreshed in order to produce a joint document with the City of London Police to increase the scope of the document, improve partnership working and prevent duplication.

This report also gives an overview of the progress of 'The Bridge Pilot' initiative to reduce the number of suicides that occur from London Bridge.

Recommendations

The Health and Wellbeing Board members are asked to:

- Approve that the City of London Suicide Prevention Action Plan be refreshed in order to produce a joint strategy with the City of London Police.
- Review the progress of the actions within the Suicide Prevention Action Plan annually.
- Note the progress of 'The Bridge Pilot' and endorse this initiative.

Main Report

Background

1. In January 2016 the Health and Wellbeing Board approved City of London Suicide Prevention Action Plan (appendix one) which responds to the HM Government's Preventing Suicide in England 'One Year On' report, published in 2014. It recognises that suicide is the leading cause of death of British men under 50 years of age. Suicide is a major issue for society and a serious but preventable public health problem. While its causes are complex and no strategy can be expected to completely prevent suicide, there is much that can be done to ensure that we reduce the likelihood of suicide and to ensure support is available for people at their most vulnerable.

2. As a result, the City of London Suicide Prevention Action Plan was developed to outline the ways in which the City of London public health team and local partners aim to work towards a reduction in suicides amongst the resident and worker populations of the City of London, as well as those who may travel to the City of London with the intention of committing suicide.
3. The City of London Suicide Prevention Action Plan outlines actions across six priority areas taken from the National Suicide Prevention Strategy (NSPS) with accompanying recommendations which have been tailored to address our local needs.
4. The action plan was signed off by the Health and Wellbeing Board in January 2016 and it was agreed that the Board would receive annual updates on the progress of the actions within the plan.
5. Data collected whilst writing the action plan recognised the high number of suicides from bridges within the City of London. One key action resulting from the plan is 'The Bridge Pilot'; a joint initiative between the City of London Corporation, City of London Police, the Metropolitan Police and the Samaritans to reduce these suicides through awareness raising and encouraging help-seeking behaviour.

Current Position

6. Since January 2016, the Suicide Prevention Action Plan working group, consisting of representatives from Public Health, the CCG, City of London Police, the Samaritans, the RNLI and Port Health and Public Protection, have met twice to discuss progress of actions.
7. Of 29 actions outlined in the action plan, 24 have been completed. Of the five actions which are not complete, three actions are making good progress (two of which are being led by the RNLI). The further two outstanding actions include engaging with TfL and raising the awareness of parents and schools.

Proposals

8. Given the progress so far in completing many of the actions in the current Suicide Prevention Action Plan it is proposed that the document be refreshed. This will retain the momentum and current collaborative working of the current action plan whilst making sure the priorities reflect new national guidance and take into account the more comprehensive picture of suicide in the City of London that has now been developed.
9. It is suggested that the document be refreshed as a joint strategy between the City of London Corporation and the City of London Police. Much of the frontline response to suicide in the City of London is delivered by the City of London Police. Producing a joint strategy will strengthen our working relationship with the City of London Police and improve our strategic response to suicide prevention in the City.

The Bridge Pilot Update

10. The Bridge Pilot began in April 2016 and is a joint initiative between the City of London Corporation, City of London Police, the Metropolitan Police and the Samaritans to reduce the number of suicides that occur from London Bridge. From London Bridge in 2014 there were 52 calls for help and eight who jumped. The rate of suicide calls and incidents will be monitored and compared to baseline figures from 2014 and 2015.
11. This initiative has been framed around one of the recognised approaches to reducing suicide at iconic sites by signposting people to support services. Evidence shows that this approach has been successful elsewhere in the country and there is no evidence to suggest that help-seeking signs increase the number of suicides in a certain recognised location.
12. Six signs with the Samaritan's free phone number have been placed on London Bridge. Further to this, the Samaritans and City Corporation with the help of East London Foundation trust and City and Hackney Mind have put together a training package which is being delivered to frontline staff and members of the public free of charge. The training can be catered to the audience, size and length of session, and addresses the stigma of suicide and encourages approaching people who are at risk. A train the trainer version of the training has been developed to maximise the reach. So far 121 people have been trained over 6 sessions and a further 18 trained to be trainers themselves.
13. In addition, a leaflet has been developed outlining how to recognise a person who may be at risk and how to approach them. So far 5,000 leaflets have been handed out to members of public during rush hours on London Bridge and as part of the training.
14. This initial approach will be expanded to the other bridges within the City. Planning permission has been granted to place signs on Blackfriars Bridge and we anticipate the signs will be fixed in January 2017. Work continues with the London Borough of Tower Hamlets and London Borough of Southwark to get the required planning permissions to put signs on Tower and Southwark bridges.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

15. The proposals in the report support priority two of the Department of Community and Children's Services Business Plan; promoting the health and wellbeing of all residents and workers and improving access to health services in the Square Mile.

Conclusion

16. Progress in implementing the City of London's first Suicide Prevention Action Plan has been strong and in order to retain the momentum of the strategy and achieve the strategic goals it is proposed that the document be refreshed as a joint document with the City of London Police.

Appendices

Appendix One – City of London Suicide Prevention Action Plan

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