

Walsall Multi-Agency Suicide Prevention Strategy 2024-2029

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Walsall Multi-Agency Suicide Prevention Strategy 2024 - 2029, for endorsement by the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB).

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the HWBB endorse the Walsall Multi-Agency Suicide Prevention Strategy 2024-2029.
- 2.2 That the HWBB continue identify mental health champions from their respective organisations to drive forward the prioritisation of mental health and suicide prevention.

3. Report detail

- 3.1 The Walsall Multi-Agency Suicide Prevention Strategy 2024 - 2029 supersedes the 2018 -2023 Walsall Suicide Prevention Strategy. This strategy has been produced by the joint efforts of a wide range of partners who either contributed to the writing and design or provided data and information.
- 3.2 In recent years, there was a continually increasing rate in Walsall, which, as of 2016, was higher than both the regional and national average rates. However, the rate has been decreasing more recently, and Walsall now has a lower rate than England and the West Midlands. In England, there were 198 (1.3%) more suicides registered in 2021 than in 2020. The age-standardised rate has also seen an increase nationally, with 10.74 persons per 100,000 dying from suicide in 2022, compared with 10 per 100,000 in 2020.
- 3.3 A suicide prevention audit conducted in 2022 highlighted seven key themes for focus: Bereavement; Physical Ill-Health/ Disability; Social Exclusion (Neurodiversity); Acute Financial Stresses; Familial Estrangement; Offenders (alleged and convictions for violent and sexual offences); Abuse and Trauma (Sexual or physical abuse as a child/ young person, domestic violence, ex-service personnel – Post traumatic stress disorder).
- 3.4 A multi-agency consultation workshop was held involving a wide range of stakeholders in January 2024. Further consultation has been ongoing, with partners contributing throughout the development of the strategy, and through the process of data review the risk factors were updates (See strategy page 24)

- 3.5 Members of the partnership are from a range of diverse statutory, non-profit and private bodies. This group is to be further expanded to facilitate coordination of effective partnerships in suicide prevention across sectors, including statutory, third sector and for-profit organisations. These will include any local organisation whose remit includes activity relevant to suicide prevention or with information pertinent to local deaths by suicide.
- 3.6 The Walsall Multi-Agency Suicide Prevention Strategy takes a broad approach to improving the mental health and wellbeing of people living in the borough. It seeks to raise awareness of suicide, encourage help-seeking behaviour amongst high-risk groups and tackle the social, health and economic factors that increase suicide risk.
- 3.7 The vision is that: ***We individually and collectively aspire to reduce self-harm and prevent all deaths by suicide in Walsall, offering hope, support and recovery to those experiencing mental distress.***
- we see a continuing decrease in the number of suicides and incidence of self-harm in Walsall
 - every person in Walsall understands how to protect their own mental health and knows how to access adequate support and we know there is not adequate support available
 - all partners see suicide prevention as their business and are skilled in responding appropriately
 - information and data are timely and sufficiently detailed to inform prevention
 - those affected by suicide have access to timely and appropriate local information and support
 - the means of suicide are dramatically reduced
 - those supporting the bereaved are equipped to provide preventative suicide support
 - local media deliver messages sensitively

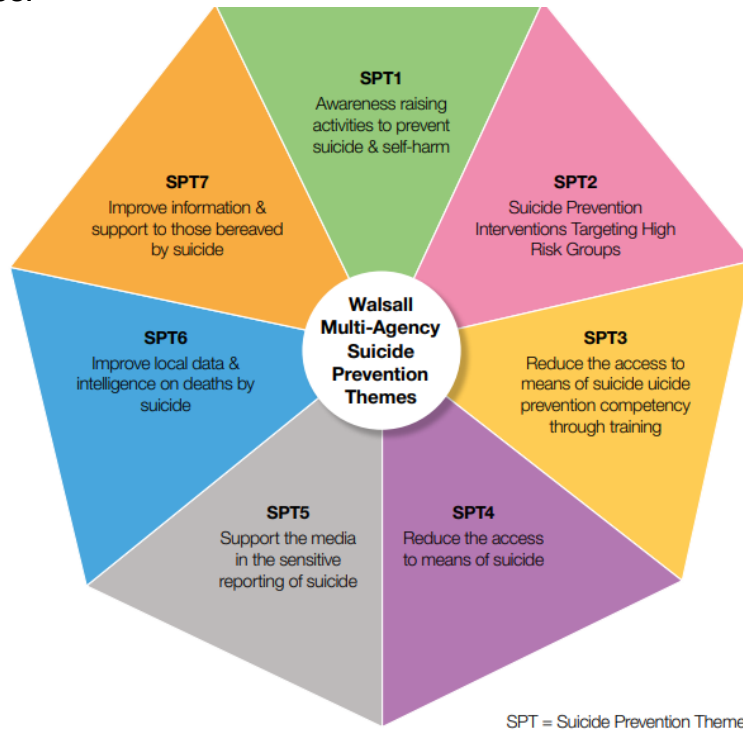
4. Implications for Joint Working arrangements:

- 4.1 Suicide prevention is most effective when it comprises part of wider work addressing the social and other determinants of poor health, wellbeing or illness. This strategy seeks to tackle and address the 'risk factors' for suicide and encourage and support the 'protective factors'.
- 4.2 Aligning this strategy with the broader mental health agenda, mental health commissioning vision and financial plans is a real challenge. The success of this strategy is reliant on the prioritisation of suicide prevention by all stakeholders in Walsall.
- Financial implications: This strategy will require resourcing to develop targeted initiatives, support services and suicide prevention training.

- Other resource implications (e.g. staffing): This strategy requires resourcing i.e. intelligence and project support officer time and programme coordination

Health and Wellbeing Priorities:

The strategy contributes to Mental wellbeing – especially social isolation and the impact of COVID-19 by addressing the Walsall Multi-agency Suicide Prevention Strategic Themes.



It also contributes to the We Are Walsall 2040 vision and ambitions by seeking to:

- Be a healthy borough
 - We are thriving and happy
 - We are healthy and well

And to *The Walsall Economic Strategy and Action Plan* by increasing appropriate skills and training and opportunities for taking up volunteering

Background papers

Walsall Multi-Agency Suicide Prevention Strategy 2024-2029

Contact Officer

Angela Aitken
Senior Public Health Programme Development Manager
☎ 01922 6523719
✉ angela.aitken@walsall.gov.uk

Dr Susan Lloyd
Locum Consultant Public Health Medicine

☎ 01922 652574

✉ susan.lloyd1@walsall.gov.uk

Dr Claire J. Heath

Senior Public Health Intelligence Officer

☎ 01922 655983

✉ claire.heath@walsall.gov.uk