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## Report to West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board

25 January 2024

### West Sussex Suicide Prevention Framework and Action Plan 2023-2027, and Sussex Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2027

Report by: Alison Challenger, Director of Public Health

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#### Summary

Following the [progress update](#) presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board on 27 April 2023, this report presents the final West Sussex Suicide Prevention Framework and Action Plan 2023 – 2027 (including Year 1 action plan to April 2024), and the Sussex Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan 2024 – 2027. Both focus on all ages and follow national guidance and strategy. They have been developed collaboratively as partnership documents, with partners spanning the NHS, Local Government, Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations, and blue-light services, enabling a whole systems approach to suicide prevention for our local population and across the Sussex geography (Brighton and Hove, East Sussex, West Sussex).

#### Recommendation(s) to the Board

##### The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to;

- (1) Approve the West Sussex Suicide Prevention Framework and Action Plan 2023 – 2027.
- (2) Note the Sussex Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan 2024 – 2027 and its alignment with the West Sussex Suicide Prevention Framework and Action Plan 2023-2027.
- (3) Recognise the significant impact that implementation and delivery of both the framework, strategy and their action plans can have on reducing the risk of suicide in West Sussex and Sussex-wide.
- (4) To consider how the West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board, as key systems leaders, can support this approach to reducing the risk of suicide across our local population, to maximise our collaboration and impact.

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#### Relevance to [Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#)

The West Sussex Suicide Prevention Framework and Action Plan 2023-2027 and the Sussex Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2027 support the West Sussex Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS) 2019-2024's focus on improving the health and wellbeing of our residents, reducing gaps in health and wellbeing between communities, and ensuring joined up working and services.

The West Sussex JHWS refers to the Suicide Prevention Strategy as a key strategy (within the Living and Working Well theme) that links with the JHWS. In addition, both the framework, strategy and their action plans, aim to maximise opportunities for prevention across the life course, aligning with the JHWS's lifecourse approach to improving health and wellbeing.

## **1 Background and context**

- 1.1 Suicide is a serious public health problem; however, suicides can be prevented with timely, evidence-based interventions. For an effective response, local, comprehensive multisectoral suicide prevention strategies are needed<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.2 Every death by suicide has a devastating impact on families, friends and communities. The factors leading to someone taking their own life are complex and are often linked to circumstances and experiences over an extended period. Risk is often higher in those who are more disadvantaged or socially excluded<sup>2</sup>.
- 1.3 The rate of suicide in West Sussex of 11.5 per 100,000 people (approximately 75 people per year) exceeds the England average of 10.4 but is lower than other parts of Sussex (Brighton and Hove rate is 14.1 and East Sussex rate is 12.1 per 100,000 people)<sup>3</sup>.
- 1.4 The need to develop local plans that engage a wide network of stakeholders was established in the government's national strategy for England, 'Preventing suicide in England' released in 2012. Councils were given the responsibility for leading the development of local suicide action plans through their work with health and wellbeing boards. The new national Suicide Prevention Strategy for England 2023 to 2028 (September 2023),<sup>2</sup> emphasises the role of the wider system, including the Integrated Care System (ICS) in co-ordinating action to prevent suicides.
- 1.5 Historically, the previous West Sussex Suicide Prevention Strategy 2017-2020 was shared with the West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board. East Sussex and Brighton and Hove have also developed local plans to accompany the new Sussex wide strategy, and have shared these with respective Health and Wellbeing Boards during November and December 2023.

## **2 Working collaboratively across Sussex on suicide prevention**

- 2.1 For many years, partner organisations across Sussex have been working together closely on suicide prevention. This collaboration has significant benefits including shared learning, innovation and efficiencies, for example in delivering Sussex level communication campaigns. Some key partners, such as Sussex Police and Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, operate across the whole footprint which enhances Sussex collaboration.
- 2.2 Between 2019 and 2023, Sussex benefited from an NHS England (NHSE) funded suicide prevention and self-harm prevention programme as part of the national Transformation funding programme. It was delivered across the Sussex geography of West Sussex, East Sussex and Brighton and Hove.

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<sup>1</sup> [One in 100 deaths is by suicide \(who.int\)](https://www.who.int)

<sup>2</sup> [How does living in a more deprived area influence rates of suicide \(ONS.GOV.UK\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

<sup>3</sup> [Local Authority Health Profiles - Data - Office for Health Improvements and Disparities OHID \(fingertips.phe.org.uk\)](https://fingertips.phe.org.uk)

## **Sussex Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2027**

- 2.3 As the NHSE funded suicide prevention and self-harm prevention programme came to an end, the need to refresh the strategic approach across Sussex became apparent and a Sussex-wide Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan was developed by the Sussex Suicide Prevention Steering Group. Membership of this group includes NHS Sussex, Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Sussex Police, Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector representatives and the three upper tier local authorities (Brighton and Hove, East Sussex, West Sussex).
- 2.4 The Sussex Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2027 was approved by the Sussex Mental Health Learning Disability and Autism Board in September 2023. Following publication of the national Suicide Prevention Strategy for England 2023 to 2028<sup>4</sup> later that same month (11 September), the Sussex Strategy was given minor updates to reflect the latest national guidance (see Appendix 1).

### **3. West Sussex Suicide Prevention Framework and Action Plan 2023 – 2027**

- 3.1 Work commenced in September 2022 to develop the West Sussex Suicide Prevention Framework and Action Plan 2023-2027 (see Appendix 2), which updates the West Sussex Suicide Prevention Strategy 2017-2020. This framework and action plan was developed by the West Sussex Suicide Prevention Steering Group; a multi-agency group with representatives from West Sussex County Council, NHS Sussex, Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector, Sussex Police, and wider partners. It's formal reporting line is to the Sussex Suicide Prevention Group; it also provides updates to the West Sussex Mental Health Oversight Board, Children's First Board, West Sussex Safeguarding Children's Partnership, NHS Sussex Children's Board as well as West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board. Additionally, a suicide prevention partnership group reports to the West Sussex Suicide Prevention Steering Group that includes wider membership of organisations supporting suicide prevention and a sub-group focused on suicide prevention for children and young people.
- 3.2 The purpose of the document is to provide a framework and plan for action for multi-agency partners in West Sussex to work together to reduce the risk of suicides. It covers all ages, and dovetails with the Sussex Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2027, to ensure an aligned approach locally and Sussex-wide. Both documents were developed in line with the guidance of the previous national suicide prevention strategy for England (2012), and as with the Sussex strategy, the West Sussex framework and action plan was updated following the publication of the Government's updated national strategy, adapting and absorbing the latest evidence and information provided.
- 3.3 Two main areas of focus have informed the development of both the West Sussex and Sussex documents:
- A review of the latest evidence, including academic research, government policy, public health guidance, and national and local data.

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<sup>4</sup> [Suicide prevention in England: 5-year cross-sector strategy - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/115282/suicide-prevention-in-england-5-year-cross-sector-strategy.pdf)

- An engagement exercise with key stakeholders from the Sussex Suicide Prevention Partnership in summer 2022, where views were sought on the proposed action areas for the Sussex Suicide Prevention Strategy. Groups and individuals consulted include community and voluntary sector groups, NHS, and local authorities.

- 3.4 The final version (including updates) of the West Sussex Suicide Prevention Framework and Action Plan 2023-2027 has been presented to and discussed with the following strategic and partnership groups: West Sussex Mental Health Oversight Board, Adults Services Directorate Leadership Team, Children, Young People, and Learning Directorate Leadership Team, Safer West Sussex Partnership, West Sussex Combating Drugs Partnership, West Sussex Domestic Violence and Abuse Steering Group, West Sussex Suicide Prevention Steering Group, West Sussex County Council Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and shared with the West Sussex Health and Care Partnership Executive, and West Sussex Safeguarding Children's Partnership Board.
- 3.5 In line with the national and Sussex suicide prevention strategies the framework (Appendix 2) aims to reduce the risk of suicide, improve support for people who self-harm and improve support for those bereaved by suicide. It has nine key action areas that are mapped against the national strategy.

#### **4. Proposal details**

- 4.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Health and Wellbeing Board on the actions being taken to reduce the risk of death by suicide across West Sussex and the wider geography of Sussex.
- 4.2 Approval is sought from the Board for the West Sussex Suicide Prevention Framework and Action Plan 2023-2027, and their views on how, as key systems leaders, they can support the approach to reducing the risk of suicide across our local population, to maximise our collaboration and impact.

#### **5. Consultation, engagement and advice**

- 5.1 The West Sussex Suicide Prevention Framework and Action Plan 2023-2027 was developed by the West Sussex Suicide Prevention Steering Group, a multi-agency group. The process of developing the plan involved an engagement exercise with key stakeholders from the Sussex Suicide Prevention Partnership in summer 2022, where views were sought on the proposed action areas. Groups and individuals consulted includes Community, Voluntary and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector groups, the NHS, and local authorities.
- 5.2 Updates and drafts of the both the Sussex Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2027 and the West Sussex Suicide Prevention Framework and Action Plan 2023-2027, have been shared with key partnership boards.

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#### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1: Sussex Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2027  
Appendix 2: West Sussex Suicide Prevention Framework and Action Plan 2023-2027

**Background papers**

[Suicide prevention strategy: action plan - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) (opens in a pdf)