

## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE TASK AND FINISH GROUP REPORT**

### **Rossendale Suicide and Drug Related Deaths Logic Model Action Plan**

*This report reflects the views and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group. It does not necessarily reflect the view of Rossendale Borough Council as a whole. In many cases, suggestions are made for further consideration to be given to issues, and this would need to include a full assessment of the legal and financial risks and implications.*

November 2019

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Office for National Statistics (ONS, 2019) has released data which indicated that after a dip in 2016 and 2017, the number of deaths by suicide had risen back up to levels comparable with 2015. The ONS data is summarised below:-

*Number of suicides by local authority, England and Wales, deaths registered 2002 to 2018*

2018:	10	2009:	14
2017:	4	2008:	8
2016:	3	2007:	11
2015:	11	2006:	6
2014:	2	2005:	10
2013:	8	2004:	6
2012:	7	2003:	3
2011:	9	2002:	2
2010:	8		

When compared with rates in other Lancashire areas, Rossendale has a relatively small population, which makes the statistics even more significant. The ONS statistics are at [Appendix 1](#).

In May 2019 the Court of Appeal in England and Wales handed down a ruling on the determination of suicide at inquest. *Suicide can now be concluded on "balance of probabilities"*. This amendment to the standard of proof is likely to result in further rises in recorded suicides.

- 1.2 On reflection of the ONS data and further intelligence provided by LCC Public Health, an Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group convened to investigate this matter.
- 1.3 The Scrutiny in a Day method was agreed for this Task and Finish Group.

## 2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 2.1 The Terms of Reference of the Group were agreed at the first meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2019:-

Following data released by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), it has become clear that there has been a rise in suicide rates in Rossendale. A Task and Finish Group has been established and the Terms of Reference for this group are as follows:-

1. To acknowledge the rise in suicide rates in Rossendale.
2. To identify and explore the training and awareness packages, support and resources available for councillors and officers and to develop a training matrix.

3. To engage with the voluntary sector, stakeholders and organisations to understand the support services available to people affected by suicide in Rossendale.

### **3. MEMBERSHIP AND MEETINGS**

- 3.1 When signing up to this Task and Finish Group, members were asked to sign up if they could commit to the following dates:-

Meeting 1 – 7<sup>th</sup> November 2019

Scrutiny Day – 25<sup>th</sup> November 2019

- 3.2 Members were confirmed as:-

Councillor Janice Johnson (Chair)

Councillor Christine Gill

Councillor Sue Brennan

Councillor Granville Morris

Councillor Peter Steen

- 3.3 Officer support was provided by the Lancashire County Council (Public Health), NHS England, the Communities Team, Housing, HR/SMT Scrutiny Lead and Committee and Member Services.

### **4. SCRUTINY DAY**

#### **4.1 Attendance**

Attendees at the Scrutiny Day are listed at Appendix 2.

#### **4.2 Local Situation**

Data was presented by LCC Public Health which outlined the current statistics in Rossendale and the ICS Logic Model from which a Rossendale action plan was developed.

The ONS data was noted and although the number of deaths by suicide had plateaued in recent years, there had been a rise in those figures. When compared with other East Lancashire areas with a higher population, it was clear that the data for Rossendale has demonstrated that there is a clear and serious issue around the rising number of deaths by suicide in the Borough.

Various training and awareness packages were outlined and the action plan was discussed in detail. The LCC officer answered questions regarding Rossendale-specific data and the action plan.

#### **4.3 Discussion**

Discussion took place between all attendees with the following points raised:-

- Inclusion of incidents in Healey Dell as this was an area that was shared with another authority/area.

- Police – the Zero Suicide Alliance training could be looked into with a view to rolling out across Council officers. The support available to the police as staff was also outlined.
- Wording was discussed; ‘commit suicide and completed suicide’ was no longer used and the wording should be ‘died by suicide’.
- Attempted suicides were often unreported or recorded.
- Work was required to break down the stigma around mental health and suicide which can be addressed through training and signing up to Time to Change.
- Training and support for council staff was discussed and outlined.
- Training and support for the community was discussed and outlined.
- The Council’s Public Protection Unit (PPU) outlined their service area and the opportunities for training and awareness.
- Methods of contacting services such as the Samaritans differed across age groups.
- Voluntary organisations played a huge role in supporting the community and starting the conversation around mental health and suicide.
- The ‘6507 project’ was outlined and this number represented the number of people who had taken their own lives in the UK in 2018.
- It was highlighted that access to mental health is a barrier, as support could often take weeks.
- ELCCG noted that their frontline/first point of contact staff could undertake the Zero Suicide Alliance training.
- Leaflets were not used in ambulances due to infection control issues; the ‘Hub of Hope’ app was used instead.
- The issue could be promoted and awareness raised via the Community Partnerships agendas.
- Inspire, Veterans in Communities and the Stubbylee Greenhouses/ Bacup Consortium outlined their activities and roles.
- Statutory services were noted as being good at looking after their employees – private sector employers should be engaged with.

## **5. WHAT CAN BE DONE?**

5.1 The problems above had been identified and discussed and the meeting moved towards potential ideas and solutions, which are listed below. It should be noted that these are ideas and not all are/will be taken forward:-

- Training and awareness should be promoted across Rossendale. Members did raise concerns regarding compulsory training.
- Private sector employees could be engaged with via the Rossendale Business Leaders Forum which was attended by the Chief Executive.
- Signs with tear-off strips in toilets were often effective.
- Linking in with the public at events such as Christmas light switch-ons and neighbourhood forums was suggested. An example was given of Burnley FC who promoted the Samaritans’ number at matches.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CABINET

- 6.1 The Task and Finish Group recommends to Cabinet that the following pledge is made as a council:-

That we will work towards the Rossendale Suicide and DRD Logic Model Action Plan by the following actions:-

1. The council signs up to a 'Time to Change' and promotes the '6507' project.
2. Offer and encourage the appropriate training through Healthier Lancashire and South Cumbria (HLSC) and LCC and other suitable providers to all staff and partners in line with the developing training matrix.
3. That the PPU unit adds suicide awareness training to it's training for taxi drivers and how this can be promoted in licensed premises and work with landlords.
4. That the Council's Health Champion liaises with the Samaritans.
5. The council's facilities are made available to partners and organisations to host training and awareness events.
6. The Zero Suicide Alliance training will be raised with business leaders.
7. The Samaritans' 116 123 number will be promoted
8. The appropriate use of language around suicide will be promoted.
9. The issue will be raised on agendas at Community partnership meetings.
10. That a member of council staff continues to attend the Suicide Prevention and Self Harm Reduction Strategy Group.
11. That awareness raising through digital means and social media is undertaken.
12. That the council feeds back actions taken to the LCC Public Health so that these actions may be measured.

## 7. FINAL WORD FROM THE CHAIR

I would like to thank everyone who has worked on and participated in this Task and Finish Group. This has not been an easy subject to scrutinise and I am hopeful that our work will go some way to improving training, support and awareness around suicide.

## 8. GLOSSARY & USEFUL LINKS

HLSC Healthier Lancashire and South Cumbria - Integrated Care System (ICS) – Suicide Support  
<https://www.healthierlsc.co.uk/suicide-prevention/suicide-prevention>

ELCCG East Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group  
<https://eastlancscg.nhs.uk/>

LCC Lancashire County Council  
<http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/>

ONS	Office for National Statistics <a href="https://www.ons.gov.uk/">https://www.ons.gov.uk/</a>
PPU	Public Protection Unit (Rossendale Borough Council)
RBC	Rossendale Borough Council <a href="https://www.rossendale.gov.uk/">https://www.rossendale.gov.uk/</a>
Time to Change:	<a href="https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/">https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/</a>
The Samaritans:	<a href="https://www.samaritans.org/">https://www.samaritans.org/</a>
Papyrus	<a href="https://papyrus-uk.org/">https://papyrus-uk.org/</a>
Support after suicide:	<a href="https://supportaftersuicide.org.uk/support-guides/">https://supportaftersuicide.org.uk/support-guides/</a>
CALM:	<a href="http://www.thecalmzone.net">www.thecalmzone.net</a>

Number of suicides by local authority, England and Wales, deaths registered 2002 to 2018<sup>1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12</sup>

Area Codes	Lancashire	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	Number of deaths
E07000117	Burnley	10	9	3	8	7	11	8	5	3	12	10	7	8	7	11	6	9	
E07000118	Chorley	19	12	16	10	8	8	7	8	10	10	21	14	4	5	10	8	6	
E07000119	Fylde	4	7	6	10	11	5	9	5	7	3	7	3	5	5	7	6	5	
E07000120	Hyndburn	7	7	13	7	12	9	12	9	10	8	6	12	5	7	7	6	11	
E07000121	Lancaster	16	17	15	16	15	13	16	12	14	9	9	12	12	6	11	16	10	
E07000122	Pendle	12	12	6	8	9	12	11	6	9	11	9	3	5	10	8	10	7	
E07000123	Preston	21	10	13	16	21	21	22	14	15	24	12	23	8	15	18	6	14	
E07000124	Ribble Valley	4	4	8	7	3	7	2	2	5	8	6	7	5	3	5	2	7	
E07000125	<b>Rossendale</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	
E07000126	South Ribble	10	7	11	11	11	10	18	14	11	8	9	7	12	11	12	9	8	
E07000127	West Lancashire	14	14	11	6	7	12	8	10	7	9	11	7	6	8	9	9	4	
E07000128	Wyre	14	7	15	6	10	9	9	6	14	13	11	7	8	7	9	12	11	

**Scrutiny Day Attendees – 25<sup>th</sup> November 2019**

**Rossendale Borough Council**

Councillor Janice Johnson (Chair)  
Councillor Christine Gill  
Councillor Sue Brennan  
Councillor Granville Morris  
Councillor Steve Hughes (Portfolio Holder)  
Clare Law, HR Manager and Scrutiny Lead  
Alison Wilkins, Locality Officer, Communities Team  
Phil Morton, Public Protection Manager  
Jenni Cook, Committee & Member Services Officer

**Other attendees**

Marie Demain, LCC Public Health  
Councillor Whitehead, Whitworth Town Council  
Andy Laverty, ELCCG  
Dr A Mannan, GP Lead  
Souta Van Wick, Bacup Consortium  
Ben Milward, Bacup Consortium  
Claire Downes, Advanced Nurse Practitioner  
Richard Peters, NWAS  
David Lucas, Inspire  
Bob Elliott, Veterans in Communities  
Amanda Walton, Veterans in Communities  
James Mansley, The Samaritans  
David Clarke, Lancashire Police

Apologies were received from:

Councillor Peter Steen  
Angela Han, Able Futures  
Tony Sheppard, Citizens Advice/Men in Sheds