

Creating Hope Together in Highland- Highland’s Suicide Prevention Plan 2023-2025

Introduction

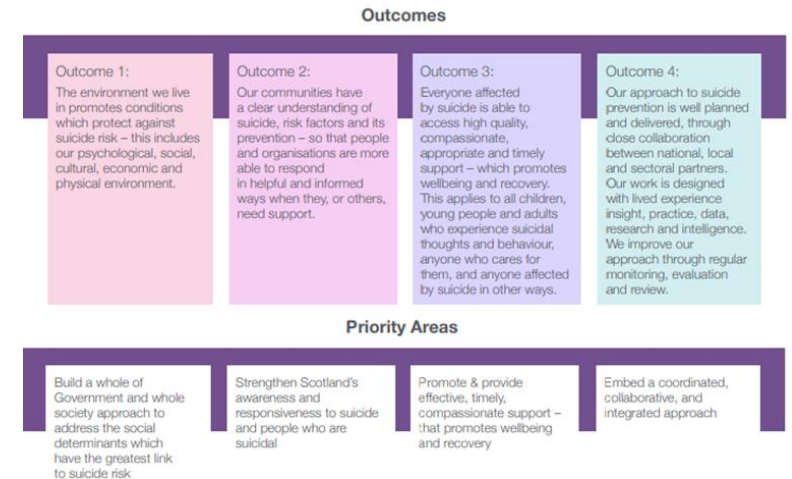
Creating Hope in Highland is the local suicide prevention plan for Highland. The plan has been developed following an eight-month period of engagement with partners and stakeholders to review the priorities and organisation of the Highland Community Planning Partnership work on mental health improvement and suicide prevention. Moreover this consultative period has allowed stakeholders to consider and identify priorities for suicide prevention, review the key people, organisations and services required to support delivery of action to prevent suicide and refresh the remit of the Suicide Prevention Steering Group.

This engagement work has coincided with the launch of *Creating Hope Together -Scotland’s Suicide Prevention Strategy 2022-2032 and subsequent action plan for 2022-2025*. Creating Hope in Highland’s priority actions align with the four outcomes and priorities of the national strategy and action plan (see pic 1). However, Creating Hope Together in Highland takes a local perspective and considers local data and needs for suicide prevention in Highland.

Our objectives for the next 3 years are the following:

1. We will identify groups most at risk of suicide and work to reduce the risk.
2. We will ensure timely and effective support for people expressing suicidal thoughts.
3. We will ensure that people in Highland have consistent access to crisis support.
4. We will identify places of concern and develop actions to make them safer.
5. We will ensure that people bereaved by suicide in Highland have opportunities to access timely support.
6. We will ensure Highland workforces and communities are suicide aware and can respond appropriately.
7. We will develop communications work to inform and to increase public knowledge on suicide and distress.
8. We will work collaboratively with media outlets to provide guidance, information, sources of support, and stories of hope and recovery.

Picture 1



These objectives have no order of significance. Each of the objectives cannot be seen in isolation. To tackle suicide in Highland we need to look at the bigger picture and to take a whole system approach to this work. We also need to acknowledge that public, private and third sectors – as well as communities and individuals have a role to play in reducing suicide. These may be perceived small actions, or wider statutory responsibilities but they are all valuable and important to keep people safe. We all have the potential to create hope together in Highland.

Our vision in Highland underlines the national vision which *is to reduce the number of suicide deaths, whilst tackling the inequalities which contribute to suicide.*

To achieve this, all sectors must come together in partnership, and we must support our communities so they become safe, compassionate, inclusive, and free of stigma. Our aim is for any child, young person or adult who has thoughts of taking their own life, or are affected by suicide, to get the help they need and feel a sense of hope.

Since the early 2000's suicide prevention has been a strategic priority in Scotland. The 'Choose Life' strategy and action plan laid the groundwork for suicide prevention in Scotland. Specifically, the strategy and action plan established an identified suicide prevention lead in every area of Scotland with responsibility for developing and implementing a local action plan. Creating Hope Together in Highland action plan is the third developed in Highland. A lot has been achieved since the last Highland suicide prevention action plan (2017-2022). Key pieces of work have included more timely information and support to those bereaved or affected by suicide, and increasing suicide prevention training provision throughout Highland. Creating Hope Together in Highland builds on this work from the previous action plan, but also acknowledges that more needs to be done. There is also recognition that the last few years have been challenging for communities across Highland (inc. covid 19 pandemic and socioeconomic factors) and the impact that this is having on wellbeing.

How are we going to achieve these 8 objectives?

Appendix 1 shows a breakdown of each of the objectives and sets out the actions required to deliver these objectives. Some actions are up and running, some may take more time to implement. This action plan covers three years, there is a need to be realistic and to assess which these actions are in the longer term of the plan, or require other actions to be in place before proceeding. The next stage of this process is for the Highland Suicide Prevention Steering Group to develop more detailed programmes of work and timescales for actions identified in the action plan.

The Suicide Prevention Steering group has agreed a set overarching principles- guidelines as to how the group will work and what is expected of them.

Overarching principles of this work:

1. We take an inclusive approach to suicide prevention work. We endeavour to reduce stigma for people experiencing mental health and wellbeing concerns and people affected by suicide.
2. We take a Time Space Compassion approach, to improve the way people are supported and cared for when they are suicidal.
3. We address suicide throughout the life course, and ensure that prevention and help seeking is prioritised.
4. We ensure suicide prevention work is based on need, evidence and is data informed.
5. We communicate with each other and the public.
6. We ensure that work/ actions are informed by lived experience, and will advocate to reduce the wider inequalities related to suicide (e.g. poverty, housing).
7. We have clearly defined actions and objectives and will regularly review these.
8. We take responsibility for the actions in this plan.

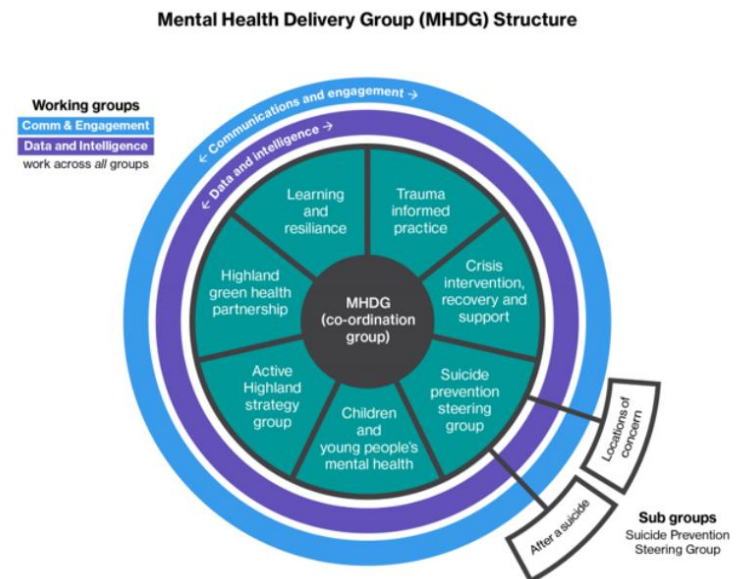
Governance and delivery of the action plan

How will this action plan be governed and delivered?

The current Mental Health Delivery Group (MHDG) Structure is illustrated in picture 2. This new structure represents a whole systems approach to mental health and suicide prevention work. Rather than treating mental health and suicide prevention as two separate entities, the structure acknowledges that actions need to be looked at in the bigger picture rather than in isolation. Different steering groups will look at themed areas of work across mental health and suicide prevention. This will ensure more a more efficient way of working.

The Suicide Prevention Steering Group has responsibility for overseeing the delivery of the eight objectives in this suicide prevention plan (pic 3).

Picture 2



Within the Steering group are two sub groups of the Suicide Prevention Steering group who meet regularly and report to the steering group. Both subgroups will have responsibilities around priority actions.

- Location of concern- This group will be responsible for objective 4.
- After a suicide- This group will be responsible for objective 5.

There are other steering groups within the MHDG structure with overlapping responsibilities around some of the suicide actions plans. These groups will have shared responsibility to deliver suicide prevention priority actions.

- *Data and Intelligence group* will have some responsibility for delivering objective 1.
- *Crisis Intervention Recovery and Support group* will have some responsibility for objectives 2 and 3.
- *Learning and Resilience group* will have some responsibility for priority action 6.
- *Communication and Engagement group* will have some responsibility for priority actions 7 and 8.
- Children and young people subgroup will also have input across all 8 objectives.

Work from the other steering groups will be standing agenda items when the Suicide Prevention Steering Group meets. There will be identified leads for each of the eight priority actions who will report to the Suicide Steering Group.

The Suicide Prevention Steering Group will ensure governance of these eight priority actions. However there is key leadership and accountability for suicide prevention as stated within the suicide prevention national action plan: *Creating Hope together- Scotland's Suicide Prevention action plan 2022-2025*. Within the national action plan leadership and accountability sits with the Chief Officer of the local Authority (Highland Council) in line with public protection guidance. The Chief Executive of

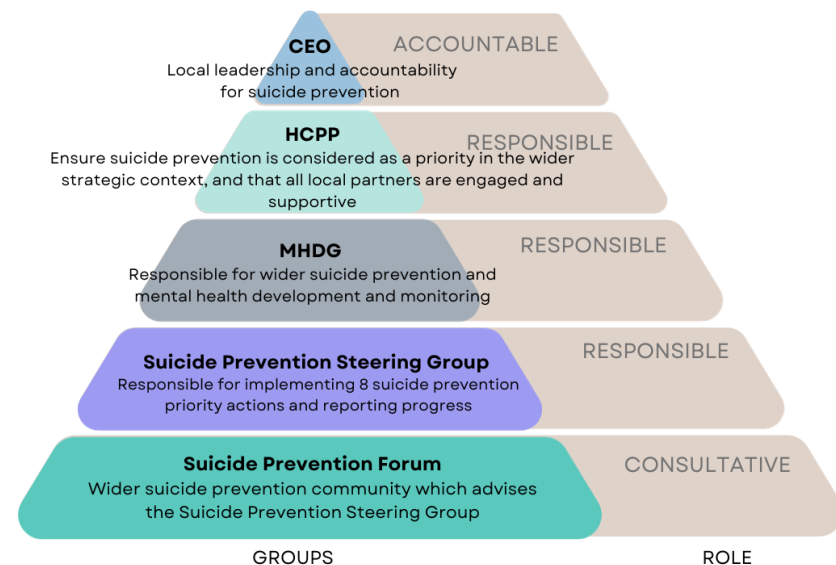
Picture 3

Our objectives for the next 3 years are the following:

1. We will identify groups most at risk of suicide and seek to work to reduce the risk.
2. We will ensure timely and effective intervention/assessment of people expressing suicidal thoughts.
3. We will ensure that people in Highland have consistent access to crisis services.
4. We will identify places of concern and develop actions to make them safer.
5. We will ensure that people bereaved by suicide in Highland have opportunities to access timely support.
6. We will ensure Highland workforces and communities are suicide aware and can respond appropriately.
7. We will develop communications work to inform and to increase public knowledge on suicide and distress.
8. We will work collaboratively with media outlets to provide guidance, information, sources of support, and stories of hope and recovery.

Picture 4

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE



Highland Council and the Highland Community Planning Partnership will be briefed on the eight suicide prevention priority actions in addition to the wider mental health work. Picture 4 highlights governance arrangements and roles.

Acknowledgments

Many thanks to all of the individuals, services and organisations who have been involved in the development of the action plan, and wider work supporting suicide prevention and support in Highland.

Sources of Support

- NHS 24 -111
- Samaritans - 116 123 (calls are free and do not show on a phone bill)
- Breathing Space - 0800 83 85 87 (Monday to Thursday 6pm – 2am; Friday 6pm to Monday 6am)
- MikeysLine - 07786 207755 (Sunday to Thursday 6pm - 10pm, Friday to Saturday 7pm - 7am) <https://www.mikeysline.co.uk/>
- Ewen's Room - 0800 689 3317 (Weekdays 5pm - 10pm; Weekends 12 noon - 10pm)
- James Support group - 07563 572 471 (24-hour helpline) <https://jamesupportgroup.com/>
- Suicide Bereavement Support Service (Change Mental Health) 0800 471 4768 and leave a message or you can email us direct at suicidebereavementsupport@nhs.scot
- Highland mental wellbeing website - <https://www.highlandmentalwellbeing.scot.nhs.uk/>
- Prevent Suicide Highland Smartphone App: To download the app please use the QR codes below:



Appendix 1:

How will we deliver these objectives?

Objectives:	How will we do this? (Actions)
Identify those groups most at risk of suicide and seek to work to reduce the risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider a suicide prevention needs assessment for Highland. • Identify and appropriately report out, potential contagion and suicide clusters within Highland communities. • Explore realistic undertaking of suicide audit/reviews with a view to understanding risks and informing future prevention. • Map areas of higher risk through information on locations of deaths and attempts. • Develop a common understanding of what the data is telling us including definitions. • Ensure commentary accompanies data analysis to reduce the risk of misunderstanding/misinterpretation of data and intelligence. • Establish a suicide / self-harm surveillance group to regularly review intelligence
Identify places of concern and develop actions to make them safer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of Locations of concern action plan.
Ensure that people bereaved by suicide in Highland have opportunities to access timely support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Community Tragic Events protocol for responding to a death by suicide and providing support to those bereaved. • Support community response in setting such as schools, colleges and workplaces. • Develop a support pack for distribution to families following a suicide including appropriate materials such as, "After a Suicide" booklet. • Map bereavement support services to identify gaps in current provision • Establish a local suicide bereavement support service pilot oversight group with appropriate membership from relevant parties. • Support community response in setting such as schools, colleges and workplaces.
Ensure timely and effective support for people expressing suicidal thoughts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop approaches/pathway for anyone identified at being at risk of contagion, including rapid referral for community mental health support and training if needed.
Ensure that people in Highland have consistent access to crisis support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore research opportunities into indicators of suicide distress and what has helped people in crisis. • Develop a model to improve access to crisis services and support including identifying existing provision, pathways and gaps.

<p>Ensure the Highland workforces and communities are informed and skilled in suicide prevention</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners work together to develop and promote one training prospectus that outlines all the mental health and suicide prevention training available in Highland to partners, employers and communities. • Develop guidance / toolbox on how to take a place-based approach to improving mental health and prevent suicide. • Plan a programme of activity to raise awareness and equip people to effectively support people. • Regularly review and update Highland Prevent Suicide App. • Develop Highland Wellbeing toolkit to include suicide prevention tools and resources.
<p>Develop communications work to inform and to increase public knowledge on suicide and distress.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a comprehensive proactive communications plan with dedicated comms support that all partners sign up to. • With Highland Suicide Prevention Forum consider and highlight the key messages/priorities for communities in Highland. • Offer Media and Comms/engagement training to all partners. • Develop a programme of communications to reduce stigma and discrimination. • Develop communications focussing on language and health literacy. • Promote Prevent Suicide Highland and Highland mental wellbeing website. • Develop communications work in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Educating the public about how to support anyone experiencing poor mental health /distress and suicidal thoughts. -The importance of talking to those bereaved by suicide and reduce the stigma associated with death by suicide. -Awareness of self-harm. -Key groups at higher risk of poor mental health and/or risk of suicide.
<p>Work collaboratively with media outlets to provide guidance, information, sources of support, and stories of hope and recovery.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure local media have access to a designated suicide prevention lead/corporate communications channel so they can engage prior to running any story. • Work with local media to ensure coverage of suicide methods and sites are restricted. • Offer training and support to the media around suicide reporting guidelines. • Ensure all media opportunities provide information about sources of support and contact details of helplines when reporting mental health and suicide