

Birmingham City Council

City Council

14th January 2020



Subject: The Birmingham Suicide Prevention Strategy 2019 - 2024

Report of: Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care

Report author: Dr Justin Varney, Director of Public Health

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If relevant, state which appendix is exempt, and provide exempt information paragraph number or reason if confidential :

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 It was agreed at Full Council on 06/11/2018 that a suicide prevention strategy would be developed.
- 1.2 The Birmingham Suicide Strategy has now been completed and formally approved through the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- 1.3 The strategy sets out the priorities for action and a shared ambition for the city to reduce deaths from suicide, as part of the wider ambition to become a mentally healthy city.
- 1.4 The Strategy is being brought to Full Council for endorsement and to request support from Full Council in implementing the strategy.

2 Motion

- 2.1 That Council endorses the Birmingham Suicide Prevention Strategy and calls on elected members across all parties to support the delivery of the strategy moving forward.

3 Background

- 3.1 The Birmingham Suicide Prevention Strategy has been co-produced with partners from the NHS, voluntary and community, business and academic sectors of the City and with the support of Public Health England and NHS England. It is based on the national strategic and informed by local evidence.

- 3.2 The Birmingham Suicide Prevention Working Group is a multi-agency forum, that reports into the Creating a Mentally Healthy City Forum and will oversee delivery of the Birmingham Suicide Prevention Strategy.
- 3.3 The Birmingham Suicide Prevention Working Group meets on a quarterly basis which focuses on Regional and National updates and feedback from a wide range of partners including Network Rail, Birmingham & Solihull Women's Aid, NHS Birmingham & Solihull Clinical Commissioning Group, and Common Unity. The Working Group have collaborated on a shared partnership Suicide Prevention Action Plan.
- 3.4 The Health and Wellbeing Board has established the 'Creating a Mentally Healthy City Forum' to focus action on improving mental wellness in the City, following the consultation on public health priorities in spring 2019 which highlighted this as a gap. The multi-agency Forum reports to the Health and Wellbeing Board on a bi-monthly basis with a detailed presentation to the Board on an annual basis. The Forum is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care. The Forum sits alongside the NHS led partnership forums focused on Mental health diagnosis, treatment and support, in which the Council plays an active role.
- 3.5 Key issues:
- 3.5.1 Suicide is preventable. The latest figures in Birmingham, indicate suicide rates to be significantly lower than the England average and the lowest of all the core cities.
- 3.5.2 The Five-Year Forward View for Mental Health set the ambition that by 2020/21 the number of people taking their own lives will be reduced by 10% nationally compared to 2016/17 levels. This included the development and delivery of a local multi-agency suicide prevention and action plans.
- 3.5.3 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and the strategy considers all the protected characteristics.
- 3.6 Strategy Approach and Themes
- 3.6.1 The Birmingham Suicide Prevention Strategy is a co-produced strategy that sits alongside national strategy and is based on a combination of local and national evidence and data. In Birmingham, in addition to the nationally recognized high-risk groups, we also have higher rates of suicide among individuals working in skilled trade occupations like construction and among citizens born in Poland and Eastern European countries.
- 3.6.2 The Strategy sets out a series of key priority areas for action across the partnership under six core areas: -
- Reducing the risk of suicide in high-risk groups
 - Improving mental health in specific groups
 - Reducing access to means of suicide
 - Provide better information and support to those bereaved or affected by suicide

- Support the media in delivering sensitive approaches to suicide and suicidal behaviour
- Support research, data collection and monitoring

3.6.3 The collaborative action plan to deliver the Strategy is now being led through the Suicide Prevention Working Group.

3.6.4 Two specific actions to highlight are the city's partnership with the city of Warsaw in Poland to share learning and collaborate on addressing suicide prevention in Polish communities, and the Council securing support from the Association of Directors of Public Health and the Local Government Association to accelerate this work through an expert led workshop in Spring 2019.

4 Appendix

- Birmingham Suicide Prevention Strategy 2019-2024