

**Meeting:** Health and Wellbeing Board **Date:** 5/3/26

**Wards affected:** All

**Report Title:** Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan

**When does the decision need to be implemented?** From April 2026

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## 1. Purpose of Report

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1.1 This paper presents the new One Devon Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan 2026-31 for ratification.

## 2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

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2.1 Suicide rates have been consistently high in Torbay compared with regional and national rates. Suicide prevention is an important public health issue, requiring wide ranging multi-agency activity.

2.2 In March 2025, Plymouth, Devon and Torbay Health and Wellbeing Boards each supported the proposal to develop a One Devon Suicide Prevention Plan to replace the individual suicide prevention plans in each area. This is designed to allow more effective oversight of the plan, facilitate clearer engagement with organisations that work across multiple local authority areas, improve partnership working across the county, and maximise capacity, whilst maintaining accountability to each local Health and Wellbeing Board.

## 3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

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Members are asked to review and ratify the One Devon Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan for 2026-2031

## Supporting Information

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### 1. Background

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A death by suicide is a tragic and traumatic event. Its most fundamental impact is the loss of the opportunity for that person to experience all that life holds. It is also a devastating bereavement for family and friends, and the pain and grief can be immense and long lasting. The impact also extends into the wider community, workplaces and to all services involved.

Suicide can be preventable. But it is essential that the preventative approach addresses the complexity of the issue. No one organisation is responsible for suicide prevention and there are no simple measures to prevent suicide. Suicide prevention is broad and includes measures to improve emotional wellbeing, support for people with mental health issues (from early intervention through to crisis care), and support for people who are bereaved by suicide.

Multi-agency suicide prevention actions help coordinate action to reduce suicides in local areas. In England, responsibility for local suicide prevention strategies and action plans usually sit with local government through Health and Wellbeing Boards. Previously, the multi-agency suicide prevention groups in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay have aligned around a strategic vision but maintained their own plans.

In March 2025, Plymouth, Devon and Torbay Health and Wellbeing Boards each supported the proposal to develop a One Devon Suicide Prevention Plan to replace the individual suicide prevention plans in each area. This would enable more effective oversight of the plan, facilitate clearer engagement with organisations that work across multiple local authority areas, improve partnership working across the county, and maximise capacity, whilst maintaining accountability to each local Health and Wellbeing Board.

### 2. Development of the Strategic Plan

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The plan has been co-developed by system partners and is structured around the aims and priority areas of the national [Suicide prevention strategy for England: 2023 to 2028](#). Since March 2025 extensive collaborative work has been undertaken, this has involved:

#### 2025/26 Q1: Mapping of existing suicide prevention plans

2025/26 Quarter 1: A mapping exercise of the existing plans in Plymouth, Devon and Torbay against the national strategy. This indicated that the three plans were all well aligned to the national strategy and that there was significant duplication across the plans.

#### 2025/26 Q2: Engagement workshops

Through the summer of 2025 a series of face-to-face workshops were held with partners across the system to develop the new One Devon Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan. The workshops were themed against the priorities of the national strategy and partners from relevant organisations/departments were invited to attend.

### 2025/26 Q3: Developing the draft strategic plan

The outputs from the workshops were used to develop a draft plan. This plan was reviewed and edited by the Devon ICS Suicide Prevention Oversight Group. This group, chaired by Public Health, consists of colleagues from across Plymouth, Devon and Torbay in Public Health, NHS Devon ICB, NHS Mental Health Providers (Livewell Southwest and Devon Partnership Trust) and the Police.

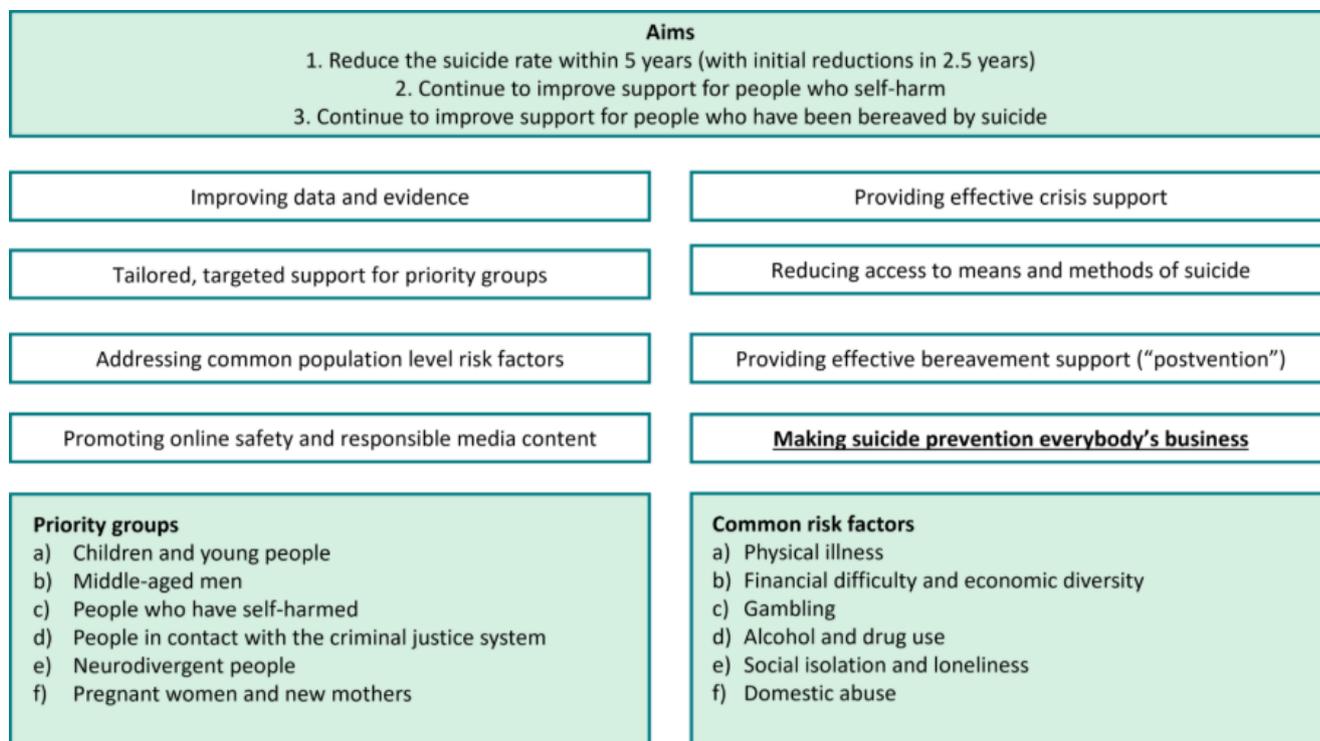
Following this, partners across the system were further consulted to provide feedback on the developing plan. This consultation occurred via email and themed meetings, for example on suicide risk in the context of domestic abuse.

### 2025/26 Q4: Finalising the draft plan for Health and Wellbeing Boards

Final feedback from partners reviewed and relevant changes made to create the strategy to be presented to Health and Wellbeing Boards. Starting of prioritisation exercise for the delivery of the objectives in the plan.

## 3. One Devon suicide Prevention Strategic Plan

This strategic plan has been organised so that it aligns with the national strategy's aims and priority areas. Each section of the plan reflects these themes, allowing local partners to see how their work contributes to the wider national direction, while responding to local needs and priorities.



In total there are 64 objectives in the One Devon Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan. The plan is intended for all partners involved in suicide prevention, including local authorities, NHS organisations, voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations, education providers, emergency services, criminal justice partners, employers and community leaders, as well as for commissioners and system leaders who oversee and

resource suicide prevention activity. It is also a reference point for anyone developing, delivering or commissioning services and interventions that may reduce suicide risk.

Governance for this action plan is provided through the existing suicide prevention partnerships in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay and accountable to their respective Health and Wellbeing Boards. Oversight, prioritisation of the objectives and development of specific actions to meet the objectives will be held by the Devon ICS Suicide Prevention Oversight Group (SPOG), which provides senior strategic leadership and ensures effective cross-communication and alignment between suicide prevention partnerships and the wider ICS. This governance framework enables consistent priorities across the system while allowing local adaptation based on existing contexts and assets, supports timely sharing of learning and intelligence, and ensures that progress, challenges and successes are fed back to all areas.

### Overarching principles

The following principles underpin the development and delivery of this suicide prevention strategic plan. They reflect how we will work together as a system and the values that should guide all activity across Devon, Plymouth and Torbay:

<b>Localised delivery within a system-wide framework</b>	Actions agreed at Integrated Care System (ICS) level should be implemented in ways that respond to the specific needs, assets and contexts of local areas. Where appropriate, actions will be adapted to reflect the priorities and delivery models of locality partnerships while remaining aligned to the overall system plan.
<b>Collaborative system working and strong partnerships</b>	Suicide prevention is everybody's business. Success depends on effective collaboration between local authorities, NHS organisations, voluntary and community sector partners, education, employers, emergency services, criminal justice partners and community leaders. System partners will share learning, resources and expertise to maximise impact.
<b>Meaningful involvement of people with lived experience</b>	People with personal experience of suicide, bereavement and mental health crisis bring essential insight to prevention work. The system will review how they will be engaged and supported in a safe, respectful and impactful way, shaping priorities, informing service design and contributing to evaluation and continuous improvement.
<b>Equity and inclusion</b>	All activity will take account of the unequal distribution of suicide risk, ensuring that prevention approaches are inclusive and responsive to the needs of groups who experience higher risk, due to factors such as deprivation, discrimination, trauma, neurodiversity or other vulnerabilities and to differences in local service provision and capacity.

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**Evidence-informed  
and continuously  
improving practice**

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Decisions will be based on the best available data, research and real-time intelligence. The system will monitor outcomes, evaluate interventions and adapt approaches in response to emerging evidence and feedback from those affected.

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#### 4. Recommendation

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It is recommended that the Health and Wellbeing Board reviews and ratifies the One Devon Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan for 2026-2031

*Reason for recommendation: Suicide Prevention partnerships are accountable to Health and Wellbeing Boards. Therefore, endorsement will enable partners to begin the delivery of the plan, focusing on the highest priority areas in the first year.*

#### 5. Next steps

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Following Health and Wellbeing Board approvals of this plan, partners in the Devon ICS Suicide Prevention Oversight Group will undertake a prioritisation exercise so that a phased approach to delivering the objectives of the plan can be agreed.

Health and Wellbeing Boards will receive an update on the progress against the plan annually.

#### 6. Financial Opportunities and Implications

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6.1 None identified

#### 7. Legal Implications

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7.1 None identified

#### 8. Engagement and Consultation

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8.1 The Strategic Plan has been developed with input from multiple stakeholders as described above.

#### 9. Procurement Implications

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9.1 None identified

#### 10. Protecting our naturally inspiring Bay and tackling Climate Change

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10.1 No specific implications, however access to green and blue spaces help to promote good mental health.

## 11. Associated Risks

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11.1 No specific risks are identified. There is risk attached to having no plan in place.

## 12. Equality Impact Assessment

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
Age	<p>18 per cent of Torbay residents are under 18 years old.</p> <p>55 per cent of Torbay residents are aged between 18 to 64 years old.</p> <p>27 per cent of Torbay residents are aged 65 and older.</p>	<p>The Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan aims to promote and improve the mental health and wellbeing across the whole of our population. Specific groups experience greater risk and are highlighted for priority action, eg young people, adult males.</p>	Not applicable	Not applicable
Carers	<p>At the time of the 2021 census there were 14,900 unpaid carers in Torbay. 5,185 of these provided 50 hours or more of care.</p>	<p>The Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan aims to promote and improve the mental health and wellbeing across the whole of our population. Specific groups experience greater risk and are highlighted for priority action.</p>	Not applicable	Not applicable
Disability	<p>In the 2021 Census, 23.8% of Torbay residents answered that their day-to-day activities were limited a little or a lot by a physical or mental health condition or illness.</p>	<p>The Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan aims to promote and improve the mental health and wellbeing across the whole of our population. Specific groups experience greater risk and are highlighted for priority action. Physical disability is identified as a risk factor.</p>	Not applicable	Not applicable

Gender reassignment	In the 2021 Census, 0.4% of Torbay's community answered that their gender identity was not the same as their sex registered at birth. This proportion is similar to the Southwest and is lower than England.	The Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan aims to promote and improve the mental health and wellbeing across the whole of our population. Specific groups experience greater risk and are highlighted for priority action, eg young people, adult males.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Marriage and civil partnership	Of those Torbay residents aged 16 and over at the time of 2021 Census, 44.2% of people were married or in a registered civil partnership.	No differential impact anticipated.  The Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan aims to promote and improve the mental health and wellbeing across the whole of our population. Specific groups experience greater risk and are highlighted for priority action. Relationship break up is identified as a risk factor.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Pregnancy and maternity	Over the period 2010 to 2021, the rate of live births (as a proportion of females aged 15 to 44) has been slightly but significantly higher in Torbay (average of 63.7 per 1,000) than England (60.2) and the South West (58.4). There has been a notable fall in the numbers of live births since the middle of the last decade across all geographical areas.	No differential impact anticipated.  The Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan aims to promote and improve the mental health and wellbeing across the whole of our population. Specific groups experience greater risk and are highlighted for priority action.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Race	In the 2021 Census, 96.1% of Torbay residents described their ethnicity as white. This is a higher proportion than the South West and England. Black, Asian and minority ethnic individuals are more likely to live in areas of Torbay classified as being	No differential impact anticipated.  The Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan aims to promote and improve the mental health and wellbeing across the whole of our population. Specific groups experience greater risk and are highlighted for priority action.	Not applicable	Not applicable

	amongst the 20% most deprived areas in England.			
Religion and belief	64.8% of Torbay residents who stated that they have a religion in the 2021 census.	<p>No differential impact anticipated.</p> <p>The Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan aims to promote and improve the mental health and wellbeing across the whole of our population. Specific groups experience greater risk and are highlighted for priority action.</p>	Not applicable	Not applicable
Sex	51.3% of Torbay's population are female and 48.7% are male	The Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan aims to promote and improve the mental health and wellbeing across the whole of our population. Specific groups experience greater risk and are highlighted for priority action, eg young people, adult males.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Sexual orientation	In the 2021 Census, 3.4% of those in Torbay aged over 16 identified their sexuality as either Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or, used another term to describe their sexual orientation.	The Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan aims to promote and improve the mental health and wellbeing across the whole of our population. Specific groups experience greater risk and are highlighted for priority action.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Armed Forces Community	In 2021, 3.8% of residents in England reported that they had previously served in the UK armed forces. In Torbay, 5.9 per cent of the population have previously served in the UK armed forces.	The Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan aims to promote and improve the mental health and wellbeing across the whole of our population. Specific groups experience greater risk and are highlighted for priority action, eg young people, adult males. Previous service can be an identified risk factor.	Not applicable	Not applicable
<b>Additional considerations</b>				

Socio-economic impacts (Including impacts on child poverty and deprivation)		The Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan aims to promote and improve the mental health and wellbeing across the whole of our population. Specific groups experience greater risk and are highlighted for priority action, eg young people, adult males. Economic disadvantage is identified as a risk factor.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Public Health impacts (Including impacts on the general health of the population of Torbay)		The Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan aims to promote and improve the mental health and wellbeing across the whole of our population. Specific groups experience greater risk and are highlighted for priority action, eg young people, adult males.	All programmes are designed to improve population health.	Not applicable
Human Rights impacts		Services and providers will remain cognisant of human rights, including the right to life, health, privacy, education and prohibition of discrimination.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Child Friendly	Torbay Council is a Child Friendly Council and all staff and Councillors are Corporate Parents and have a responsibility towards cared for and care experienced children and young people.	The Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan aims to promote and improve the mental health and wellbeing across the whole of our population. Specific groups experience greater risk and are highlighted for priority action, eg young people, adult males.	Not applicable	Not applicable

## 14. Cumulative Council Impact

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14.1 The Strategic Plan necessitates working across Council departments.

## 15. Cumulative Community Impacts

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15.1 All activities involve close partnership working across the Integrated Care System, including voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector, and all are intended to promote and improve health across the whole of our population.