

Torbay Multi-agency Suicide Prevention Plan

2024-2027



December 2023
Torbay Council & Partners*

TORBAY COUNCIL

Our key achievements since the 2022/23 plan

<p>Continued to see a small but consistent decline in our local suicide rate</p>		<p>Continued to flexibly support people who are feeling suicidal via the Torbay Community Helpline and our local Samaritans Call Back service</p>	
<p>Delivered six Community Suicide Prevention and Emotional Resilience training courses using local trainers</p>		<p>Published the Torbay Community Consultation on Self-harm which includes key recommendations for improving care and support</p>	
<p>Extended the school based self-harm intervention pilot with additional data feasibility being tested by PenARC</p>		<p>Continued to invest in community grants (CLASP) for creative and innovative local suicide prevention projects</p>	
<p>Under the Torbay SEND Written Statement of Action, established a strategic multi-agency Children's Emotional Health and Wellbeing Group</p>		<p>Under the Community Mental Health Framework, recruited new mental health and recovery practitioners and developed Mental Health Multi-agency Team (MAT) meetings</p>	

“Suicide prevention is everybody’s business.”

(Adapted from: Dr Dai Lloyd, 2018)

National Context

All areas of the country have local suicide prevention plans in place¹. 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 boards².

The [new national suicide prevention strategy \(2023-28\)](#) outlines three aims:

- Reduce the suicide rate over the next five years – with initial reductions observed within half this time or sooner.
- Improve support for people who have self-harmed.
- Improve support for people bereaved by suicide.

The following are the eight areas of action to achieve the aims above:

1. Improve data and evidence to ensure that effective, evidence-informed and timely interventions continue to be adapted.
2. Provide tailored, targeted support to priority groups, including those at high risk.
3. Address common risk factors linked to suicide at a population level by providing early intervention and tailored support.
4. Promote online safety and responsible media content to reduce harms, improve signposting, and provide helpful messages about suicide and self-harm.
5. Provide effective crisis support across sectors for those who reach crisis point.
6. Reduce access to means and methods of suicide where this is appropriate and necessary as an intervention to prevent suicides.
7. Provide effective bereavement support to those affected by suicide.
8. Make suicide everybody’s business so that we can maximise our collective impact and support to prevent suicides.

In wider Devon our Suicide Prevention Strategy is a collaborative document produced and shared by Devon County Council, Plymouth City Council and Torbay Council: **Devon-wide Suicide Prevention Strategic Statement**. This aligns to the Devon Integrated Care System (ICS) geography area. Suicide Prevention Action Plans are coordinated and produced by each local authority area and will be co-owned by a range of local agencies. Plans will be made available on each local authority’s website and will undergo annual review. Where appropriate, work will be undertaken on a Devon-wide level to take advantage of economies of scale and to maximise finite resources.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/suicide-prevention-strategy-for-england-2023-to-2028/suicide-prevention-in-england-5-year-cross-sector-strategy>

² [PHE_LA_Guidance_25_Nov.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

The [Devon Integrated Care System Joint Forward Plan 2023-28](#) includes a system target to reduce suicides to England average levels within the next five years.

“Every suicide will be regarded as preventable and we will work together as a system to make suicide safer communities³ across Devon and reduce suicide deaths across all ages.”

This plan (Torbay’s) is **owned and monitored via the Torbay Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Alliance**. The priorities within this plan have been set via a large multi-agency workshop (July 2023) and have been collectively agreed by these attendees. The plan will be **endorsed by the Torbay Health and Wellbeing Board** (December 2023).

Priorities and actions will be **monitored by the Torbay Suicide Prevention Action Plan (TSPAP) Group** on a quarterly basis and be **implemented via a range of associated task and finish groups**. Progress will be reported to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Aim

The COVID-19 pandemic challenged all of us; it created new mental health needs and stressors (e.g. financial strain, lack of social contact, etc.) and exacerbated previous mental health conditions and stressors. Nationally we are now in particularly challenging economic times which adds additional pressure – again – to the lives of many of us.

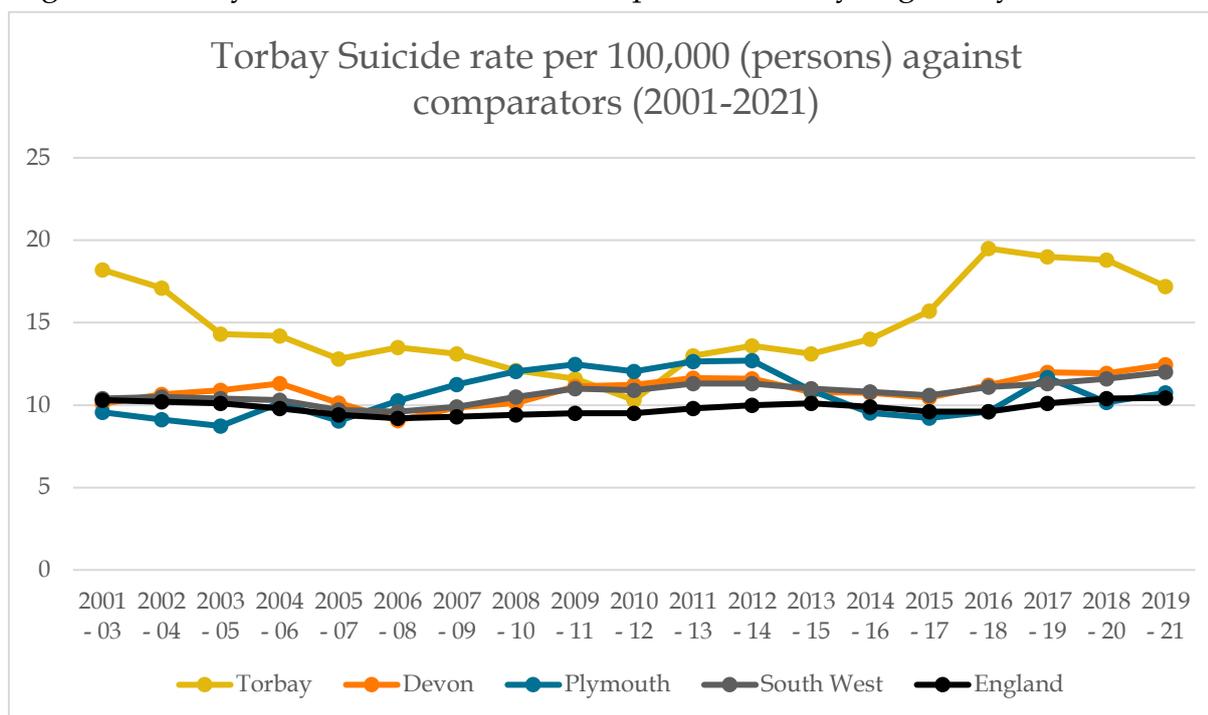
“Recessions can hurt. But austerity kills.”
(Professor David Stuckler, 2013)

Against a backdrop of macro level societal challenge, local suicide prevention action plans have the potential to focus on improving individual, family and community based protective factors that can save lives whilst being influenced by a national strategy.

There is no acceptable number of suicides in Torbay. That being said, we do need to be realistic about what can be achieved with the challenge that we face and the resources that we have. Torbay has experienced significantly higher suicide rates since 2014-16 (see Figure 1) and sits amongst the highest suicide rates in the whole of England (fourth highest of county/unitary authorities). As such, this three-year action plan aspires to continue its consistent downward trajectory towards the regional average. This will contribute to our [One Devon 5-Year Joint Forward Plan](#) target of achieving a similar suicide rate compared to England by 2028.

³ [Suicide Safer Communities - Every Life Matters \(every-life-matters.org.uk\)](https://www.every-life-matters.org.uk)

Figure 1: Torbay suicide rate over time compared to locally, regionally and nationally



Our strengths and challenges

Stakeholders across Torbay identified some of the challenges that we particularly face, and also some of the strengths we have as a community, and how these could be harnessed to tackle suicide and promote emotional wellbeing:

- *Mental health services are very stretched.*
- *People do not always know where to go for help.*
- *Communities are suffering the impact of the cost-of-living crisis.*
- *Collectively we need to tackle the root causes of suicide and poor mental health.*

- *We have an active and passionate community and voluntary sector in the Bay.*
- *We have data showing us what to focus on.*
- *We have a beautiful location and many natural assets.*
- *A lot of people want to help and support each other.*

Collaborative priorities for action - Torbay

Our priorities and associated action plan reflect those areas which are most important to local stakeholders, will have the most impact on mental health and suicide risk, and which are most suited to collaborative action.

Priorities for Torbay are:

1. Ensure mental health and emotional support is accessible to all.
2. Acknowledge and work with Torbay's risk factors for suicide.
3. Harness passion, commit to collaborate and pool resources to reduce suicides.

These are detailed in the action plan on the following page. A RAG (red, amber, green) version of this plan will be held by the Torbay Suicide Prevention Action Plan (TSPAP) Group to aid output monitoring.

Targeted work

Within Torbay's three priority areas (outlined above), the following groups will receive additional focus:

- A. Men
- B. Children and young people
- C. People who self-harm

Lived experience

All priority areas and associated actions will seek to be informed by lived experience and will coproduce where possible. Coproduction is particularly encouraged with the target groups outlined above.

Strengths based

All priority areas and associated actions will seek to be informed by need and will use a strengths-based approach. This means we will build on the strengths of individuals, and the assets in our communities, to maximise ownership, outputs and outcomes.

Collaborative priorities for action – Devon

Priorities taken on a Devon-wide basis (including Torbay) are:

1. Devon-wide Real Time Suicide Surveillance.
2. Devon-wide online mental health and wellbeing support (adults).
3. Devon-wide Self-harm Health Needs Assessment (all age).
4. Devon-wide Suicide Prevention Community Pots.
5. Devon-wide Suicide Prevention Training.
6. Devon-wide Media & Communications Programme.
7. Devon-wide NCISH 10 Ways to Improve Patient Safety' in acute and community mental health provision.

	Action required	Example progress measures	Lead/s	System alignment (links to existing groups, strategies or organisations)
1. Ensure mental health and emotional support is accessible to all with additional targeting for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Men B. Children and young people C. People who self-harm 				
1.1	Improve our communication of what emotional and mental health services and support are available LINKS TO 3.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professionals and public know where to go for information or support • Leaflets/posters in key venues • Utilisation of digital directories 	TBC T&F to be convened	Children’s EHWB Locality Comms workstream, Provider Collaborative comms plans, DPT, Joy App
1.2	Increase the number of people trained in suicide prevention LINKS TO 3.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professionals and public know where to go (links to 3.2) • Numbers trained • Case studies where interventions have taken place 	Public Health DPT	DPT training audit, Devon & Cornwall Police, National Police & Crime Commissioner
1.3	Support the development of peer support in Torbay LINKS TO 1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing peer support mapped and gaps are identified • Torbay bi-polar group principles utilised by other groups • Professionals and public know where to go to access peer support 	TBC	Lived experience recommendations – Wellbeing Front door

	Action required	Example progress measures	Lead/s	System alignment (links to existing groups, strategies or organisations)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number and utilisation of peer support groups 		
1.4	<p>Support people on NHS mental health waiting lists by providing appropriate alternative support (this may not always be therapeutic support)</p> <p>LINKS TO 1.3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professionals and public know where to go for support Trauma informed practice is in place People feel well held by a system System gaps are identified and worked on collaboratively 	TBC DPT CFHD	Community Mental Teams, IAPT (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies), MHSTs, CFHD, Psych Liaison, ED, Devon Mental Health Alliance, Torbay Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Alliance, ASC, QWELL, Primary Care, Torbay Community Helpline, Family Hubs, individual CVSE organisations
1.5	<p>Explore high intensity use of services and unexpected underuse of services to improve support (e.g., people who do not attend appointments where needs are high) LINKS TO 1.4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trauma informed practices in place Multi-agency approaches in place Families and carers are present/involved in decision making and safety plans with data sharing across agencies 	TBC Torbay Hospital DPT CFHD	Community Mental Teams, IAPT, MHSTs, CFHD, Psych Liaison, ED, Devon Mental Health Alliance, QWELL, KOOTH, Primary Care, Torbay Community Helpline, Family Hubs, individual CVSE organisations, Standing Tall, Children's EHWP Locality Comms workstream

Action required	Example progress measures	Lead/s	System alignment (links to existing groups, strategies or organisations)	
<p>2. Acknowledge and work with Torbay’s risk factors for suicide with additional targeting for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Men B. Children and young people C. People who self-harm 				
<p>2.1</p>	<p>Increase awareness of risk factors (including multiple risk factors) for suicide to include but not restricted to the following: LINKS TO 3.2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical illness • Financial difficulty & economic adversity • Gambling • Alcohol & drug misuse • Social isolation & Loneliness • Domestic abuse • Mental illness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence review, suicide audit and RTSS analysis complete • Learning gained from sectors, commissioners, providers and people with lived experience • One Page help guides for professionals complete (e.g. GPs, schools, social workers, warm space workers) • Data and resources (links to 1.1, 3.1, 3.2) shared with appropriate audiences 	<p>TBC T&F to be convened</p>	<p>Samaritans multi-risk factor area targeting, Devon & Cornwall Police & Pete’s Dragons (RTSS)</p>

	Action required	Example progress measures	Lead/s	System alignment (links to existing groups, strategies or organisations)
2.2	Strengthen awareness of links with Deprivation and Economy and include suicide prevention in relevant policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suicide prevention present in policies and action plans • Warm spaces and Places of Welcome are trained, have resources and know where to signpost • Mental health support in place in Job centres 	TBC	Turning the tide on poverty, Torbay Economic Growth Strategy, Local Motion, Levelling up, Joint Forward Plan, DWP (Department for Work and Pensions)
2.3	Spread awareness of the impact of Acute Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and trauma on future mental ill-health and suicide risk and promote support for emotional resilience and relational communications LINKS to 2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current provision and training offers mapped • Trauma informed practices in place • Multi-agency approaches in place • Appropriate peer support in place (links to 1.3) 	TBC	Trauma informed network, High Intensity Service Use work, Mental health MAT meetings, Devon Mental Health Alliance, Torbay Community Helpline, Children's social care, Family Hubs, MASH, MARAC, Torbay Safeguarding Children's Partnership, Devon & Cornwall Police

	Action required	Example progress measures	Lead/s	System alignment (links to existing groups, strategies or organisations)
3. Harness passion, commit to collaborate and pool resources to reduce suicides with additional targeting for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Men B. Children and young people C. People who self-harm 				
3.1	Improve our ability to access funding for suicide prevention activity LINKS TO 3.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compile ‘invest to save figures’ such as societal cost per suicide • Professionals know where to access up to date statistics and evidence • Regular community engagement and dialogue around suicide prevention is in place including key target groups • Professionals know how to write successful bids • Professionals are well networked to enable collaborative bids (links to 3.3) 	TBC T&F to be convened	JSNA, OHID (Office for Health Improvement and Disparities), NICE, CVSE networks, Torbay Communities bid writing support, Devon & Cornwall Police, National Police and Crime Commissioner
3.2	Streamline suicide prevention resources in one place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suicide prevention toolkit created and available on an 	TBC T&F to be convened	One Devon, Other toolkits, OHID, Dorset media toolkit, MHLDN Provider Collaborative, Family Hubs,

	Action required	Example progress measures	Lead/s	System alignment (links to existing groups, strategies or organisations)
		<p>accessible website (links to 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 3.1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toolkit advertised through multiple channels • Website hits and resource usage monitored 		Devon & Cornwall Police, National Police and Crime Commissioner
3.3	<p>Raise awareness of and improve cross-communication between sectors/networks/groups</p> <p>LINKS TO 3.2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professionals know what networks exist and their purpose • People know what newsletters and email circulations exist to better communicate • People know what lived experience work has already happened and what groups can be engaged with for varying degrees of coproduction • Suicide prevention specific circulation list created (links to 1.1) 	TBC Public Health	One Devon, Family Hubs, Devon Mental Health Alliance, Torbay Health and Wellbeing Alliance, Torbay Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Alliance, Imagine This, Family Hubs, CYP EHWP Locality Group, Torbay Wellbeing Network, Health and Wellbeing VCSE (Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise) group, Schools network, TCSP, ASC, MH Partnership South, DMHLs, MHSTs, Urgent Care Boards, Trust MH meeting, DASV (Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence) Community Forum, DASV Network Forum, Standing Tall, Devon & Cornwall Police, National Police & Crime Commissioner

***Organisations represented in the development of this plan:**

Active Devon, Age UK Torbay, Alright Mate CIC, Citizens Advice Bureau, Department for Work and Pensions, Devon Clinic CIC, Devon and Cornwall Police, Devon County Council, Devon Mental Health Alliance, Devon Partnership Trust, Healthwatch Torbay, Heart of Torbay CIC, KOOTH, Ministry of Justice, NHS Devon Integrated Care Board, Rivera Education Trust, Sanctuary Housing, Torbay Council, Torbay Drug and Alcohol Service, Torbay Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Alliance, Torbay Methodist Circuit, Torbay Safeguarding Children's Partnership, Torbay and Southern Devon NHS Foundation Trust, Torbay United (church coalition), Safer Torbay, Samaritans South Devon, Shekinah, Step One Charity