

Preventing Suicide in Children and Young People in Kent and Medway: 2021-2025 Strategy

In order to reduce suicide and self-harm amongst children and young people as much as possible; we are adopting the six priorities from the national suicide prevention strategy and adapting them for our local circumstances. We are also adding a seventh priority highlighting the system leadership ambitions within the Strategy.

Actions in **purple** will be funded or led by the **Suicide Prevention Team**.

Actions in **blue** will be funded or led by **other partners within the system**.

1. Reduce the risk of suicide and self-harm in key high-risk groups of children and young people

We will promote the recommendations made by the 2020 Thematic Analysis into children and young people suicides undertaken by the University of Kent.

We will continue to provide suicide prevention training for people working with children and young people to increase the probability that high-risk individuals will be identified and supported.

Where funding allows, we will support innovation approaches to reduce suicide and self-harm amongst high risk groups.

We will also work with relevant partners to reduce the risk of suicide and self-harm in high-risk groups including:

- Children and young people known to mental health services (including the 18-25 transition to adult MH services).
- Children and young people in care and care leavers.
- Children and young people in custodial settings.
- Children and young people with neuro development disorders.
- Children and young people who identify as LGBTQ+.
- Children and young people who self-harm or engage in other risky behaviours.
- Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking children and young people.

- Children and young people impacted by Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES).

2. Tailor approaches to improve mental health and wellbeing of all children and young people in Kent and Medway

We will continue to monitor the impact of Covid-19 on the mental health and wellbeing of the population.

We will work with partners to support implementation of the Kent and the Medway Children and Young People Mental Health Local Transformation Plans. We will also support the implementation of the Medway Self-Harm action plan and the KCC adolescent strategy.

We will work with partners to ensure that all children and young people have access to a range of easily accessible and evidence-based emotional wellbeing support services.

We will support the HeadStart programme to increase resilience amongst children and young people in Kent.

We will encourage services and education settings to adopt a trauma informed care approach.

3. Reduce access to the means of suicide

We will further strengthen the Real Time Surveillance System, ensuring we work with partners, such as Kent Police, Network Rail, KCC and Medway Highways, Highways England and others to identify, intervene and respond to high-risk locations and means.

4. Provide better information and support to those children and young people bereaved by suicide

We will commission a new all-age Support Service for People Bereaved by Suicide.

We will work with partners to commission a specialist bereavement support service for children and young people.

5. Support the media in delivering sensitive approaches to suicide

We will work with local media outlets to place positive stories about how children and young people can improve their wellbeing.

We will monitor media coverage of incidents and remind journalists of the Samaritans' guidelines for reporting on suicide.

We will ask editors and reporters to amend inappropriate reporting.

6. Support research, data collection and monitoring

We will work with all partners (including the Child Death Overview Panel, Kent Police, NELFT, and social care teams) to monitor local data relating to suicide and self-harm. This includes establishing a

new real time suicide surveillance system and undertaking Positive Practice Audits where appropriate.

We will review national research and undertake our own detailed research projects into relevant topics (possibly including online harms, the impact of living in a household affected by domestic abuse and the suicide risk amongst young trans people).

7. Demonstrate system leadership and quality improvement in relation to children and young people suicide and self-harm prevention

We will facilitate the Children and Young People Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Network ensuring system wide engagement and learning.

We will invoke the Suicide Prevention Multiple Incident Response Protocol when appropriate to co-ordinate a system wide response.