



Baile Átha Cliath Theas, Cill Dara & Iarthar Chill Mhantáin

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03/08/2023

Cormac Devlin TD
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2
D02 XR20

Re: PQ/36801/23

To ask the Minister of Health for an update on the implementation and success of the Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2018 – 2020 “Connecting for Life Dublin South”; and if he will a statement on the matter?

Dear Deputy Devlin,

I refer to the above representation that you submitted to the Minister for Health, the Minister has requested that the HSE respond to you on this matter. I have examined the question raised and the following outlines the position.

There are currently 2 Resource Officers for Suicide Prevention to cover Dublin South County and Dublin South City. Their role is to coordinate and support the suicide prevention work in the South Dublin area with partners in the community, voluntary and statutory sector and support the effective implementation of Connecting for Life. Suicide prevention is best achieved when individuals, families, health and community organisations, workplaces, government departments and communities work collaboratively to build an infrastructure of suicide prevention and support from national through to local level.

The resource officers work with the Children and Young People Services Committee’s (CYPSC) in Dublin South City and Dublin South County. They work with the youth mental health sub group and the critical incident protocol, which is enacted in a community when required. The resource officers also work with the Local Drug and Alcohol Task Forces in Tallaght, Clondalkin, Ballyfermot, South Inner City, Canals area and Dublin 12. They provide guidance and support to local communities in the aftermath of suicide and support the delivery of coordinated responses to communities affected by suicide.

The following paragraphs outlines the significant amount of ongoing work in Dublin South County and City around suicide prevention services and initiatives.

Suicide Bereavement Liaison Officer (SBLO)

An SBLO is currently employed by Pieta House to cover CHO 7 and works 3 days per week. The role of the SBLO is to offer individuals and families guidance, practical information and support in the aftermath of suicide. The Resource Officer and SBLO work closely together to provide bereavement supports and community responses following suspected suicides in Tallaght. Contact details for Karolina Szafarz the SBLO for Dublin South County are attached below.

Karolina Szafarz

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Email: karolina.szafarz@pieta.ie



Connecting for Life Action Plan (Dublin South, Kildare and West Wicklow)

Guiding the work of the Resource Officer is the Connecting for Life National Suicide Prevention Strategy which has been extended to 2024 to allow the strategy to continue a whole of government and whole of society approach to suicide prevention. A local action plan for Dublin South, Kildare and West Wicklow is currently being reviewed by Connecting for Life Implementation Committees in Dublin South City, Dublin South County and Kildare West Wicklow to inform actions for implementation across the three areas for 2023 – 2024.

Under *Connecting for Life* the HSE continues to fund local counselling services to support those who have been bereaved by suicide and those who may be experiencing suicidal ideation. Funding is also provided to Pieta House to provide support to those engaging in self harm, with suicidal ideation or bereaved by suicide in the South Dublin area.

The following actions from the Connecting for Life Dublin South, Kildare and West Wicklow Action Plan, demonstrate some of the recent activity taking in respect of suicide prevention in Tallaght, Co. Dublin.

1.2.1 (a) Ensure all Dublin South, Kildare and West Wicklow Community Healthcare Mental Health supports and services are included in yourmentalhealth.ie and promoted on the Dublin South, Kildare and West Wicklow Community Healthcare Connecting for Life website.

ROSP's promote yourmentalhealth.ie, with bi-yearly communications issuing to local services to ensure service and support details are included and that details listed are current/accurate. Informational resources such as posters and postcards promoting yourmentalhealth.ie are regularly disseminated throughout South Dublin. Resources can be ordered free of charge at www.healthpromotion.ie

Action 1.3.1 Aligned to national campaigns develop and deliver suicide prevention and positive mental health awareness raising events and campaigns locally that reduce stigma e.g. Green Ribbon campaign and local campaigns as appropriate.

- Green Ribbon Information Stands will be held in The Square Shopping Centre, Tallaght and Liffey Valley Shopping Centre in September 2023. The aim is to reduce stigma around mental health and increase awareness of supports available. Resource Officers will engage with members of the public with information around suicide prevention, and bereavement support resources will be disseminated. Green Ribbon Partner Packs will be distributed to all of the local services that we work with so that can promote also. This campaign ran successfully in September 2022.
- To promote World Suicide Prevention Day on September 10th, adverts will be placed in local media to highlight suicide prevention trainings available in the community.

Action 2.1.1(a) Implement, monitor and report on the delivery of Connecting for Life Dublin South, Kildare and West Wicklow Community Healthcare 2021 – 2024

- The Connecting for Life Implementation Committees meet bimonthly to support the implementation of the 'Connecting for Life Community Healthcare Dublin South Kildare and West Wicklow 2021-2022' (CfL) by acting as a local forums for information sharing and collaboration for the duration of the plan.
- Local committees are made up of members from community and hospital mental health teams, domestic violence services, counselling services, Local Drugs and Alcohol Task Forces, CYPSC's, housing providers and networks, local youth services, Traveller Projects and local Partnerships.
- Quarterly reports on connecting for life activity collated from lead partners.



2.1.1(b) Support the implementation of Connecting for Life Dublin South, Kildare and West Wicklow Community Healthcare through networking events and enhanced information sharing.

- A significant part of role of ROSP's is working with community partners to support and provide guidance regarding suicide prevention and bereavement supports.
- Recent networking events have taken place in Ballyfermot Civic Centre, St Kevin's Family Resource Centre, Rowlagh Community Centre and Killinarden Family Resource Centre.
- Crisis, out of hours services postcards have been developed and distributed to partner agencies by resource officers to provide information to the public of support services in Dublin South.

2.3.2 Aligned to the National Training Plan, provide access to suicide prevention and self-harm training to staff and volunteers across community-based organisations targeting organisations that focus on priority groups.

- Training forms an integral part of the ROSP Dublin South Central role to support communities to respond to suicide. Total participants in Dublin South engaged in Suicide Prevention training for 2022 is 548 persons.
- Figures for Q1 2023 note there have been a total of 5 Safe Talk's, 1 ASIST and 1 Understanding Self Harm in Dublin South with a total of 149 participants.
- Recent figures for Q2 2023 alone note a total of 192 persons in Dublin South engaged with 6 Safe Talks, 3 ASIST trainings and 1 Understanding Self Harm training.

Training provided includes the following:

- SafeTALK – an internationally recognised half day training programme that prepares participants to recognise and engage with people who may be having thoughts of suicide and connect them to suicide first aid resources.
- ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) is a two day skills building workshop in suicide first aid. Participants are trained to reduce the immediate risk of a suicide and increase the support for a person at risk.
- STORM – a skills training course to increase confidence and competence by enhancing the community skills needed to engage someone in distress to work collaboratively, assess vulnerability, plan for safety and prevent suicide.
- Understanding Self Harm (USH) – a workshop that provides opportunities to improve knowledge, awareness and understanding of self-harming behaviour.
- 172 Living Works Start online licenses requested for Dublin South in 2022.

3.1.3 (a) In conjunction with Wicklow, Dun Laoghaire Dublin South East Community Healthcare and Dublin North City and County Community Healthcare and clinical staff within homeless agencies, examine the mental health needs of the homeless population.

- There are Mental Health Homeless teams now in place in South Dublin
- Water-proof, pocket sized cards with emergency numbers developed and are currently being distributed to homeless services



3.1.3 (b) Support the development and completion of research on the impact of suicide among the Traveller community in South Dublin and implement the recommendations.

- Project complete and research recently published by Traveller Services in Ballyfermot, Clondalkin and Tallaght.
- ROSP's continue to work with Traveller Development Groups and sit on the Mental Health Steering Group, providing support and guidance to service on suicide prevention and bereavement supports for Travellers.

(c) Develop culturally appropriate bereavement supports for Travellers who have been bereaved by suicide.

ROSP's are working with the Traveller Mental Health Coordinator and HUGG (Healing Untold Grief Groups) to establish bereavement supports groups for Travellers in South Dublin.

ROSP's also working with the National Office of Suicide Prevention on developing culturally appropriate Safe Talk training specifically for the Traveller Communities.

(d) To run a series of webinars targeted at the mental health needs of women across the lifespan in Dublin South, Kildare and West Wicklow Community Healthcare to include a review of need.

Action currently under review in order to address specific mental health challenges being faced by women across the life span.

ROSP's attended the National Menopause Summit in Dublin and is engaging with local services across South Dublin on supporting women in suicidal distress during the perimenopause and menopausal stages of life.

There is a Heads-Up Programme for women currently being piloted in Tallaght.

3.1.3 (e) To deliver Domestic Violence Awareness training for HSE Mental Health Staff across Dublin South, Kildare and West Wicklow Community Healthcare.

This training was delivered in Q4 2022 and will run again in Q4 2023.

3.1.3 (f) Continue to support and develop multi-agency approaches to improve outcomes in relation to perinatal mental health.

- Post Birth Wellbeing Plan updated to include local services and supports for Dublin South. Women attending Coombe and Holles Street Maternity Hospitals and Public Health Nurses across South Dublin will receive a copy of the plan.

-Perinatal Mental Health Working Group in CHO7 has been expanded to include services from Dublin South which will inform the development of perinatal resources for women in Dublin South.

- ROSP's worked with community partners to promote World Maternal Mental Health Day on May 3rd 2023. There was a high level of engagement with the campaign. The plan is to build on success of campaign for 2024.

3.1.3 (h) Deliver 5 SafeTalk projects across communities affected by suicide in Dublin South, Kildare & West Wicklow including Traveller men in Tallaght, North Clondalkin, Cherry Orchard, Athy & Blessington.

Project complete. Additional Safe Talks scheduled in collaboration with Quarryvale FRC, Cherry Orchard FRC, National College of Art and Design, Carmelite C and Crosscare, Ronanstown

Following feedback from Traveller groups, ROSP's are working with CHO7 Traveller Mental Health Coordinator and Tallaght Travellers Development Group on plans for Safe Talk specific to Travellers.



3.1.3 (m) Support young people experiencing parental mental health issues by implementing the WITH (Wellbeing in the Home) Programme.

- Wellbeing In the Home (WITH) Programme informational resource for young people who live at home with a parent/carer who has a mental health difficulty launched in Dublin South on May 3rd 2023. Posters and postcards containing QR code to access resources by young people and their parents were disseminated throughout the community including schools, youth services, family resource centres, community centres, libraries and primary care centres throughout Dublin South. Link to view WITH Programme information videos attached for easy reference [WellbeingInTheHome \(WITH\)](#)

3.1.6 Support access and participation for those attending education centres and teacher training in relevant mental health promotion programmes including the feasibility of teacher training in informal education centres.

- The development of the academic schools training calendar took place in August by partners in Health and Wellbeing. Mind out and Zippy's Friends will be delivered and all Schools will receive information on the trainings in August 2023.
- ROSP's continue to identify training opportunities for teachers across South Dublin.

3.3.3 Support third level institutions to implement the National Student Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Framework.

ROSP's are working with Technological University Dublin (Tallaght Campus) to develop suicide prevention policy and increase suicide prevention initiatives on campus following recent bereavements in the student population. ROSP's are also engaged with the National College of Art and Design to develop a training plan for students and staff. Membership is being sought from the student body for the Connecting for Life Implementation group.

4.1.1 (a) Establish a Working Group to explore the feasibility of establishing models of care e.g. crisis cafes, community cafés and Crisis Intervention Teams in Dublin South, Kildare and West Wicklow Community Healthcare to include potential pilots.

A submission has been made as part of the integrated plan for unscheduled emergency care.

4.1.4 Continue to roll out STORM training for all HSE Mental Health staff.

ROSP's leading the Implementation of Collaborative Assessment and Management of Suicidality (CAMS) across Dublin South Mental Health Teams in both Community and Acute Hospital settings. STORM action on hold due to implementation of CAMS Training for HSE Mental Health Staff in Dublin South. Training scheduled for Q3 2023.



6.2.1 Work with relevant organization's to identify and map high risk locations, and introduce preventative measures and additional supports at these locations.

- ROSP's are working with Dublin City Council and South Dublin County Council to identify and map high risk locations following discussions with local services on same. Mapping of high risk locations ongoing at present. Resource officers are also engaging with local services on locations of concern.

ROSP's are working with Irish Rail to support them with the development of a plan to respond to a recent increase in incidents of suicide and self-harm on railway tracks.

- Following concerns expressed by Connect 4 street work youth programme based in the Killinarden / Jobstown area of Tallaght. Resource officer supporting Connect 4 team as they work with young people aged 10-24 to support and empower them to achieve their full potential.

- Resource officer supporting staff at Saoirse Domestic Violence refuge in Tallaght to support women who experience suicidal ideation.

-Resource officers are continuing to promote Heads up Programme in South Dublin and recently worked with the Mental Health Lead in South Dublin County Partnership to provide resources and supports to a Men's Health Hike which attracted 250 men.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin Brady".

Kevin Brady, Head of Service Mental Health
HSE Dublin South, Kildare and West Wicklow Community Healthcare