



Connecting for Life

Ireland's National Strategy to Reduce Suicide

NOSP Communications Plan to Support the Implementation of Connecting for Life

2021 - 2022

HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention (NOSP)

NOSP Communications Plan to Support the Implementation of Connecting for Life
2021 - 2022

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1.0 Introduction

In 2020 the HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention (NOSP) published the Connecting for Life Implementation Plan 2020-2022. This an accompanying document (the NOSP Communications Plan to Support the Implementation of Connecting for Life 2021- 2022) will inform communications work in the NOSP to help implement the strategy and to lead out on specific communications-related actions in the strategy.

The key to developing an understanding of Connecting for Life at different levels, is effective communication of the strategy, its purpose and implementation progress. This will help inform and support people, communities, teams and services who work to deliver on specific actions.

While significant communications work related to Connecting for Life has taken place since its launch, an ongoing and responsive communications approach from the national perspective is required. This will ensure understanding and awareness of key developments and messages for existing and newer audiences, during this implementation period.

2.0 Connecting for Life communications tone and style

NOSP Communications activities emerging from this plan will reflect;

- The Vision of Connecting for Life – “An Ireland where fewer lives are lost through suicide and where communities and individuals are empowered to improve their mental health and wellbeing”
- The 5 overarching Guiding Principles in Connecting for Life – “Collaborative, Accountable, Responsive, Evidence-informed and outcome focused, Adaptive to change”
- The Vision, Mission and Values of the HSE Corporate Communications –
 - “**Our vision** is a positive and compassionate culture within the health service, where we and our colleagues put our patients and people at the centre of all of our communications, always”.
 - “**Our mission** is to enable and empower those who work within our health service to communicate clearly with the people who use our services with empathy, understanding and respect”.
 - “**Our values** are care, compassion, trust and learning”.
- Approaches will be taken in line with HSE **Communicating Clearly** and **Plain English** Guidelines, HSE **Digital Guidelines** (Content Principles, Language and Structure, Style Guide, Voice and Tone Guide, Social Media Guidelines) and HSE and Connecting for Life **Brand Guidelines**.

3.0 Connecting for Life communications audiences

The **primary** audiences associated with Connecting for Life include;

- Agencies with responsibility for Connecting for Life implementation
- NGO partners involved in Connecting for Life implementation
- Government and HSE Senior Management and Leadership
- Other HSE departments and functions, including Resource Officers for Suicide Prevention
- Members of the Oireachtas and Oireachtas committees
- Policy makers and those responsible for implementing other related strategies and frameworks.

The **secondary** audiences associated with Connecting for Life include;

- The general public
- People with lived life experience of suicidal behaviour or bereaved by suicide
- Other agencies working in suicide prevention
- Communities and people with an interest in suicide prevention
- The media.

The responsibility to communicate effectively about Connecting for Life nationally is with;

1. The HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention

The NOSP plays a central role in communicating on Connecting for Life. All functions of the office maintain an open and responsive relationship and engagement with stakeholders. The NOSP enables many outward communications channels and helps facilitate and align all related messaging and content.

2. Connecting for Life Cross Sectoral Implementation and Steering Group

The Connecting for Life Cross Sectoral Implementation and Steering Group takes a strong lead in communicating with and engaging key stakeholders, in particular at higher levels of the implementation structure. This will help sustain an impetus on effective implementation, and maintain links with particular focus on communicating key milestones and developments to senior stakeholders.

4.0 Connecting for Life communications objectives

The main communications objectives associated with Connecting for Life are to;

- Build a shared understanding and awareness of Connecting for Life, and the role of the NOSP
- Promote trust and openness in the Connecting for Life journey, in line with core HSE values
- Maintain a clear and consistent brand identity for Connecting for Life
- Adopt a proactive role to communicating and disseminating the work of Connecting for Life
- Represent high quality information across all channels in an honest, accessible and effective way
- Generate a high level of engagement and commitment from all Connecting for Life stakeholders.

5.0 Connecting for Life communications-specific actions

The NOSP has additional responsibilities for communications-specific objectives and actions in Connecting for Life. These include;

- To provide broad support of the implementation of all actions in Goal 1 of Connecting for Life - "To improve the nation's understanding of and attitudes to suicidal behaviour, mental health and wellbeing".
- To take specific lead responsibility for;
 - **Action 1.3.1** - "Deliver campaigns that reduce stigma to those with mental health difficulties and suicidal behaviour in the whole population and self-stigma among priority groups"
 - **Action 1.4.4** - "Monitor media reporting of suicide, and engage with the media in relation to adherence to guidelines on media reporting"
 - **Action 5.1.5** - "Disseminate information on effective suicide prevention responses through the development and promotion of repositories of evidence-based tools, resources, guidelines and protocols".

Key actions 2021-2022

CfL 1.3.1 On-going delivery, development and improvement of stigma reduction campaigns and in response to developments related to Connecting for Life Action 1.1.1, Sharing the Vision and HSE Mental Health Communications Framework - incorporating key partners where relevant.

CfL 1.4.4 Establish new work streams and initiatives facilitated by the development of new quarterly round table network - incorporating key partners (Headline, PC, BAI, Samaritans, NSRF).

CfL 5.1.5 Determine the feasibility and need for the development of a new repository, and produce recommendations.

Across this period of Connecting for Life implementation, the NOSP will continue to support other on-going and emerging communications activities related to the strategy. For example;

- Communications elements of other projects or workstreams within the NOSP (Education and Training, Strategy Coordination, Research, Monitoring and Evaluation)
- Related campaigns led by Connecting for Life NGO partner agencies or local Connecting for Life structures.
- HSE Mental Health Operations-led actions;
 - **Action 1.1.3** - “Deliver co-ordinated communication campaigns (such as LittleThings, 2014) for the promotion of mental health and wellbeing among the whole population with a focus on protective health behaviours and consistent signposting to relevant support services”
 - **Action 1.2.1** - “Deliver accessible information on all mental health services and access/referral mechanisms and make the information available online at yourmentalhealth.ie.”
 - **Action 1.2.2** - “Deliver targeted campaigns to improve awareness of appropriate support services to priority groups”.

Key actions 2021-2022

Support ongoing communications elements to the National Education and Training Plan, including the development of online suicide prevention training.

Ongoing contribution to and participation with HSE Mental Health Communications work, in particular;

- The work of the Mental Health Communications Steering Group
- HSE Mental Health Campaigns and responsive content and messaging
- Improvement works to yourmentalhealth.ie.

6.0 Connecting for Life communications channels

Due to the number of different teams working to implement Connecting for Life, clear communication channels are essential so as to ensure each team is purposefully linked and that there are constant feedback loops and improvement cycles. Communications channels have been established or utilised to support this, and reach targeted audiences. Examples include;

- Email (including subscription email newsletter)
- Websites (including connectingforlifeireland.ie and nosp.ie)
- Social media (#connectingforlife and @NOSPireland)
- Meetings (in person and online)
- Print and publications
- Events (in person and online)
- Press and media
- Paid advertising
- HSE Internal Communications channels
- Written correspondence (including Parliamentary Questions, Committees, Reps and Briefings).

Key actions 2021-2022

Plan for the redevelopment of the nosp.ie and connectingforlife.ie websites, in parallel with HSE Digital Roadmap rollout.

Establish NOSP social media plan.

Source and implement replacement email subscription tool.

Ongoing consolidation and improvement of the range of publically available print and publications.

7.0 Connecting for Life regular communications activities

Regular, core communications activities are summarised in **Table One** (page 10). The NOSP Communications will work to capture and report where relevant, all metrics available for each activity, including budget and spend.

Key actions 2021-2022

Develop improved tracking of metrics from all regular Communications activities and channels, to inform planning and improve ability to measure in the future.

World Suicide Prevention Day – Develop separate work plan for 2021 and 2022 activity.

Green Ribbon Campaign - Develop separate work plan for 2021 and 2022 activity.

World Mental Health Day - Develop separate work plan for 2021 and 2022 activity.

Propose plan to improve the approach, style and content of the NOSP Annual Report.

8.0 NOSP communications staffing

This plan is supported by 2.0 NOSP communications staff who work within annually agreed budgets:

- 1.0 x Communications Manager.
- 1.0 x Content Development Officer. This position is shared with HSE Mental Health Operations, to co-work on wider mental health campaigns development.

Note: since February 2020 a temporary arrangement is in place which means the reduced availability of the Content Development Officer, to 0.6 WTE. It is envisaged that this will be restored in 2021 to 1.0 WTE.

Table One

Connecting for Life regular communications activities

Communication	Channels	Frequency	Main Audiences	Notes
Connecting for Life Newsletter	Email Websites	Quarterly	All primary and secondary audiences	Subscription or public sign-up required
Connecting for Life Implementation Progress	Email Meetings Websites	Quarterly	National Cross Sectoral Implementation and Steering Group, All primary audiences	With NOSP SMT and c/o Group Secretariat
NOSP Annual Report	Print Websites Event Press HSE Internal Communications	Annually	All primary and secondary audiences	
Responses to Parliamentary Questions, Committees and Reps	Written correspondence	When required	Members of the Oireachtas and Oireachtas committees.	
Responses to press queries	Written correspondence	When required	HSE Press, Media	
Briefings	Written correspondence	When required	Government and HSE Senior Management and Leadership	
Social media engagement	Social	Daily	All primary and secondary audiences	NOSP presence on Twitter only
Public suicide and self-harm prevention information and promotion	Print literature Websites Social HSE Internal Communications	Ongoing	All primary and secondary audiences, with emphasis on general public	Print literature c/o healthpromotion.ie

Communication	Channels	Frequency	Main Audiences	Notes
World Suicide Prevention Day	Various campaign elements (NOSP-led)	Annually (Sep)	All primary and secondary audiences, with emphasis on general public	Campaign elements, methods and work plan determined aside
Green Ribbon Campaign	Various campaign elements (partner-led)	Annually (May)	All primary and secondary audiences, with emphasis on general public	Campaign elements, methods and work plan determined aside
World Mental Health Day	Various campaign elements (HSE MH-led)	Annually (Oct)	All primary and secondary audiences, with emphasis on general public	Campaign elements, methods and work plan determined aside
HSE Mental Health Content	Various campaign elements Social Websites (HSE MH-led)	Ongoing	All primary and secondary audiences, with emphasis on general public	HSE Mental Health Communications Steering Group

