



Connecting for Life

NGO strategy implementation monitoring report – Q1 2021

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1: Introduction

This is first implementation monitoring report for *Connecting for Life (CfL)* for the activities of our NGO partners. It should be stressed that extensive work is being carried out by our NGO partners and this report does not capture it all. It provides a broad overview of reach and developments in Q1 2021.

Face to face delivery is still paused for many services, however some are in a position to offer emergency face to face supports. Some NGOs have utilised this period as an opportunity to carry out staff training and building renovation works.

Despite the continued restrictions and instances of Covid-19 outbreaks affecting some services, this is a positive time as many front-line staff have already received their vaccine.

Some NGOs have reported an increase in demand for counselling and general mental health support services, either in the form of direct counselling or direct calls for support. Other services have highlighted concerns that some priority groups have no or limited access to phone or IT to access remote mental health support.

Some partners are also reporting a level of fatigue with online or remote mental health supports, with some clients indicating a preference to wait until face-to-face supports can resume before beginning or continuing engagement. Creating new referral partnerships has proved challenging for some services at this time.

Updates from our NGO partners illustrate how they are utilising social media and other online communication fora to raise awareness and tackle mental health stigma. During Q1, NGOs have coordinated online events and festivals such as First Fortnight, collaborated on short films, produced animations, podcasts, calendars, online mental health resources and signposted to vital support services.

NGOs continue to offer a diverse range of training in the suicide prevention space, with online workshops and supports offered to target groups, professionals, volunteers and adults and children. Supports are offered across the spectrum of need, ranging from meditation and wellness supports, to peer supports and evidence-informed therapeutic interventions for those with more acute needs.

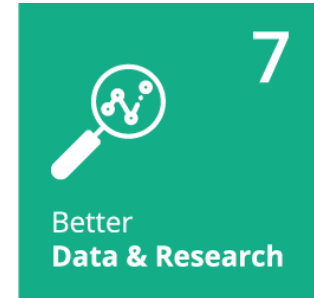
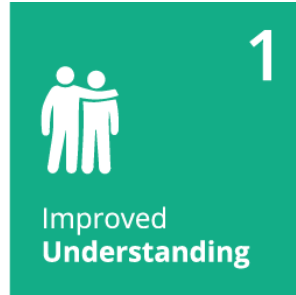


This quarter **updates were received from** 15 CfL NGO implementation partners:

- Aware
- Dublin Simon Community
- Exchange House Ireland
 - First Fortnight
- Family Resource Centre (FRC)
- Gaelic Athletic Association GAA
 - ISPCC Childline
 - LGBT+ Ireland (LGBT+I)
- Men's Health Forum Ireland (MHFI)
 - MyMind
 - The Samaritans
 - Shine
- Suicide or Survive (SOS)
 - SpunOut
- Transgender Equality Network Ireland (TENI)



2: Overview of progress on CfL strategic goals





Goal 1: Improved understanding

1.1 Understanding suicidal behaviour	1.2 Awareness of services	1.3 Reducing stigma	1.4 Media and reporting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Fortnight delivered their online mental health arts festival at the beginning of January which included 84 online events over 16 days, and almost 5,000 attendees. • The GAA co-ordinated and delivered the <i>GAA's Irish Life Steps Challenge</i> to promote physical activity as a protective factor for mental health. This ran instead of popular <i>Ireland Lights Up</i> Initiative this year. It is hoped to coordinate Ireland Lights Up at a later date in the year (GAA). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The GAA are working with the Samartians to develop a mental health questionnaire for <i>GAA Healthy Clubs</i>. This will enable the GAA to consult with all <i>GAA Healthy Club</i> members. • Work of the 150 GAA Clubs involved in the <i>Healthy Club</i> Project is ongoing, including the adoption of the GAA Critical Incident Response Plan. • The Childline website recorded 16,271 users in Feb-Mar, with 54,132 page views. Additional resources on suicide and mental health also added to the site. • TENI, SpunOut and LGBTI+ Ireland were among some partners that engaged in awareness raising activities for Transgender Day of Visibility (31st March) and Day of Elimination of Racial Discrimination (21st March). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shine supported See Change in the delivery of their Workplace Programme in 3 organisations in Q1, which aims to tackle workplace mental health stigma. Extensive training for mental health Ambassadors was also carried out. • The report on the 2020 Green Ribbon campaign was completed and disseminated by Shine. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headline have reported high volumes of media reporting requiring analysis due to pandemic reporting, the Caroline Flack suicide anniversary and cases of murder-suicide. • Shine are developing an online workshop for journalism students on responsible reporting of suicide. • Headline have completed a review of the 2020 Mental Health Media Awards. Entries to the awards were up 52% on 2019.



Goal 2: Empowered Communities

2.1 Multiagency community responses	2.2 Accurate information and guidance	2.3 Education and training
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childline have promoted the START suicide intervention training programme to all staff and volunteers. This will be advertised as an option for all future volunteer intakes going forward to register and complete on shift. • Childline can provide a designated crisis helpline to schools and communities where there has been a death by suicide and will work with the HSE / CYPSC's on receiving request to make same available as soon as possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The GAA provided critical incident support to approximately 8 suspected suicides in Q1. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject to public health restrictions, all face-to-face training has been paused. Many NGOs have now moved their training offer online offering a variety of initiatives, including but not limited to: • Training workshops on the suicide prevention Code of Practice (FRC) • Online information sessions delivered to 19 FRCs and 104 participants • Self-care workshops for staff (FRC) Online 1 hour workshop delivered to 24 FRCs and 82 participants • Meditation and mindfulness classes (FRC) 28 FRCs and 62 participants • Active listening skills workshops (The Samaritans) 10 training sessions • Wellness Webinars and community WRAP programmes (SOS) 28 webinars attended by 279 people and 7 WRAP programmes completed by 90 people • Transgender awareness talks, podcasts, training and peer support groups (TENI). 12 x healthcare trainings; 6 x school training; 13 awareness talks; 4 podcasts

Goal 3: Focus on Priority Groups



3.1 Reducing suicide among priority groups

- **Dublin Simon Community** had a total of 234 clients with an allocated counsellor in Q1. There were 67 new referrals in Jan-Feb, 10 of these were for suicide and / or self-harm.
- **Aware** continued to offer its 8-week CBT-based *Life Skills* programme online during Q1, which was completed by 252 participants. It aims launch its Bipolar Programme in Q2.
- **Exchange House** supported 171 clients in Q1, with accommodation and mental health issues being the most common presenting needs.
- **SOS** delivered 1 26-week programme for those experiencing suicidality, 139 wellness webinars for the general public and 8 programmes for those supporting people with mental health difficulties.
- **LGBT+Ireland** trained 95 professionals in LGBTI+ awareness in Q1.
- **MyMind** provided approximately 12,000 appointments, of which 2,750 are at low fees.
- **TENI** received 114 requests for community support and 8 requests for family support. Peer support groups and voice therapy sessions were also delivered.

3.2 Early intervention and prevention of substance misuse with Primary Care

- The **GAA** is partnering with the Local Drug Task Forces, Regional Drug Task Forces, the Alcohol Forum and Planet Youth to start the development of an alcohol harm reduction proposal to launch a social media campaign in 2021.

3.3 Supports for young people

- **Childline** received 39,403 calls in Q1: 426 profiled under suicide, 241 under self harm and 1, 445 under mental/emotional health.
- **Childline** are completing plans to pilot an evidenced based CBT guided self-help programme for children developed by Silvercloud. Recruitment and selection of staff members to act as supporters for this new programme has been completed.
- **SpunOut.ie** had a combined readership figure for their online mental health content of 123,186.

Goal 5: High quality services



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5.4 Best practice among Practitioners

- During 2021, **MHFI** is being funded by NOSP to undertake Year 1 of the CAIRDE Project. The overall aim of this three year initiative is to use the construction industry in Ireland as a setting to create and embed a whole organisation mental fitness culture, which can actively promote and support men's mental health and resilience, and reduce the risk of suicide. Developments in this quarter included:
 - (a) Making contact with the 'MATES in Construction' initiative in Australia
 - (b) Meeting with the Department of Health's Healthy Workplaces team, agreeing their contribution to this project, and identifying potential key organisations for the inter-agency Stakeholder Group.
 - (c) Establishing initial contact with the Health and Safety Unit within the Construction Industry Federation in Ireland.
 - (d) Scoping potential collaborators in the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.
 - (e) Identifying key personnel in the Health and Safety Authority.
 - (f) Drafting a Project Overview paper - offering potential stakeholders a brief synopsis of CAIRDE.
 - (g) Preparing and submitting an application for a PhD scholarship to Waterford IT / IT Carlow - for a student to undertake one strand of the research and evaluation process.
 - (h) Advertising the potential PhD Studentship and Post-Doc Researcher roles that funding applications have been made to the Irish Research Council for, selecting people for interview, conducting interviews, and selecting successful candidates (pending agreement of funding from the IRC).

Goal 6: Reduced access to means

6.2 Lethal methods

- **The Samaritans** continues to work with local authorities and organisations on crisis signage.
- In this quarter, Irish Rail requested 110 crisis signs for the DART line and 50 for the east of the country.
- Royal Canal Greenway: Residents requested crisis signage following two suicide attempts and one suicide along the greenway in recent months. Guidance and four crisis signs were provided.

Goal 7: Better data and research



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7.4 Research and Evaluation Plan

- **Shine** and **See Change** are planning to carry out research in 2021 which explores people's attitudes to mental health issues, and the impact of stigma. Work in underway to progress this project in Q2.



HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention - April 2021