



Connecting for Life

Statutory strategy implementation monitoring report – Q1 2021

By: HSE NOSP (2021)



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1: Introduction

This is the Q1 2021 implementation monitoring report for *Connecting for Life (CfL)*. It will provide an overview of the work carried out by strategy lead agencies from January-March 2021.

Updates received from our implementation partners indicate there is now widespread adaptation to offering suicide prevention services training online, to accommodate the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions. Additional online offers have been put in place across the HSE to address concerns surrounding increased need for mental health supports, such as Stress Control, telepsychiatry, and online guided Cognitive Behaviour Therapy which is planned to be made available to 1,000 individuals based on primary care referral.

A new reporting template has been agreed and put in place with all of HSE NOSP's NGO partners to ensure progress reporting is now aligned with CfL goals and consistent with the data



Connecting for Life

collection approach used for these quarterly progress reports. This will ensure a holistic and inclusive approach to CfL monitoring is adopted as we enter into Q2 of the new implementation plan.

Continuing on from Q4 2020, updates provided indicate that our CfL partners are still aware of the impact of Covid-19 on mental health and wellbeing of their staff. Online and other supports continue to be offered to help migrate the myriad stresses of these times. It is hoped that some face to face supports and training can resume at some point this year as our vaccination efforts continue apace.

This quarter, of the 66 actions in CfL, updates were received on 66. Of these 66 actions, 13 were logged as needing attention and 3 were off track. The majority of actions were considered to be on track. Further detail on the needs attention and off track actions are provided at the end of this report.



This quarter updates were received from 19 CfL implementation partners:

- Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI)
- Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media (DTCAGSM)
- Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine (DAFM)
- Department of Children, Disability, Integration, Equality and Youth (DCDIEY)
- Department of Education (DoE)
- Department of Defence (DoD)
- Department of Health (DoH)
- Department of Justice (DoJ)
- Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD)
- Department of Social Protection (DSP)
- Higher Education Authority (HEA)
- HSE Health and Wellbeing (HSE H&W)
- HSE Acute Hospitals
- HSE Mental Health Operations (HSE MH)
- HSE Primary Care (HSE PC)
- HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention (HSE NOSP)
- Health and Safety Authority (HSA)
- Press Council of Ireland
- Local Government Management Authority (LGMA)

This quarter updates not received from 1 partner:

- Tusla

1: Q1 2021 at a glance

• CfL Implementation Planning (2020-22):

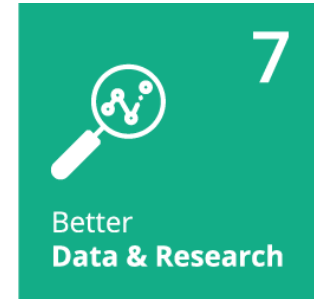
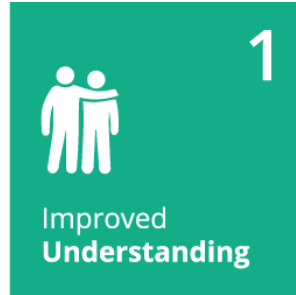
• All NGOs funded by HSE NOSP have now been issued with quarterly reporting templates which are aligned to CfL actions. It is envisaged that similar quarterly NGO progress reports will be submitted to the cross-sectoral group along with the this statutory progress report. This will ensure that, going forward, monitoring of the implementation of CfL will be comprehensive and inclusive of the dedicated suicide prevention efforts of our NGO partners. It also ensures that all reporting on a statutory and community and voluntary basis is now aligned with the seven strategic goals of CfL.

• Headline developments

- HSE NOSP has made a submission to the Joint Oireachtas Committee conducting pre-legislative scrutiny on the Online Safety and Media Regulation Bill (OSMR Bill).
- An updated briefing on suicide mortality data was published in January. The updated provisional figures for 2019 show there were 421 deaths by suicide, in comparison to 437 deaths in 2018.
- The HSE NOSP grant scheme has reviewed all applications for collaborative research projects into priority groups in the CfL strategy. 12 grants have been awarded and contractual agreements are currently being finalised with successful applicants.



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"> HSE NOSP and researchers from Maynooth University have completed a study titled '<i>Predicting risk along the suicidality continuum: A longitudinal, nationally representative study of the Irish population during the COVID-19 pandemic</i>'. It will be published in an Irish peer reviewed journal later this year. New content to Drugs.ie regarding mental health, including the link between use and suicide. A new booklet and video series aimed at young recreational users will include points on mental health and suicide risks. (HSE PC). HSE H&W are involved in stakeholder consultations as part of the final development stage of the HSE mental health promotion plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website traffic to ymh.ie is up 43% compared with Q1 of previous year - to 500,000 visits. The 'self-harm' article is currently most viewed content. (HSE MH). Partner organisations representing priority groups continue to work as keyword partners in the roll-out of text 50808. (HSE MH). Research currently underway to determine communications needs for priority groups. (HSE MH). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Fortnight Mental Health Arts Festival took place in January with HSE NOSP support of programme. Working Group for 2021 World Suicide Prevention Day (Sept) & World Mental Health Day (Oct) - TORs and Membership agreed. Working Group to convene in Q2. HSE NOSP supported a communications campaign in CHO 7 to promote bereavement services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HSE NOSP has finalised 2021 SLAs with Shine and Headline. HSE NOSP briefing note supplied to the Joint Committee on Media, Tourism, Arts, Culture, Sport and the Gaeltacht - to outline current position in respect of the OSMR Bill. There were no complaints submitted this quarter to the Press Council or the Broadcasting Authority regarding the reporting of suicide.



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"> • HSE MH and HSE NOSP are supporting the development of new local CfL implementation plans. • There will be variation in the approach to the development of new local CfL plans. Some existing county-wide plans will be consolidated to cover CHOs. Some new implementation plans will run until 2022, others to 2024. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HSE NOSP has worked with ROSPs to finalise the ‘Developing a Community Response to Suicide’ resource. It is planned to launch the resource and publish online in Q2. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The HSE NOSP Education and Training Plan 2021-2023 is currently being developed. The Gatekeeper Training Evaluation has now been finalised. • HSE NOSP continues to develop the suicide prevention training offer to accommodate online platforms. The online suicide prevention training project team has been created. A 2-hour online introduction to USH is now available online. In Q1 1110 users enrolled for the online training programme, Living works START. • HSE H&W are continuing to deliver Stress Control online. A total of 4,408 users completed Stress Control online in Jan/Feb. A partnership underway with HSE Psychology to develop a HSE Stress management programme funded by HSE H&W.



Goal 3: Focus on Priority Groups

3.1 Reducing suicide among priority groups

- New HSE Traveller Mental Health working group established to explore collaborative working to address mental health in Travellers across the HSE.
- The HSE NOSP research grant scheme for priority groups received 41 applications in Q1, of which 12 grants were awarded. Contracts are currently being agreed with awardees.
- The Defence Forces (DF) Mental Health and Wellbeing Standing Committee continues to meet monthly. Working Groups have been established to address milestones in DF Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020-2023, and workplans have been produced.

3.2 Early intervention and prevention of substance misuse with Primary Care

- HSE Primary Care have adapted SAOR training to the online space, including a virtual classroom training pack and Guide for Trainers. 35 SAOR trainers have been upskilled to offer the programme online.

3.3 Supports for young people

- The HSE Telepsychiatry model to support Addiction services dealing with young people is operating effectively in all 4 areas as planned (HSE PC).
- The evaluation of the Wellbeing Action Research Project which involved working with 30 schools was finalised. The findings will inform the planning for supports for schools as they embark on reviewing their own wellbeing promotion (DoE).
- DoE is currently updating the post primary guidelines for the formation of Student Support Teams.
- Over 220 student counsellors at third level have received training in Collaborative Assessment and Management of Suicidality (CAMS) to support students in crisis (HEA).



Goal 4: Better access to support

4.1 Assessments and Care Pathways	4.2 Therapeutic Interventions	4.3 Support Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staffing for 7/7 community mental health service provision has reached 47 out of the 48 posts. This service improvement initiative is now 'business as usual'. As such, a review of the service is being planned (HSE MH). The HSE Clinical Lead and Programme Manager for Dual Diagnosis has now been recruited (HSE MH & PC). Developments to support the delivery of crisis support for people experiencing suicidal ideation are underway in HSE MH, with all funding for additional 12 CNS posts released and recruitment underway. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Talking Therapies Service Improvement Project was recommenced and the Model of Care finalised following extensive stakeholder engagement. It will be launched on 20th April (HSE MH). 1,000 licenses for online CBT via SilverCloud Health will be rolled out from Q2 based on referrals from GPs, Primary Care Psychology, Counselling in Primary Care and Jigsaw (HSE MH). Attention is needed in relation to psychological interventions at primary care level. A review of need at this level is planned (HSE MH & PC). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> '<i>You are not alone</i>' the new National Suicide Bereavement Support Guide was launched via an online event on 11th March and is available online here. A draft of the evaluation of the Pieta House SBLO service was submitted by the NSRF to HSE NOSP and is currently under review. The third meeting of the National Suicide Bereavement Support Advisory Group took place on February 23rd with the next meeting to take place in late May.



Goal 5: High quality services

5.1 National quality standards, guidance and information for suicide prevention	5.2 Responses to suicidal behaviour in services	5.3 Responses to suicidal behaviour in the justice system	5.4 Best practice among Practitioners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were a number of publications published and disseminated by HSE NOSP in Q1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NOSP-CSO Briefing Document (in line with January CSO update) ○ National Suicide Bereavement Support Guide ○ Samaritans Revised Media Guidelines ○ Scalability Assessment of CAMS Approach. • The HSE NOSP Twitter account had the highest level of interaction since it was created in 2017. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A detailed review of in-patient suspected suicide deaths has been undertaken by HSE MH. The purpose of the review has been to establish the learning arising from systems analysis reviews following serious reportable events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Self Harm in Prisons 2019 Report finalised. The IPS and the National Suicide Research Foundation continue to work collaboratively on this project. • The Pilot medical card project is in place in all locations. IPS and HSE/PCRS continue to review progress of this initiative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2130 Prison Service staff have received suicide prevention training to date. • A survey has been conducted with 99 lecturers and module co-ordinators teaching in Irish healthcare degree courses to assess teaching of suicide prevention. 98% agreed training in suicide prevention is necessary (HSE NOSP & HEA). • On 8th March, DAFM launched its eLearning resource entitled '<i>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in DAFM workplace</i>'.



Goal 6: Reduced access to means

6.1 Access to drugs used in intentional overdose	6.2 Lethal methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DoH will work with NOSP to continue exploration of ways to progress this action, for e.g. through education. • DoH will be in discussion with HSPA regarding improving adherence to legislation on prescribing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The national ligature risk reduction policy is currently out for clinical review. It includes an amended standard audit tool which has now been pilot tested in approved centres across the country (HSE MH). • The development of a 'repository' of learning and information to guide construction, renovations and environmental safety related to ligature risk is ongoing (HSE MH). • Window replacement programme completed in a number of locations. Changes made to TV as required, following an incident. The issue is being kept under review at NSHPSG. The group established to review risk of in-cell phones was reconvened in March 2021 (IPS). • The NSRF developed a Briefing on “<i>Suicide prevention messages, objects and memorials on bridges and other public places</i>”. • NOSP will join the Rural Development, Community, Tourism, Culture and Heritage Committee meeting in May to discuss suicide prevention with local authorities.



Goal 7: Better data and research

7.1 Evaluating CfL	7.2 High quality Data	7.3 Death recording	7.4 Research and Evaluation Plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The technical synthesis of all research commissioned during phase 1 of CfL has been completed by the Centre for Effective Services and will be published in Q2. Publication was delayed due to pending research reports which needed to be included (HSE NOSP). HSE NOSP and IPS have issued a joint tender for implementation support for the roll-out of CAMS in Irish prisons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The technical and summary report detailing analysis of Coroner's data over the period 2015-2017 is now finalised and in the design stage. It is planned to publish the outputs in Q2 (HSE NOSP). Local area data reports will also be disseminated to ROSPs throughout the country this year. A data sharing protocol related to both NIMS and MHC data on suspected suicides has now been reviewed and it was decided that both ethical approval and a data privacy impact assessment (DPIA) are required to support this work. Work can commence once a DPIA and ethical approval are secured (HSE MH). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No updates received for this series of actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See HSE NOSP research grant scheme update as per action 3.1.4. The Technical Advisory Group for the coroners data report was convened in Q1 2021 to sign off on the project outputs prior to publication (HSE NOSP). Work has commenced to highlight the innovative practices happening under CfL local action plans - HSE NOSP communications are working with About Face consulting on showcasing the work (HSE NOSP).

At a Glance: Needs Attention (13 actions)

Goal 3

3.1.1 Integrate suicide prevention into the development of relevant national policies, plans and programmes for people who are at an increased risk of suicide or self-harm (Dept. of Health and the Probation Service)

DoH have forwarded the Dr. Pillinger report on policy proofing to Dept. of Taoiseach for observations. Proposed next steps are to follow up with DoT, and continue to explore ways to ensure recognition of suicide and self-harm in relevant national policies, plans and programmes.

The delivery of Storm on-line training will resume when Probation Service staff have received the required IT equipment.

3.1.2 Develop and implement a range of agency and inter-agency operational protocols for critical incidents (HSE NOSP, HSE Acutes, Gardaí, Irish Prison Service, Probation Service)

Draft data sharing protocol is still awaiting review by Garda Policy Coordination Unit. However, progress has been made on the dissemination of the new bereavement guide by the Garda Victim Liaison Office. HSE NOSP plans to continue to work with Garda Victim Liaison Office to progress the data sharing protocol and provision of suicide bereavement support.

Acute Operations in conjunction with NOSP has assessed the potential for Phase I targeted training of ED staff. Initial plans were to progressed for January 2021 but due to a surge in COVID presentations, the roll out has been paused. The next date will be May.

The Irish Prison Service report that there has been no progress on agreement to establish a sub-group to consider issue of information sharing between IPS, Probation Service, HSE and AGS, however separate work underway in this regard not specifically related to mental health/suicide prevention. The Probation Service report that Covid-19 has impacted on the ability to make connections with the Central Mental Hospital.



At a Glance: Needs Attention

Goal 4

4.1.2 Deliver accessible, uniform, evidence based psychological interventions, including counselling, for mental health problems at both primary and secondary care levels. (HSE Mental Health Operations and HSE Primary Care)

National Clinical Lead and Programme Manager for the Dual Diagnosis Programme have been appointed and awaiting start date. However, backfill needs to happen before post holder can commence in the new role. The proposed next steps are to progress backfill, set up working group, agree MOC and identify pilot sites.

4.1.3 Ensure that those in the criminal justice system have continued access to appropriate information and treatment in prisons and while under Probation services in the community (Irish Prison Service, Probation Service))

The Irish Prison Service update that the Chair of Taskforce to review provision of mental health services to those in custody has been appointed and terms of reference have been agreed between the DoH and DoJ. The outstanding MOU has been noted for inclusion in the work of the Taskforce. The Probation Service update that no meetings relevant to this action took place in Q1 but online meetings will resume in April.

4.1.4 Deliver a uniform assessment approach across the health services, in accordance with existing and recognised guidelines for people who have self-harmed or are at risk of suicide (HSE Mental Health Operations)

A project working group has been convened and is being meeting regularly to progress the guidelines document. Meetings have taken place regarding elements of the guidelines and the need to identify concrete resources that can support roll-out, e.g. STORM training. The writing has not progressed as quickly as envisaged given competing operational demands. The proposed next steps are to facilitate stakeholder consultation and finalise guidelines.

At a Glance: Needs Attention

Goal 4 continued

4.3.2 Commission and evaluate bereavement support services (HSE NOSP)

A draft of the evaluation of the Pieta House SBLO service was submitted by the National Suicide Research Foundation. Access to data for the evaluation team was delayed due to staff turnover and COVID 19 pandemic. The proposed next steps are to finalise the SBLO evaluation and work with Pieta House to implement recommendations.



At a Glance: Needs Attention

Goal 5

5.1.2 Continue to promote a whole school approach to student guidance/ counselling within each post primary school (Department of Education)

The Taskforce on Guidance Counselling has met six times to date and did not meet in the last quarter. Responding to the implications of the Covid crisis, coupled with the move to the new Department have led to delays in progress. The proposed next steps are to consider the recommendations from the Indecon review report can be implemented.

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 (HSE NOSP)

Significant proportion of time given to support mental health and NOSP projects, and general BAU. It was not possible to advance the exercise to determine the feasibility and need for a new repository of suicide prevention resources. The proposed next steps are to commence an exercise to determine the feasibility and need for the development of a new repository, and produce recommendations.

5.2.1 Develop and deliver a uniform procedure to respond to suicidal behaviour across mental health services (HSE Mental Health Operations)

In addition to ongoing work on the SSHAARP guidelines, the report based on the review of in-patient suspected suicide deaths needs to be finalised.

At a Glance: Needs Attention

Goal 5 continued

5.4.2 Deliver training in suicide prevention to staff in government departments and agencies who are likely to come into contact with people who are vulnerable to/at risk of suicidal behaviour (Department of Education, HSA and the Defence Forces)

The Department of Education is exploring other ways to promote the Safetalk training. Engagement with NOSP & Education Centres is also planned to see how best to make training accessible for teachers. HSA is currently awaiting the publication of the Healthy Workplace Framework to progress this action. The Defence Forces are currently promoting START as online training in the absence of face to face training.

5.4.3 Support professional regulatory bodies to develop and deliver accredited, competency based education on suicide prevention to health professionals (Department of Health)

This action is delayed as Unit resources are focussed on the Covid 19 response. The proposed next steps are for DoH to work with NOSP to ensure the NOSP standardised training programme is delivered to undergrads and medical professionals.

Goal 6

6.1.1 Work with professional groups to reduce the inappropriate prescribing of medicines commonly used in intentional overdose, including benzodiazepines and SSRIs (Department of Health)

Work delayed due Covid 19. However a number of actions in recent years have contributed to improving awareness of inappropriate prescribing. DoH will work with NOSP to continue exploration of ways to progress this action, perhaps through education.



At a Glance: Needs Attention

Goal 7

7.2.3 Collect, analyse and disseminate high quality data on suicide and self-harm and ensure adequate access to and understanding of the data among those working in suicide prevention across all sectors (HSE NOSP)

The coroners dataset is being analysed at an area-level to help inform local action planning. Analysis has been carried out at a CHO level - and a briefing paper is being drafted. Analysis is now beginning at a Cfl action plan level - and reports will be prepared for ROSPs across the country. It is flagged as needing attention because this work is behind schedule.

At a Glance: Off Track (3 actions)

Goal 1

1.1.2 Develop and implement a national mental health and wellbeing promotion plan (Department of Health)

Action on hold as Unit resources are focussed on Covid 19 response.

Goal 5

5.1.1 Develop quality standards for suicide prevention services provided by statutory and non-statutory organisations, and implement the standards through an appropriate structure (HSE NOSP).

There are ongoing challenges to implementation of the quality standards surfacing due to COVID, charity regulator requirements of NGOs and implementation supports required for project. This is impacting on the timelines for the external evaluation. HSE NOSP continues to support NGOs already engaged with the self-assessment tool.

Goal 7

7.2.1 Develop capacity for observation and information gathering on those at risk of or vulnerable to suicide and self-harm. This includes children/young people in the child welfare/protection sector and places of detention, including prisons.

HSE NOSP has re-engaged with the Garda research Unit in Templemore in February 2021 and resubmitted request for analysis of PULSE Data to identify frequently used location for suicidal behaviour (fatal & nonfatal). They agree in principle to assist with this analysis. The proposed next steps are for HSE NOSP to follow-up with Garda Research Unit to agree a timeline for the project.



HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention - April 2021

