



Connecting for Life

# Strategy implementation monitoring report – Q2 2020

By: HSE NOSP (2020)



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# 1: Introduction

This is the Q2 2020 implementation monitoring report for *Connecting for Life*. It will provide an overview of the work carried out by strategy lead agencies from April-June 2020.

Q1 saw responsive adaptations being made across our statutory and NGO partners to the challenges posed by Covid-19. Many of our partners moved services online or to telephone where possible, or offered alternative online sources of support and information. As some services and business as usual activity resumes, it is apparent that innovative adaptations and efficient changes to business as usual continue to

be made to ensure critical suicide prevention work continues apace, on a whole of government basis.

Understandably, many of our partners have had to prioritise other strategic and operational concerns and this report is compiled with this in mind. Of the 69 actions in CfL, updates were received on all 69. Of these 69 actions, 19 were logged as needing attention and 3 were off track. The remaining actions were considered to be on track. The main reason given for actions being 'needs attention' or 'off track' was redeployment of staff, reprioritization of resources due to the global pandemic or inability to carry out activities such as training due to social distancing requirements.

# 1: Introduction

This quarter updates were received from the majority of CfL implementation partners (some department names changed this quarter. This will be reflected in the Q3 monitoring report):

- Broadcasting Authority of Ireland
- Department of Employment Affairs & Social Protection
- Department of Education and Skills
- Department of Justice and Equality
- Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
- Department of Communications, Climate Change and the Environment

- Department of Community and Rural Development
- Department of Children and Youth Affairs
- Department of Defence
- Department of Health
- Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport
- Higher Education Authority
- Local Government Management Agency
- Press Council of Ireland
- Tusla
- Health and Safety Authority
- HSE NOSP
- HSE Health and Wellbeing
- HSE Primary Care.

Returns were not received from one partner:

- HSE Acute Hospitals

# 1: Q2 2020 at a glance

## •CfL Implementation Planning (2020-22):

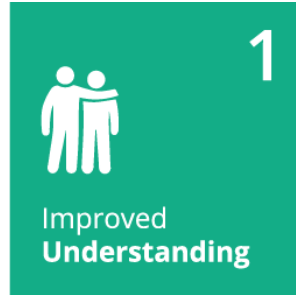
- CfL Implementation Plan 2020-22 has been drafted for final input and approval by the cross sectoral group.
- HSE NOSP has refined the SLA process with NGO partners and developed a standardised reporting template for all NGOs to report to NOSP on their funded activities and enhance alignment with the strategy.

## •The public health emergency posed by Covid-19:

- Many HSE staff who were officially redeployed or assigned additional responsibilities are gradually returning to their roles. However some staff, including Resource Officers for Suicide Prevention (ROSPs), remain fully or part-time redeployed and other HSE staff are unofficially redeployed, working on the development of the HSE National Framework for the Psychosocial response to Covid-19.
- The Research and Evaluation team in NOSP has been tracking redeployment and other pressures on HSE Resource Officers for Suicide Prevention, CfL HSE personnel, NGO partners and the National Clinical Programme for Self Harm via a monthly survey carried out over the period April – June.
- Much of the mental health communications work in the HSE currently is still prioritising Covid-19 related content and information.
- Since March all face to face suicide prevention training has been postponed due to social distancing restrictions. A new e-learning programme has been launched and it is hoped there will be capacity to move other training programmes online.



## 2: Overview of progress on CfL strategic goals



Improved  
Understanding



Empowered  
Communities



Focus on  
Priority Groups



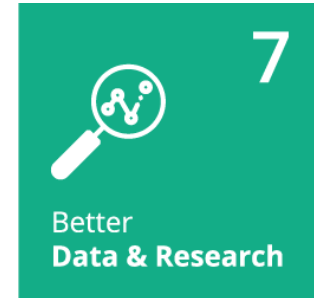
Better Access  
to Support



High Quality  
Services



Reduced  
Access to Means



Better  
Data & Research



# 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"> <li>• A joint campaign #InThisTogether was developed between the Healthy Ireland and HSE MH teams in the DoH to support the mental wellbeing of wider population.</li> <li>• HSE NOSP submitted a proposal to get questions on suicide and self harm included in a COVID-19 Psychosocial Research Consortium Study - the questions were included in wave 2 of data collection.</li> <li>• Due to Covid-19, the estimated publication date of the HSE Health and Wellbeing Plan will be January 2021. Planning for stakeholder engagement sessions are now underway.</li> <li>• HSE PC has developed new guidance for drug and alcohol services to respond to the increased risk of suicidal behaviour and overdose.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The mental health needs of priority groups were included in content developed for yourmentalhealth.ie as part of the response to the Covid-19 crisis by HSE Mental Health operations.</li> <li>• A key partnership between Pavee Point and Text 50808 was finalised in June and a social media campaign was developed to support the delivery of a text mental health support service to Travellers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Fortnight delivered a NOSP-funded video "Collectively Counting" on mental health during Covid-19 – which received national and UK attention.</li> <li>• The majority of statutory and C &amp; V providers in this space have focused on Covid-19 related communications during this period.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One complaint regarding reporting in media submitted to the BAI. The complaint was rejected by the Compliance Committee. Awareness raising activity was supported by the Covid Round to fund activity in the commercial radio sector to inform and support the listening public on multiple topics to do with the Covid pandemic.</li> <li>• The NSRF have begun a literature review on the impact of suicide and self-harm content online, which was commissioned by HSE NOSP.</li> </ul>



# 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"> <li>• Presentation made to ROSPs leadership group in Q2 on the HSE Psychosocial Response Group (collaboration with NOSP). A teleconference between NOSP-ROSPs-Mental Health was held to review local CfL implementation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidance and messaging activities have prioritised Covid-19 and mental health related communications.</li> <li>• HSE NOSP is developing a guidance document for Community Response Plans in Cases of Suspected Suicide, with some delays due to redeployment of staff.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As of March 2020 all suicide prevention training has been halted due to Covid-19 social distancing restrictions.</li> <li>• The Stress Control workshop has been made available online by HSE H&amp;W since April, with 3 courses delivered online to date to both HSE staff and the general public.</li> <li>• In May the HSE NOSP launched a new online suicide prevention skills programme (Livingworks Start) as part of a pilot initiative.</li> <li>• HSE H&amp;W are developing an online course for Minding Your Wellbeing both for the general public and specifically for older people. A consultation session has taken place with Age &amp; Opportunity to inform this work.</li> <li>• The evaluation framework for social prescribing has been completed and forms part of the national framework for the mainstreaming of social prescribing in Ireland, which is currently at sign-off stage.</li> </ul>





# Goal 3: Focus on Priority Groups

3.1 Reducing suicide among priority groups	3.2 Early intervention and prevention of substance misuse with Primary Care	3.3 Supports for young people
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To support the policy proofing work, NOSP has engaged a policy expert to explore a multi faceted approach to the action. Work includes: a literature review, development of an impact assessment tool and development of case studies.</li> <li>Approx. 20% of those who have applied for Start licence (the 90minute online suicide prevention course) work in the health and social care professional setting. Staff in the RCSI and National Ambulance Service are amongst the licence holders. HSE NOSP has begun planning to move some courses for professionals (STORM and Bereavement) online.</li> <li>HSE Primary Care has commenced pilot implementation of Homeless Hospital Discharge Protocol.</li> <li>Civil Service Employee Assistance (CSEAS) continue to produce a variety of resources on minding mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HSE Primary Care are currently exploring alternative options for the delivery of the face-to-face element of SAOR training.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final draft of National Student Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Framework is underway. Arrangements are in place for publishing of the Framework by the HEA.</li> <li>The DES Action Research Project on wellbeing in schools is still underway and contact will be made with schools regarding this research project in the new school year.</li> <li>An online youth consultation on mental health was hosted by Jigsaw and HSE Health this quarter. 'Youth talk, we listen' was virtually attended by over 80 young people.</li> <li>HSE Primary Care has begun a pilot of telepsychiatry support for under 18 Addiction services.</li> </ul>



# 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"> <li>• HSE MH have postponed progress on exploring 24/7 mental health services due to Covid-19 response.</li> <li>• The Irish Prison Service, Central Mental Hospital, Probation Service and DoJ and CfL representatives held an online information exchange meeting in July.</li> <li>• CNS x2 recruited for Temple Street due to commence in post by end of July as part of the National Clinical Programme for Self-Harm.</li> <li>• The National Clinical Programme for Self-Harm continues to be delivered in EDs, with a small number of nurses redeployed elsewhere to support the Covid-19 response.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planned regional stakeholder engagement sessions due to be held by HSE MH on models of care for therapeutic interventions postponed, to be rescheduled when possible.</li> <li>• Within HSE Primary Care further consideration of approach to the issue taking place between MH and Addiction services is underway. In the interim period additional resources have been identified for Addiction services to support mental health issues in the population.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HSE NOSP has signed an SLA with Pieta to deliver a national SBLO and suicide bereavement service. An external researcher has also been appointed to evaluate the service.</li> <li>• Work has been ongoing in HSE MH to finalise the national suicide bereavement information pack.</li> </ul>



# 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"> <li>Implementation of the guidance is ongoing, however use of the online tool is restricted due to personnel being redeployed.</li> <li>The independent evaluation of the Best Practice Guidance is currently paused due to Covid-19.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working Group and Steering Group meetings relating to the national guidelines on suicide and self-harm awareness, assessment and response have had to be postponed, to be reconvened when possible.</li> <li>In relation to implementing a system of service review, a standardised survey instrument agreed for attendees at Q4 2019 workshop on recording and reporting practices.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Pilot of the Irish Prisoner Release policy continues in all locations. IPS and HSE continue to review progress of this initiative and are continuing analysis of the data available since the inception of the pilot.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HSE NOSP has carried out an initial scoping of work to embed suicide prevention training into higher education and professional curricula, including engagement with MECC Clinical and Programme lead who have developed National Undergraduate Curriculum for chronic disease prevention.</li> <li>DES continues to work to promote SafeTALK among education practitioners.</li> </ul>

# 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"><li>• The DoH will continue to consider how to assist NOSP and the HSPA regarding paracetamol sale and access and adherence to legislation.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Irish Prison Service has completed a window replacement programme in a number of locations. A Group has been established to review potential ligature risk of introducing in-cell phones.</li><li>• A Working group has been convened in HSE MH with HSE Estates to address ligature risk reduction. The Group includes representation from across Mental Health services and HSE Estates.</li><li>• Local Authority Resource Pack circulated as part of community response to COVID-19 included information on support services for vulnerable and at-risk individuals.</li></ul>



# 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"> <li>CfL evaluation programme of work on-going.</li> <li>Two internal (to the HSE) sharing the learning events were hosted relating to NOSP contracted research projects - for the Ballyfermot Rapid assessment and one scheduled event to share the learning re: CAMS interventions (findings from 2 evaluations).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HSE, the NSRF and MHC have prepared a proposal for a retrospective research study looking at deaths in mental health services.</li> <li>On-going analysis of 2015/17 coroners data and write-up of the 3 year report is underway.</li> <li>Irish Prison Service self-harm data for Q4 submitted to NSRF for analysis. The 2019 SADA report will be published in Q3 2020.</li> </ul>	<p>No updates received on this action area for this reporting period.</p> <p><i>(7.3 Review (and, if necessary, revise) current recording procedures for death by suicide.)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NOSP renewed the contract with the Health Research Board to continue the Coroner's Suicide Surveillance research project, for another 3 years.</li> </ul>

# At a Glance: Needs Attention

## Goal 1

### *1.1.5 Promoting physical activity as a protective factor for mental health through the National Physical Activity Plan. DOH*

While individual levels of physical activity have risen, team sports and facilities have been affected by COVID-19 restrictions. Social marketing resources have also been diverted to the COVID-19 response.

### *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. HSE NOSP*

Green Ribbon campaign postponed.

### *1.4.1 Broadcast monitoring. BAI*

Awareness raising activity was focussed on COVID-19.

## Goal 2

### *2.3.2 Deliver training and awareness programmes prioritising professionals and volunteers across community-based organisations HSE NOSP*

All face to face suicide prevention training (including train-the-trainer events) have been paused since March 2020 due to COVID-19. Analysis of training participant data delayed due to redeployment. However, in May a new online suicide prevention skills programme was launched as part of a pilot initiative. LivingWorks Start builds skills and knowledge to keep others safe.

# At a Glance: Needs Attention

## Goal 3

### *3.1.1 policy proofing*

This was flagged as needs attention by DCRD, IPS/DoJ, DOH

### *3.1.2 Inter agency protocols*

IPS: 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.

### *3.1.3 Develop and deliver targeted initiatives and services at Primary Care level for priority groups.*

- HSE Social inclusion and DRHE training partnership – training delayed due to COVID-19. Considering how training for groups can best be delivered in current situation. LivingWorks Start online programme on suicide prevention circulated to all Addiction service.
- Efforts to embed CfL actions in regional homeless fora action plans have not progressed due to COVID-19. Going forward they will consider the role of Dept of Housing and Local Authorities here.
- Stepped Model of Mental Health Care: derogation of posts not obtained in the development money for 2020. Explore for 2021.

### *3.1.4 Evaluate as appropriate targeted initiatives and/or services for priority groups. HSE NOSP*

Due to redeployment there has been a lack of capacity to progress this project internally over the last 3 months. The NSRF provided some data on evidence review (of effective suicide prevention measures for CfL priority groups/ and gaps in knowledge). As per briefing on the impact of COVID-19 on CfL - the needs of particular priority groups may surface over the coming months.

# At a Glance: Needs Attention

## Goal 3

### *3.1.5 Provide and sustain training to health and social care professionals. HSE NOSP.*

All face to face suicide prevention training (including train the trainer events) has been paused since March 2020 due to COVID-19. Planning has begun to move some courses for professionals (STORM and Bereavement) online.

### *3.2.1 Continue the roll out of programmes aimed at early intervention and prevention of alcohol and drug misuse. HSE PC.*

Global pandemic suspended delivery of training and trainers were redeployed to crisis response. Currently exploring alternative options for the delivery of the face-to-face element of SAOR training and alternative for MECC.

## Goal 4

### *4.1.2 Provide a co-ordinated, uniform and QA service for those with co-morbid addiction and mental health difficulties. HSE MH*

Currently no Clinical Lead in place for dual diagnosis services. National Clinical Leads in the areas of Integrated Care, Mental Health and Social Inclusion are collaborating to progress the Model of Care and putting appropriate implementation structures in place.

### *4.1.4 Deliver a uniform assessment approach across the health services. HSE MH*

Working and steering group meetings have been postponed. Drafting of the guidelines has also paused.

### *4.2.1 Deliver accessible, uniform, evidence based psychological interventions, including counselling, for mental health problems at both primary and secondary care levels. HSE MH and HSE PC*

Service improvement project is temporarily paused, as a result of challenges posed by COVID-19 on staff, service users/family members and services (HSE MH); Further consideration of approach to the issue taking place between MH and Addiction services. In interim period additional resources identified for Addiction services to support MH issues in population (HSE PC)



# At a Glance: Needs Attention

## Goal 5

*5.2.1 Develop and deliver a uniform procedure to respond to suicidal behaviour across mental health services. HSE MH*

Working and steering group meetings have been postponed - drafting of the guidelines has also paused due to COVID-19.

*5.3.2 Ensure compliance with the relevant policies through regular audit and implementation of audit recommendations. IPS*

Review of Monitoring of Prisoners Policies. Issues COVID-19. Legal clarification required and IT system requirements to be agreed.

*5.4.2 Deliver training in suicide prevention to staff in government departments and agencies.* Flagged by some lead agencies as needs attention/off track (DCRD, DES, DEASP, LGMA, HSA) due to COVID-19. HSA is also awaiting the Healthy Workplace Framework launch.

*5.4.3 Support professional regulatory bodies to develop and deliver accredited, competency based education on suicide prevention to health professionals. DOH* Work delayed due to COVID-19.

## Goal 6

*6.1.1 Work with professional groups to reduce inappropriate prescribing of medicines commonly used in intentional overdose. DOH*

Work delayed due to COVID-19. However a number of actions in recent years have contributed to improving awareness of inappropriate prescribing.

*6.2.1 Local Authorities will be requested to consider, develop and implement measures where practical to restrict access to identified locations and settings where people are at risk of engaging in suicidal behaviour, and assist generally in reducing risk factors in public locations. LGMA*

Review of all activities in light of current COVID-19 guidelines. Pausing of contracting / progression of studies on frequently used locations for self-harm / suicide due to COVID-19.



# At a Glance: Off Track

## Goal 1

### *1.1.2 Develop and implement a national mental health and wellbeing promotion plan. DOH HI*

Action on hold as Unit resources are focussed on COVID-19 response. Social marketing resources have been diverted to the COVID-19 response. It should be noted however that mental wellbeing is a key element of the “In This Together” campaign.

## 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 DoJ*

Probation service highlighted activities including STORM training and a planned conference not currently taking place due to COVID-19.

## Goal 5

### *5.1.1 Develop quality standards for suicide prevention services provided by statutory and non-statutory HSE NOSP*

Training scheduled for April and external evaluation had to be postponed due to COVID-19.



Connecting for Life



Seirbhís Sláinte  
Níos Fearr  
á Forbairt

Building a  
Better Health  
Service