



Connecting for Life

# Strategy implementation monitoring report – Q4 2020

By: HSE NOSP (2020)



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# 1: Introduction

This is the Q4 2020 implementation monitoring report for *Connecting for Life (CfL)*. It will provide an overview of the work carried out by strategy lead agencies from October-December 2020.

It is clear from the updates provided that suicide prevention work continues apace, albeit in a different context from the beginning of the year. Face to face suicide prevention training is still paused due to social distancing restrictions. Some courses have moved online and other courses such as STORM are proving more difficult to migrate to an online space. Work is ongoing to ensure that suicide prevention training, where appropriate, can be delivered online until face to face training can resume.

Significant work has been undertaken with our NGO partners to revise Service Level Agreements (SLAs) for the coming year. All SLAs with our NGO partners have now been standardised and

all contractual agreements are aligned to CfL actions. A reporting and monitoring system will be put in place to oversee all SLAs for the coming year.

Updates provided indicate that our CfL partners are keenly aware of the impact of Covid-19 on mental health and wellbeing of their staff, service users and the public at large. Online and other supports such as training programmes and webinars continue to be offered to help deal with the stress and uncertainty of these times.

This quarter, of the 69 actions in CfL, updates were received on 55. Of these 55 actions for which updates were received, 14 were logged as needing attention and 4 were off track. The majority of actions were considered to be on track. The main reason given for actions being 'needs attention' or 'off track' were delays or competing demands due to Covid-19.



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This quarter **updates were received from** 14 CfL implementation partners: This quarter **updates not received from** 3 partners:

- Broadcasting Authority of Ireland
- Press Ombudsman
- Department of Health
- Department of Social Protection
- Department of Justice & Equality
- Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine
- Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth
- Department of Education and Skills
- Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment
- Department of Community and Rural Development
- Local Government Management Agency
- Department of the Environment, Climate & Communications
- Department of Defence
- Higher Education Authority
- HSE NOSP
- HSE Health & Wellbeing
- HSE Primary Care
- HSE Mental Health Operations

- HSE Acute Hospitals
- Tusla
- Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport

# 1: Q4 2020 at a glance

- **CfL Implementation Planning (2020-22):**

- The CfL implementation plan 2020-2022 is now finalised and will be published by the end of Q4. News of the four year extension of CfL has been disseminated and received very positively among stakeholders.

- As part of the reporting process for Q4, all implementation partners were requested to devise their quarterly milestones for 2021 based on their assigned actions.

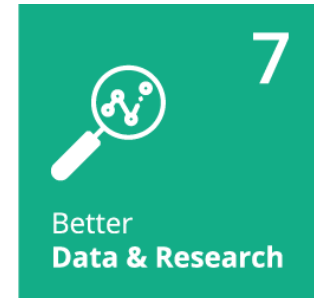
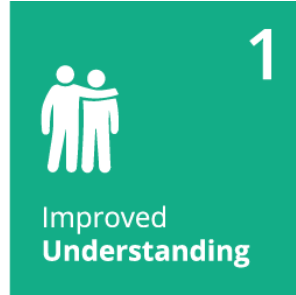
- **Headline developments**

- The latest [official suicide statistics](#) were released in by HSE NOSP and the CSO in November. There were 437 deaths by suicide in Ireland in 2018 (9.0 per 100,000), in comparison to 383 in 2017 (8.0 per 100,000). The data for 2019 is still provisional.

- HSE NOSP launched a research grant scheme for collaborative research projects between researchers and service providers in December. Grants will be awarded to projects focusing on research into priority groups for suicide risk, as outlined in the Connecting for Life policy document. The scheme will close on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2021.



## 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"> <li>• Questions on suicide and self-harm have been successfully accepted to the Healthy Ireland survey on the add-on online module. Recruitment of the sample for the survey began in late October.</li> <li>• HSE NOSP is currently finalising a research paper based on analysis of survey data from the UK and Ireland study 'the Covid 19 Psychological Research Consortium'. This paper is being completed with staff in the School of Psychology in Maynooth.</li> <li>• The Healthy Ireland 'Keep Well' campaign was launched recently. €11.8m has been allocated to Sport Ireland as part of the campaign.</li> <li>• HSE PC completed market research on 1000 young adults examining attitudes towards cannabis to help inform awareness campaign in 2021.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The launch of the 'Minding Your Wellbeing' programme was promoted via new blog content on ymh.ie by HSE MH.</li> <li>• HSE MH have finalised the suicide prevention video for the Traveller Community - in collaboration with Turn2me.ie and Exchange House.</li> <li>• HSE MH have produced videos with with Translate Ireland on Minding Your Mental Health in 8 different languages.</li> </ul>	<p>HSE NOSP has carried out stigma reduction communications work with partners including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of Green Ribbon campaign (October, online) by SeeChange, and supporting the campaign across HSE networks and channels.</li> <li>• Advertising with First Fortnight in advance of their 2021 Festival (January).</li> <li>• NOSP social activity supporting many partner agency activities e.g., Trans Mental Health Week</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NOSP support of Headline 2020 Media Awards (December) ~200 entries (+57% increase). Awards ceremony held 2nd December.</li> <li>• No complaints were made to BAI this quarter. Updated Guidelines on the reporting of suicide and self-harm promoted to relevant stakeholders.</li> <li>• The DCCAE / HSE NOSP jointly commissioned literature review on the harmful impact of suicide and self-harm content online was published in November.</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>Ongoing meetings are taking place between ROSPs, NOSP and MH Operations, including a Q4 meeting in October.</li> <li>ROSPs continue to participate in the HSE 'Green Box' Implementation Steering Group.</li> <li>Discussions are ongoing in relation to the development of local CfL plans with a milestone now set for Q2 2021.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final changes have been made to "Guidance Document for Community Response Plans in Cases of Suspected Suicide." It is currently awaiting input from HSE Psychology and publication is planned for Q1 2021.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Face to face training remains paused due to Covid-19. The online offering of suicide prevention training continues to be developed: 'Responding to a Person in Suicidal Distress' and 'Self - Care' presentations have been delivered to personnel in the Department of Defence. These presentations will also be delivered to ED administration staff in December. The online Bereavement Programme for professionals has been finalised, and will be piloted Jan 21st.</li> <li>HSE H&amp;W launched the revised Minding Your Wellbeing online programme in November. Two online Stress Control courses were also delivered.</li> <li>Regards progressing social prescribing (SP), HSE H&amp;W has been engaging with NGO partners on the job description and salary scale for SP Link Workers.</li> </ul>



# Goal 3: Focus on Priority Groups



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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>The DOD Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy was launched in early December 2020.</li> <li>HSE PC has identified key staff to target for suicide prevention training. This will also be extended to Section 39 agencies working in the area of Addiction.</li> <li>NOSP and the HEA have joint funded the implementation of CAMS training to over 300 psychologists / counsellors working in the higher education counselling services.</li> <li>The ICGP and NOSP hosted training for 140 GP trainees with Connecting with People. In November 500 GPs attended the ICGP Winter meeting webinar on Early Intervention for Psychosis.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SAOR Screening and Brief Intervention for Problem Alcohol and Substance Use: Classroom training for SAOR has been a challenge with Covid restrictions on gatherings and travel, and with the redeployment of trainers into other COVID-specific roles. eLearning for SAOR remains available. The Health Diversion Programme continues to be developed in conjunction with the DOH, DOJ and AGS.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The HEA launched the National Student Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Framework in October 2020. The HEA is collecting data on the use of the 2020 student support funding allocation to promote national implementation of Framework.</li> <li>77.5% of accepted CAMHS referrals offered an appointment within 12 weeks. Percentage offered an appointment and seen within 12 months is currently at 95.5%.</li> <li>All 4 HSE pilot sites for the new Telepsychiatry model are now operational.</li> <li>DES held a Shared Learning Day in November to mark the end of the Wellbeing Action Research Project. Development of wellbeing CPD is underway.</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 has successfully appointed 47 out of the 48 approved posts for 7/7 community mental health service provision.</li> <li>• A meeting of the CfL Justice reps took place in December 2020.</li> <li>• HSE MH has progressed drafting the national guidelines on suicide and self-harm awareness, assessment and response. Work was initially stalled due to redeployment of relevant staff.</li> <li>• HSE MH has appointed an additional CNS to Mater Hospital and Temple street.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Dual Diagnosis Clinical Programme has been re-established with interviews for Clinical Lead and Programme manager underway. Some staff have been recruited to address MH issues in Social Inclusion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The National Suicide Bereavement Support Guide is awaiting final feedback from the working group and once signed off the design process will quickly recommence with the official launch date for the guide predicted to be late January/early February of 2021.</li> <li>• The National Suicide Bereavement Advisory Group met for a second time in November 2020 and signed off on terms of reference and membership of the group which includes two people representing those bereaved by suicide alongside NGO reps and HSE colleagues.</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>The independent evaluation of the Best Practice Guidance has resumed after being paused due to Covid-19.</li> <li>HSE NOSP has delivered training in the online Best Practice tool to a further 5 NGO self-assessment teams. A review of the Best Practice Guidance framework has been completed to update references to legislation and policy.</li> <li>SLAs with all NGO partners have been standardised and are now aligned directly to CfL actions.</li> <li>HSE NOSP engaged in communication activities relating to new publications and information updates such as the joint NOSP/CSO paper on the latest suicide statistics.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Action 5.2.3 is now reported on under action 7.2.2.</i></li> <li>DCEDIY continues to meet its responsibilities in relation to conducting reviews with regards to child deaths in care.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Irish Prison Service published the SADA 2019 report in September – detailing statistics on self-harm in Irish prisons.</li> <li>The pilot medical card project is now in place in all locations. IPS and HSE/PCRS continue to review progress of this initiative and are continuing analysis of the data available since the inception of the pilot, in particular to establish first time contact with PCRS and the retention rates at six months.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suicide prevention training is still stalled across a number of settings due to Covid-19.</li> <li>The HSA continues to offer suicide awareness training (e-Suicide Talk) to all staff. A review of the Programme is planned for the end of 2020 and an update on the level of take up in early 2021. The HSA has also delivered the 'Managing Bullying at Work' to 134 individuals in Q4.</li> <li>DES is exploring other ways to promote Safetalk training. Information on Safetalk has been included in a revised directory of supports for schools and also circulated to all NEPS psychologists across the country.</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>• Work on this action has been delayed due to Covid-19. The DoH Mental Health Unit will work with NOSP to continue exploration of ways to progress this action, perhaps through education.</li></ul>	<p>HSE MH operations has completed a series of actions relating to ligature points across the HSE Estates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The national ligature risk reduction policy has been written and reviewed. It will now go out for one further round of consultation before being published.</li><li>• An amended ligature audit tool has been pilot tested in 8 mental health services and has been positively evaluated.</li><li>• Plans to develop training resources for both the policy and the audit tool have been developed.</li><li>• The development of a 'repository' of learning and information to guide construction, renovations and environmental safety related to ligature risk is ongoing - a survey for HSE Estates and for Mental health Services staff is currently being completed to inform a first iteration of the repository.</li><li>• As part of the review of ligature points in Irish prisons, the window replacement programme has been completed in a number of locations.</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>HSE NOSP has progressed a number of commitments: Evaluation of suicide prevention training: The literature review will be published by the end of 2020. The evaluation fieldwork was been paused due to Covid-19 and has now recommenced.</li> <li>The synthesis of research commissioned under phase 1 CfL is almost completed and will be published in Q1 next year.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The first report from the analysis of Coroner’s data 2015-2017 is being finalised for Q1 2021 completion.</li> <li>Initial discussions have taken place between NOSP and ROSPs in relation to establishing a real-time data collection system that may involve the emerging needs priority groups work on suspected suicides, the Observatory (in Cork) and the analysis of PULSE data.</li> <li>The NSRF options appraisal in relation to data on suspected suicide deaths amongst mental health service users has been reviewed by NOSP and MH Ops and a Q4 meeting is scheduled for mid-December.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting of the Suicide Statistics Liaison Group took place in September, attended by the DoJ CfL rep, and representative from the Dublin Coroners Service. Work is ongoing to continue this collaboration in order to support and progress this workstream.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HSE NOSP launched a research grant scheme in December 2020. Queries are currently being responded to and the scheme will close for applications on 22nd January. The Review Panel will be convened and applications will be reviewed and successful applicants notified in Q1 next year.</li> <li>A RfT has been developed for research to support the implementation of CAMS in the prison service. This will be issued by both parties in Q1 2021.</li> </ul>



# At a Glance: Needs Attention

## Goal 2

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

Face to Face training remains paused. STORM online training cannot be facilitated across the HSE due to accessibility issues to the full Microsoft Teams platform. This issue has been escalated with HSE ICT.

## 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 (Department of Justice, Irish Prison Service and Department of Health)*

This work was to be progressed earlier in 2020 in DoJ but has been postponed due to competing demands. Work which had been initiated in DoJ to be continued by DCE-DIY following the Transfer of Function Order of October 2020. The Mental Health Group in the Irish Prison service have drafted a paper on Mental Health in the prison service which is currently with senior management for review. In DoH work on this action has been delayed due to Covid-19.

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

Due to competing demands, little progress has been made on developing or enhancing protocols between: HSE NOSP and An Garda Síochána. Communication has been sent from HSE NOSP to the Garda Commissioner to emphasise the importance of having a protocol in place.

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

As stated in 2.3.2 above, STORM trainers need the required ICT functionality in the HSE IT system.



# At a Glance: Needs Attention

## Goal 4

*4.1.2 Provide a co-ordinated, uniform and quality assured service and deliver pathways of care for those with co-morbid addiction and mental health difficulties (HSE Mental Health Operations)*

Expressions of interest issued for both the Clinical Lead and for a Programme Manager and interviews for both positions took place in Q4. Proposed next steps are to confirm appointment of relevant posts and recommence the development of the Model of Care.

*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. The Irish Prison Service and the HSE National Forensic Mental Health Service will complete an agreed memorandum of understanding on improved links through the NFMHS Prison Inreach Service and the Probation Service will engage with the HSE on maintaining and developing access to community psychiatric services (Irish Prison Service)*

The specific milestone set under this action as to ensure all of the relevant implementation partners met as the CfL Justice Sector group. This group met in November, however progressing the work of the group has been difficult due to competing Covid-19 demands.

*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)*

While flagged here as needing attention the main issue relates to timing and the delays experienced due to redeployments and the pausing of 'service improvement' projects. Essentially the work is back on track but behind original schedules.

# At a Glance: Needs Attention

## Goal 4 continued

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

Service Improvement Projects remain paused in HSE due to Covid-19.

## Goal 5

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

The work on developing national guidelines on suicide and self-harm awareness, assessment and response is back on track but it's flagged as needing attention as it is behind schedule.

*5.3.2 Ensure compliance with the relevant policies through regular audit and implementation of audit recommendations (Irish Prison Service)*

The Irish Prison Service is currently seeking legal clarification regarding prisoner monitoring policies. Prison rules are currently under review and IT system requirements are to be agreed.

*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 Defence, Local Government Management Agency)*

The SafeTALK and ASIST programmes are still stalled due to Covid-19.



# At a Glance: Needs Attention

## Goal 5 continued

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

Work on this action has been delayed due to competing demands in dealing with the response to Covid-19. DoH will 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.

### *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 (Local Government Management Agency)*

There are resource issues across the sector, however, a number of Local Authorities (LA) have undertaken a review of locations and settings which come under this action. This work is ongoing. In some locations signs have been erected with details of Samaritans etc. and in other identified risk areas appropriate mechanisms have been put in place to mitigate the risk. Updated signs on rivers in association with LAs, SPO, HSE and the Samaritans.

# At a Glance: Off Track

## Goal 1

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

Action is on hold as Unit resources in DoH are focussed on Covid-19.

## 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 (Probation Services)*

As indicated in the previous Q3 2020 report, the Probation service reported that STORM training is not currently taking place due to Covid 19 but work is underway to begin the delivery of STORM online via Microsoft Teams.

## 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)*

HSE NOSP was unable to deliver training on the Best Practice Guidance online tool online due to Covid-19 as the administrative staff overseeing the online portal was redeployed . Access to the online tool has recently been enabled but this has put a 2 month time lag on the project. This may impact the timeline of the independent evaluation HSE NOSP has commissioned of the implementation of the Best Practice Guidance.

# At a Glance: Off Track

## Goal 5

*5.4.2 (Amended) To provide guidance, advice and support to workplaces in relation to addressing work-related risks and the management and reduction of work-related stressors including psychosocial hazards in the workplace (DEASP and HSA)*

The HSA is awaiting finalisation/publication of the Healthy Workplace Framework by Department of Health. DEASP have not been in a position to deliver any workplace suicide prevention training to staff due to Covid-19.



# HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention - December 2020