

MINUTE BRIEFING

National Enquiry of Suicides

Suicide by young people was rarely due to one thing, it usually followed a combination of previous:

- Traumatic experiences in early life
- Build-up of adversity
- High-risk behaviours in adolescence/early adulthood
- Recent stressful events.

Each aspect is open to prevention, such as support for young children and their families, access to CAMHS including self-harm and substance misuse services, and crisis support.

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The NCISH national investigation of suicide by children and young people (2017) examined suicide by 391 young people aged under 25 in England or Wales.

They found themes that should be specifically targeted for prevention, including support and management of family factors like mental illness or substance misuse, childhood abuse, bullying, physical health, mental illhealth, and alcohol or drug misuse.

The wide range of suicide-related factors reported in the study highlights that suicide prevention in young people is a role shared by front-line agencies, including mental health, social care, youth justice, and education.

However, only around 40% of young people who died by suicide were in recent service contact: Mental Health - 26% Social Care - 8% Youth Justice - 21%

> There are common factors in people aged under 20 who died by suicide and those aged 20-24, but also a changing pattern that reflects the different stresses experienced at different ages.

Academic pressures and bullying were more common before suicide in people aged under 20, while workplace, housing and financial problems were more often reported in young people aged 20-24.

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49% of young people aged under 25 who died by suicide had previously self-harmed

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Self-harm is a crucial indicator of risk and should always be taken seriously, even when the physical harm is minor.

Services that respond to self-harm should work with services for alcohol and drug misuse, as both are linked to subsequent suicide.

Young people at increased risk of suicide:

- Bereaved (26%) require bereavement support services.
- Students (19%) require greater focus on mental health in colleges and universities.
- Looked after children (9%) require housing support on leaving care, and access to mental
- LGBT, young people, bullied (24%) require access to mental health support.

Each year, suicide-related internet use was reported in around 80 suicides by young people. This was most often searching for information about suicide methods or posting messages with suicidal content.

It is suggested that further efforts are needed to remove information on suicide methods from the internet and to encourage online safety.

For more information regarding 7 minute briefings, please email sarah.herron@knowsley.gov.uk Knowsley Safeguarding Children Board, 2nd Floor, Nutgrove Villa, Westmorland Road, Huyton L36 6GA Tel: 0151 443 3859 www.knowsleyscb.org.uk