



<b>Subject:</b>	Suicide Prevention and Belfast Community Response Plan
<b>Date:</b>	7 June 2016
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Nigel Grimshaw, Director of City and Neighbourhood Services.
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Siobhan Toland, Lead Operations Officer Valerie Brown, Environmental Health Manager

<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	The suicide prevention strategy for Northern Ireland, Protect Life, places an onus on everyone, statutory, voluntary and community sectors alike, to work together to achieve a reduction in suicides. Two members of the Belfast Suicide Prevention Forum, Irene Sherry and Stephen Barr, presented to a special Committee meeting on 10 <sup>th</sup> May on the current situation in relation to suicide and self harm in Belfast and on the work that the various community and voluntary organisations are doing to tackle these difficult issues.
1.2	The Belfast Forum for Suicide Prevention is a recently formed group representing community and voluntary organisations working in the area of suicide prevention in the city.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Note the suicide prevention work taking place in Belfast and the significant contribution made by community and voluntary organisations to this work.</li></ul>

<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
	<p data-bbox="256 241 408 275"><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p data-bbox="150 293 1449 678">3.1 Suicide prevention is obviously a complex and difficult issue to address but there has been significant work across Belfast to attempt to reduce the rate of suicide and self harm in the city. There are various forums working in different parts of Belfast with representatives from the Health and Social Care Trusts, the Public Health Agency and the community and voluntary sectors. This new Belfast Forum for Suicide Prevention, which is made up of community based representatives from the North and West Belfast Protect Life Implementation Group and the South and East Belfast Mental Health Community of Interest, is jointly chaired by Irene Sherry and Stephen Barr.</p> <p data-bbox="150 745 1449 981">3.2 The Forum was formed following concerns raised by community and voluntary workers about the increasing levels of poor mental health being experienced by people across the city, leading to significant issues associated with self harm and suicide. It has actively lobbied MLAs, the Assembly Committee for Health and the cross Departmental Group on suicide prevention with a view to refocusing attention on this important issue.</p> <p data-bbox="150 1048 1449 1384">3.3 Members will be aware that a council officer (Valerie Brown) chairs the Belfast Community Response Steering Group, which has developed city wide and local planning arrangements to respond to suicides. The Belfast Plan provides a coordinated approach to the provision of support to local communities following a suicide. It also provides a process under which local planning arrangements can be developed, pulling together resources, services, contacts and communication within local areas. These local arrangements are well developed in many areas across the city.</p> <p data-bbox="150 1451 1449 1742">3.4 The plan itself, which is reviewed and updated annually, involves wide representation from all sectors of the community with the local knowledge to be able to address the issues. It contains arrangements which facilitate various stages in the response process. The first stage is the implementation of arrangements to do with communication and the sensitive sharing of community knowledge, 'sudden death' notification by PSNI and coordinated support for individuals, bereaved families and the wider community.</p> <p data-bbox="150 1809 1449 1989">3.5 Implementation of these arrangements in support of local communities in a connected and consistent way across the city is designed to help to prevent further suicides occurring; it facilitates the early detection of individuals and settings within communities potentially at risk and will support a more significant response should it be required.</p>

3.6	<p>This next stage of response will provide for the necessary leadership, via the Community Response Steering Group, in conjunction with other stakeholders such as local clergy, school teachers, youth workers, Councillors, etc. to mobilise additional people, resources and support in such a way as to address the core issues that could contribute to further associated deaths. The desired outcome of this co-ordinated approach at both stages is to prevent further suicides occurring and support those individuals at risk and their families and friends. This process also enables families and individuals bereaved to access more immediate support and help following a suicide; and it creates opportunities for a standardised support pathway for people bereaved across the Belfast area.</p>
3.7	<p>An overview of the Belfast Community Response Plan arrangements is set out in the attached flow chart, together with a list of steering group members.</p>
3.8	<p>While it is recognised that effective community response can contribute to suicide prevention, the arrangements are focused on supporting families and communities in the aftermath of suicide. Where trends and issues related to suicide prevention are identified through the response work they are referred to the Belfast Protect Life Implementation Group (BPLIG). This group is chaired by the Public Health Agency and is responsible for developing and monitoring the implementation of a local action plan for the revised Protect Life strategy. It is also responsible for supporting the development and implementation of innovative suicide prevention initiatives and ensuring appropriate linkages to targeted areas of deprivation and at risk groups.</p>
3.9	<p>The BPLIG is planning to use a 'Future Search' event to assist it to develop an implementation plan to tackle the issue of suicide in Belfast. It hopes to hold the event in September. It will be facilitated by Michael Donnelly, a leading expert in these events. The 'future search' process is about finding common ground and securing the authority and resources to make change happen; PHA has engaged the Council's Director of City and Neighbourhood Services in the planning and development of the 'future search' event.</p>
3.10	<p>The Council is also assisting Belfast Strategic Partnership to undertake a second 'Have Your Say Belfast' emotional wellbeing survey. The first survey was in 2012 and received over 3000 responses. It is hoped to run the survey over the summer, with a questionnaire being distributed to every household in Belfast, and to use the data collected from the 2012 and this survey to inform the future search event.</p>

<p>3.11</p> <p>3.12</p>	<p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p> <p>There are no financial, human resource or asset implications.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>There are no equality or Good Relations implications to report.</p>
<p><b>4.0</b></p>	<p><b>Appendices</b></p>
<p>4.1</p>	<p>Appendix 1 - Overview of Community Response Plan arrangements.</p> <p>Appendix 2 - Membership of the Belfast Community Response Steering Group.</p>