

SUICIDE Fact Sheet

Background

Suicide is the act of intentionally ending one's own life.¹ Suicide remains a major issue facing our society and is a significant Public Health problem. Although overall there has been a reduction in the number of suicides nationally, still over 4,800 people took their own life in 2014 (Source: NHS Digital).

Risk factors (Source: National Suicide Prevention Strategy 2012)²

Known risk factors for the likelihood of a person taking their own life include:

- Gender - males are three times as likely to take their own life
- Age - people aged 35-49 have the highest suicide rate
- Mental illness
- Treatment and care after a suicide attempt
- Physically disabling or painful illnesses including chronic pain
- Alcohol and drug misuse

Stressful life events such as:

- Unemployment
- Debt
- Living alone, social exclusion or isolation
- Bereavement
- Family breakdown and conflict
- Imprisonment

Risk factors can combine together to increase an individual's vulnerability to suicide. Stigma, prejudice, harassment and bullying can all contribute.

The Local Picture

The definition of suicide used here is where deaths are recorded as '*Mortality from intentional self-harm and injury undetermined whether accidentally or purposely inflicted*'.

This definition is consistent with that used in the National Strategy. Open verdicts are included as well as known suicides because most are suicides and it is conventional to include these.

¹ NHS Choices. Suicide. <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Suicide/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

² Department of Health. Preventing Suicide in England. September 2012.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/suicide-prevention-strategy-for-england>

Fig. 1 shows how rates in Sutton compare to other London authorities. It indicates that Sutton ranks in the lowest quarter compared to other London authorities, with a Directly Standardised Rate (DSR) of 7 suicides per 100,000 population, statistically similar to the London rate, but lower than for England. The number of deaths is higher for males than for females.

Fig. 1: Mortality from suicide and injury undetermined, DSR, Persons, all ages 15 and over, Sutton compared to London authorities

Fig. 2 shows that for those aged 15 and over in the past suicide rates for Sutton were below those for London and England, then the gap narrowed around 2005-07 and rates are now similar to London. Average numbers are consistently higher for males in line with the national profile.

Fig. 2: Trend in mortality from suicide and injury undetermined, DSR, aged 15 and over, by gender

Fig. 3 shows that the rate of Years of Life Lost for those aged 15-74 from suicide was slightly higher than London for females, but lower than England for males.

Fig. 3: Years of Life Lost due to Mortality from Suicide and Injury Undetermined, DSR, Age 15 to 74 years, by gender

Numbers are too small to profile patterns and trends in Sutton in detail, but in the three years 2013 to 2015, 75% of suicide deaths were to males.

What works to prevent suicide

The National Suicide Prevention Strategy set out overall objectives to:

- Reduce the suicide rate in the general population in England
- Better support those bereaved or affected by suicide

The Strategy set out six key areas for action to support delivery of these objectives:

1. Reduce the risk of suicide in key high-risk groups
2. Tailor approaches to improve mental health in specific groups
3. Reduce access to the means of suicide
4. Provide better information and support to those bereaved or affected by suicide
5. Support the media in delivering sensitive approaches to suicide and suicidal behaviour
6. Support research, data collection and monitoring

Specific actions for each of these six areas are set out in detail in the Strategy – see below under ‘Links to further information’.

Key indicators and targets

Relevant indicators from the Public Health Outcomes Framework

- *Healthcare and premature mortality: 4.10 Suicide rate*

Links to further information

- Public Health England. Suicide Prevention Profile.
<https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile-group/mental-health/profile/suicide>
- National Strategy. Department of Health. Preventing suicide in England: A cross-government outcomes strategy to save lives. September 2012.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/suicide-prevention-strategy-for-england>
- NHS Choices. Suicide. <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Suicide/Pages/Introduction.aspx>
- Department of Health. Preventing suicide in England: two years on - Second annual report on the cross-government outcomes strategy to save lives. February 2015.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/suicide-prevention-second-annual-report>
- See also the JSNA Factsheet on **Mortality**