

## Questionnaire on Development of a New Suicide Prevention Strategy for Scotland



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Completed questionnaires accompanied by a respondent information form (which can be found at the end of the questionnaire) should be sent to us at the below postal address or by email by the closing date.

### Postal address:

Suicide Prevention Strategy Team  
Scottish Government  
St. Andrew's House (3ER)  
Regent Road  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

Email: [contact@suicidepreventionengagement.scot](mailto:contact@suicidepreventionengagement.scot)

If the boxes provided are not large enough for your response, please continue these on another piece of paper and ensure the question number is marked clearly.

### **Suicide Prevention Strategy Development Questionnaire**

**Opens** 27 Sep 2021

**Closes** 21 Nov 2021

**Contact:** [contact@suicidepreventionengagement.scot](mailto:contact@suicidepreventionengagement.scot)

### **Overview**

Scottish Government and the Convention for Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) have committed to jointly develop a new suicide prevention strategy for Scotland

This will use the available evidence and intelligence to build on the work which has already been undertaken across Scotland to help prevent suicide, address any gaps in our knowledge, actions or implementation and develop any new priorities and/or emerging areas of work from, for example, the impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19).

This questionnaire forms one part of the first stage of engagement to develop the next suicide prevention strategy. In addition to the questionnaire there are online events where you can also share your thoughts and ideas. Details of these events and how to attend them can be found on the [COSLA website](#).

The questionnaire will close on 21 November and all responses will be analysed and themed. A working group will then utilise these responses along with feedback from future engagement exercises to inform the development of the Suicide Prevention Strategy to be published in September 2022.

### **Why your views matter**

The Scottish Government's vision, which is shared by our partners in mental health and suicide prevention, is of a Scotland where suicide is preventable, and where

help and support is available to anyone contemplating suicide and to those who have lost a loved one to suicide. Suicide prevention is everyone's business. Therefore, engagement and consultation with a wide range of stakeholders is a crucial aspect of the new strategy development.

### **Questions**

The following questions are designed to be deliberately open to allow you to share your thoughts. If there is not a specific question focusing on an area/issue you feel strongly about, please add it to the final comments section. You may not have any thoughts about some of the questions or there may only be a specific area you are interested in commenting on; we would still appreciate your thoughts. If you do not have an answer for a question, just skip it and move onto the next. Your responses will still help shape the next strategy.

The first 15 pages of this questionnaire are directly relating to different aspects of suicide prevention and development of the new strategy. The latter pages relate to information about you and your data.

We know that discussing aspects of suicide prevention work can be difficult; please see below for a list of resources for support.

### **Support available**

- [Breathing Space](#) - Breathing Space is Scotland's mental health helpline for individuals experiencing symptoms of low mood, depression, or anxiety, and offers free and confidential advice for individuals over the age of 18. They can be contacted on 0800 83 85 87, 6pm to 2am Monday to Thursday; and from 6pm Friday throughout the weekend to 6am Monday.
- [Samaritans](#) – Samaritans provide confidential non-judgemental emotional support 24 hours a day for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair. You can contact Samaritans free on short code 116 123.
- NHS24 - If you're feeling overwhelmed or need support you can call NHS 24 on 111. The Mental Health Hub is open 24/7.
- [NHS Inform](#) - NHS inform has a lot of resources to help with your mental health, whether you're looking for advice, information, local support, or ideas for improving your wellbeing.

## **Prevention**

Preventative work focusses on what we can do to help reduce the likelihood of someone developing suicidal thoughts. In this section we want to think about things which might help everyone and also things which might help people who are more at risk of suicide. Preventative work can be wide-ranging and might include work to address mental wellbeing or interventions aiming to reduce the likelihood of trauma or adverse childhood experiences.

## **Current and previous suicide prevention work**

There have been national strategies and action plans in Scotland since 2002 which have supported local delivery of activity focussed on preventing suicide. The work has included activities to address:

- supporting people when they have felt suicidal
- raising awareness of suicide
- providing the skills needed to help someone who is suicidal
- supporting those who have lost someone to suicide
- reducing the stigma around suicide

The current Suicide Prevention Action Plan has been in place since 2018. For more details, see [Suicide prevention action plan: every life matters - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/suicide-prevention-action-plan-2018-2022/pages/1-1-introduction.aspx)

It is important that as we develop a new strategy and action plan, we do not lose the things which work or have worked well.

**When thinking about suicide prevention work in Scotland, what do you feel has worked well in the past? What is currently working well?**

Please give us your views

**What do you know from other areas/countries you would like to see happen in Scotland?**

Please give us your views

**What should improve from what currently happens?**

Please give us your views

**What additional or innovative things could be done to help?**

Please give us your views

**Is there anything else you would like to add about prevention of suicide?**

Please give us your views

**Early Intervention**

Early intervention focuses on actions we can take to support people at as early a stage as possible when they begin to experience suicidal thoughts.

**What is currently working well to support early intervention?**

Please give us your views

**What needs to improve from what currently happens?**

Please give us your views

**What additional or innovative things could be done in the area of early intervention?**

Please give us your views

**Is there anything else you would like to add about early intervention?**

Please give us your views

**Crisis Intervention**

Even with the best prevention and early intervention activity in place, some people will still experience suicidal crisis. This section focuses on what should be done to help people who reach the point where suicide feels like their only option. Crisis intervention can include actions such as improving service response, reducing access to the methods people use for suicide and ensuring people know where to access help in a crisis - you may wish to consider these while answering the following questions.

**Definition: Access to Methods**

Reducing access to the methods people use to end their lives is a key component of suicide prevention work. Also called 'means restriction', it provides a crucial opportunity for someone in crisis to reflect on what they are about to do and, hopefully, for the crisis to pass. This can include measures to prevent or minimise access to pesticides, firearms, heights, railway tracks, poisons, medications or sources of carbon monoxide such as car exhausts or charcoal (source: World Health Organisation).

**What is currently working well to support those in suicidal crisis?**

Please give us your views

**What needs to improve from what currently happens in crisis intervention?**

Please give us your views

**What additional or innovative things could be done to support people when they reach a point of crisis?**

Please give us your views

**Is there anything else you would like to add about crisis intervention?**

Please give us your views

**Postvention**

Postvention refers to work which takes place in the aftermath of a suicide or suicide attempt. This covers a range of work, so when answering the questions in this section you may wish to consider the needs of different groups. These may include:

- those who have survived suicide
  - their families and carers
  - their wider community (e.g. colleagues)
  
- those who have lost someone to suicide
  - family, friends and carers of the deceased
  - wider community (e.g. colleagues of the deceased)
  
- first responders and frontline workers dealing with suicide and suicide attempts in a professional or voluntary capacity.

**What postvention activity is currently working well?**

Please give us your views



**What should improve from what currently happens?**

Please give us your views

**What additional or innovative work could be done in postvention?**

Please give us your views

**Is there anything else you would like to add about postvention?**

Please give us your views

## **Tackling Stigma**

Suicide remains a taboo subject which means it is difficult for people to talk about and yet we know that open discussion about suicide helps to save lives. This section focusses on what needs to be done to reduce the stigma around suicide.

### **What is currently working well to address stigma?**

Please give us your views

### **What needs to improve from what currently happens?**

Please give us your views

### **What additional or innovative things could be done to tackle stigma around suicide?**

Please give us your views

**How can we encourage open, honest and safe conversations and discussion about suicide?**

Please give us your views

**What could/should we do around the influence (positive and negative) of the media and social media on conversations and perceptions around suicide?**

Please give us your views

**Is there anything else you would like to add about tackling stigma?**

Please give us your views

### **Raising Awareness and Building Capacity**

Raising awareness of suicide and suicide prevention work is crucial in working to prevent suicide. Building capacity refers to the expansion of existing interventions we know to be effective, as well as helping people develop the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out suicide prevention work.

When completing this section, it might be helpful to consider some of the following:

- Opportunities to raise awareness of suicide prevention
- Communities who should be the focus of awareness-raising work
- People, groups and organisations who should be involved in developing and creating awareness-raising work
- Ensuring people can find information about where to get support when they need it

### **What is currently working well?**

Please give us your views

### **What needs to improve from what currently happens?**

Please give us your views

**What additional or innovative things could be done to raise awareness of suicide and suicide prevention work?**

Please give us your views

**How do we improve the knowledge and skills of those who will support people with thoughts of suicide in different settings such as communities, families, workplaces etc.?**

Please give us your views

**Is there anything else you would like to add about building capacity and raising awareness?**

Please give us your views

**Cross-policy Work**

Suicide prevention usually sits within the work of health and social care policies. However, we know that there are things which increase the risk of suicide which sit outside these policies, and that there are similar risk factors for a range of policy areas such as addiction, poverty and homelessness.

**Which other policy areas/interests need to be involved in the prevention of suicide?**

Please give us your views

**What makes this difficult?**

Please give us your views

**How can the effectiveness of cross-policy work be ensured?**

Please give us your views

**Anything else?**

Please use this space to highlight or raise any other areas you feel should be included in the next suicide prevention strategy for Scotland

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Please give us your views

## RESPONDENT INFORMATION FORM

**Please Note this form must be completed and returned with your response.**

### Data Sharing

We value your knowledge, experience and opinions; in order to maximise the impact of this questionnaire, we need your permission to share your responses with partners. This is likely to include the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA), Public Health Scotland and relevant organisations in the area of suicide prevention. Your responses will be fully anonymised and used only to inform the development of the new strategy.

**Please confirm that you agree to your anonymised responses to the Suicide Prevention Strategy Development questionnaire being shared with Scottish Government and partners.**

I agree (Required)

### About you

Please indicate how you wish your response to be handled and, in particular, whether you are content for your response to be published. If you ask for your response not to be published, we will still take account of your views in our analysis but we will not publish your response, quote anything that you have said or list your name. We will regard your response as confidential, and we will treat it accordingly.

To find out how we handle your personal data, please see our [privacy policy](#). By clicking submit you agree to our privacy policy.

### What is your name?

### What is your email address?

Entering your email address allows you to return to edit your consultation at any time until you submit it. You will also receive an acknowledgement email when you complete the consultation.

### Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

- Individual  
 Organisation

### What is your organisation?

If responding on behalf of an organisation, please enter the organisation's name here.



**We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this engagement exercise?**

- Yes
- No

**Privacy Policy**

This [privacy policy](#) tells you what to expect when the Scottish Government collects your personal information.

- I confirm that I have read the privacy policy and consent to the data I provide being used as set out in the policy.**