

**Easy Read**



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

# Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Strategy

Our plan to help people in Wales

We want to know what you think

This document was written by the **Welsh Government**. It is an easy read version of the '[Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Strategy](#)'.

**February 2024**

# How to use this document



This is an easy read document. You may still need support to read it. Ask someone you know to help you.



Words in **bold blue writing** may be hard to understand. You can check what the words in blue mean on **page 34**.



If you need support with your mental health you can ring the **CALL Helpline: 0800 132 737**. Or for urgent support please call the **NHS on 111 and press 2**.



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Where the document says **we**, this means **Welsh Government**. For more information contact:

**Website:** [www.gov.wales/suicide-and-self-harm-prevention-strategy](http://www.gov.wales/suicide-and-self-harm-prevention-strategy)

**Email:** [mentalhealthandvulnerablegroups@gov.wales](mailto:mentalhealthandvulnerablegroups@gov.wales)



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# What this plan is about

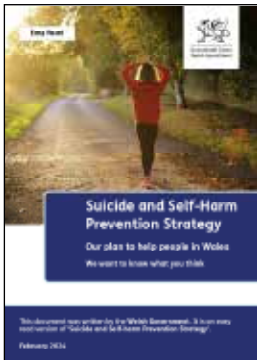


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We are the Welsh Government.

This plan says how we want to:

- Reduce the number of **suicide** deaths.
- Support people who **self-harm**.
- Help people who have lost someone to **suicide**.



**Suicide** is what we call it when a person ends their own life.

**Self-harm** is when someone hurts themselves on purpose.



It makes many people sad when:

- someone ends their own life
- or hurts themselves on purpose.



Their family, friends and people who know them.



We want to know what you think about our plan.



Please read this main document first. Then answer the questions in the response form.



Please send the response form back to us by **Tuesday 11 June 2024.**



# What we want to do and how we will do it

## Our aim



We want to stop people from:

- ending their own lives
- and hurting themselves.



We also want people in Wales affected by **suicide** and **self-harm** to:

- Feel safe and not judged.
- Get help when they need it.
- Be able to help others.



We want to help everyone be able to help others.  
Not just those who are affected.



For example, we want school teachers to be able to help children in school. Employers to be able to help staff members.



Everyone can help us achieve this aim. This plan says how we will do this.

### **Through the plan, we want to:**



- Understand why people hurt themselves. And the best ways to help people.



- Do things that help those most at risk.



- Make sure there is help for everyone in the way they need it.



- Make sure everyone can ask for help without feeling bad about it.



- Make sure that the **media** gives people the right information. And can help people find where they can ask for help.

**Media** means different tools used to give information to people. For example newspaper, radio, internet.



- Learn from people who have **lived experience** of **suicide** and **self-harm**.

**Lived experiences** means people who have been through suicide or self-harm. Or they know other people who have.



- We will encourage people to support others who need help.



# How we made this plan



We talked to people of all ages across Wales. To find out what they wanted in the plan.



We have based the aims of the plan on what people told us.



We also looked at what laws and plans we already have.



We must make sure this plan will help people to prevent **suicide** and **self-harm**.

# What we found out

## Suicide



Every year for the last 10 years, about 330 people killed themselves in Wales.



Some people are more likely to kill themselves than others. We call them **priority groups**.

**Priorities** are the things that are most important.

## Priority groups for suicide are:

### 1. Men in their 40s



- Men in their 40s kill themselves more than anyone else.



- Disabled men between 40 and 50 years old have been at the highest risk of **suicide**.

## 2. People who self-harm or have self-harmed



- Every year more than 5 thousand people go to hospital in Wales because of **self-harm**.



- People who **self-harm** are at higher risk of **suicide**. Especially young people.

## 3. People being helped by mental health services

A study published in 2020 found that:



- Many people who died by **suicide** had contacted mental health services in the week before they died.



- But there were also people who died by **suicide** who had no contact with services.

## 4. People who break the law



- There is a high risk of **suicides** amongst people who break the law.

## 5. People with substance misuse

- **Substance misuse** increases the risk of **suicide**.

**Substance misuse** means taking drugs or drinking too much alcohol.

## 6. Autistic people



- People who have **autism** are called **autistic**. **Autistic** people are at a higher risk of **suicide**.

**Autism** is the short name given to a range of conditions known as **Autistic Spectrum Disorder**.

**Autistic** people may have difficulties with things like communication, being with other people, or how they think about activities and interests.

## 7. Victims of domestic abuse



- From 2020 to 2022: About 1 in 4 people who killed themselves had been through **domestic abuse**.

**Domestic abuse** can happen to anyone. It involves any behaviour that causes harm to someone that is carried out by a partner, ex-partner, friend or family member.

## 8. People living in poverty or who have money worries



**Poverty** is when someone does not have the important things they need to live well. This means they lack things like food, clothing, healthcare and education.



- People living in poorer areas of Wales are at higher risk of **suicide**.



- People who are worried about money are at a higher risk of **suicide**.



There are also other high-risk groups for **suicide** and **self-harm**.

These high-risk groups include:



- Disabled people



- **Neurodivergent** people

**Neurodivergent** means people with brains that work in a different way to others. Like Autism and **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)**.

**Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder** is a neurodivergence. It means ADHD people think differently to most people.



- **LGBTQ+** people

**LGBTQ+** means Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer and other groups. It is about sexuality and who people are attracted to.



- **Gypsy, Roma and Traveller** families

**Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller** people are groups of people who sometimes travel from place to place.



- **Asylum seekers** and **refugees**

**Asylum seeker** is a person who is asking to be classed as a **refugee** in the new country they have gone to. The new country is looking into their situation to make a decision.

**Refugee** is a person who has had to leave their country because they were in danger there. For example, maybe there was a war. Or maybe they were being threatened.

**We also think there are other groups that will be at risk. These groups include:**



- Children and young people.



- Pregnant women and women who have just had a baby.



- People who carry out **domestic abuse**.
- People who are **bullied**.

**Bullying** is when a person or group of people treats someone else in a bad way.



- People stressed about school or college.



- People with problems caused by old age.
- People who work or worked for the armed forces.



- People who had a hard time or were in difficult situations when they were young.



- People who live (or have lived) in care.

- People with physical health problems.



- People who gamble.

- People who are lonely and find it difficult to meet other people.



- People who are sad because someone dies. Especially if they died by **suicide**.

- Victims of **rape** and **sexual assault**.



**Sexual assault** or **sexual violence** can happen to anyone. It is a sex act done to someone when they do not agree to it. It is against the law.

**Rape** is a type of sexual assault.

## Self-Harm



- From 2021 to 2022: There were fewer people in hospitals for **self-harm**.



- This might be because people could not get help in hospitals during COVID-19.



- Many people who harm themselves do not go to services. It becomes difficult to collect the right information about **self-harm**.



## Key groups for self-harm are:

Children and young people. These are mostly girls and young women



- **Self-harm** in girls between 10 and 24 has gone up a lot.



- The main reasons for **self-harm** are **bullying**, missing school and poor **mental health**.



Everyone has **mental health**. **Mental health** is how someone is feeling in their mind. It is about feelings, thoughts and wellbeing.



- **Self-harm** in children and young people from poor areas is high.



- But in the last 10 years, **self-harm** in other areas has also gone up.

## High-risk groups

Some people are more at risk of **self-harm** than others. This includes people who have been affected by things like:

- **Abuse** and **neglect**



**Abuse** is when someone hurts you or treats you badly.

**Neglect** is when someone does not look after you properly.

- **Substance misuse**
- Violence
- Sexual violence
- Not going to school
- **Eating disorders**



**Eating disorders** are problems with eating.



- **Mental health** problems
- Breaking the law
- Being treated badly

# How we will do this plan



We will say what we will do to reach our goals.



We will all work together to reach the goals.



We have boards and groups which will work together:

- to help reach the goals
- and check how we are doing.



They will look at this **Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Strategy**.



They will help think of ways we can achieve our goals.



They will deal with problems. And see how the plan is working.



**For example:**

- 1. Joint Ministerial Assurance Board**
- 2. National Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Board**
- 3. Regional Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Partnership Groups**
- 4. National Advisory Group**

# Our goals for this plan

## Goal 1: Collect facts and information on suicide and self-harm in Wales. Use this to make policy and actions



We already have lots of information on **suicide** and **self-harm**. But we need more to make sure we are doing the right things.



Good information also helps us check how we are doing.



We will make sure we can get information from services like:

- The Office for National Statistics
- The National Health Service
- Charities that help people with **suicide** and **self-harm**
- Councils
- and other groups



## How we will do this



We will collect facts to understand:



- Why people hurt or kill themselves.



- Who might need help and support to be safe and well.



- What we can do to help and improve our services.



- What is important to people.

## Goal 2: Work with everyone in the government to deal with the reasons for suicide. Do something about them



We have different plans in the government. All of these plans can also help stop **suicide** and **self-harm** in Wales.



We want to work together. This includes working with social services, councils, charities and the public.

### How we will do this



We will use the **Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy** to improve **mental health** and **wellbeing**.



**Wellbeing** is being comfortable, healthy or happy.



We will improve how we respond to problems in local areas. And in **locations of concern**.

**Location of concern** are places known for many suicides.



We will make laws and policies to improve online safety. This will help limit people seeing bad things on the internet.

## Goal 3: Give support to vulnerable groups in society



**Vulnerable** means people who might need help and support to stay safe and well.



We want to provide support to people who are most **vulnerable** to **suicide** and **self-harm**. And who are most at risk.

### How we will do this



We will improve support in places where the most **vulnerable** people are.



## We think the places where we can improve support are:

- Primary Care – for example doctor’s surgeries
- Prisons and Youth Offending Institutions
- Community services – for example job centres
- Social care settings – for example care homes for children
- Mental health services
- Schools, colleges, universities, and youth centres



We will also make sure our policies, actions and services follow:

- **The All Wales Standards for Accessible Communication and Information.**
- **The Welsh Language Standards and [Cymraeg 2050](#).**



And that policies, actions and services respect and value:

- children’s rights
- and human rights.

## Goal 4: Make people aware of suicide and self-harm and how to help people



We want to help people and groups understand how they can stop **suicide** and **self-harm**.



We also want to improve skills to recognise people at risk. And provide the right support.

### How we will do this



Offer training and support. Give the same training to all services that respond to people in danger.



Make sure services work together to give people all the support you need.

## Goal 5: Be kind and caring to people who:

- self-harm
- have thoughts of suicide
- have lost someone to suicide



We want to make services better. So they are kind when people reach out for help.



We want professionals, employers, family and friends to know how to give and get support.



We want to give advice to organisations so that they can:

- support people who are at risk of **self-harm**
- support people who have lost someone to **suicide**.



This means people get the right support quickly. And things are done to stop **suicide** and **self-harm**.



## How we will do this



Make sure everyone works together.



Make sure people who respond are kind and caring.



Make sure people are trained to give the right help.



Find ways to respond quickly to people who need help.

## Goal 6: Make sure people writing about self-harm and suicide in media and online, help



Sometimes **media** reporting can create wrong beliefs about **suicide**.



**Media** reporting can sometimes make things worse.



**Media** can also be used to give people hope. Or to encourage people to get help.



The Samaritans provide [Media Guidelines for reporting on suicide and self-harm](#).

### How we will do this



Agree plans with **media** to make sure they help and say the right things.

# Making sure we are making things better



We will check what we are doing.



We will write a report to show what we have achieved.



We will review the plan to include new things if needed.

# Hard words

## Accessible

Accessible means something is easy for people to understand and use. For example, making information into Easy Read.

## Abuse

Abuse is when someone hurts you or treats you badly.

## Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder is a neurodivergence. It means neurodivergent people think differently to most people.

## Autism

Autism is the short name given to a range of conditions known as Autistic Spectrum Disorder. Autistic people may have difficulties with things like communication, being with other people, or how they think about activities and interests.

## Asylum seeker

A person who is asking to be classed as a refugee in the new country they have gone to. The new country is looking into their situation to make a decision.

## Bullying

Bullying is when a person or group of people treats someone else in a bad way.

## Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse can happen to anyone. It involves any behaviour that causes harm to someone that is carried out by a partner, ex-partner, friend or family member.

## Eating disorders

Eating disorders are problems with eating.

## **Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller**

Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller people are groups of people who sometimes travel from place to place.

## **Lived experiences**

Lived experiences means people who have been through suicide or self-harm. Or they know other people who have.

## **LGBTQ+**

LGBTQ+ means Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer and other groups. It is about sexuality and who people are attracted to.

## **Location of concern**

Location of concern are places known for many suicides.

## **Media**

Media means different tools used to give information to people. For example newspaper, radio, internet.

## **Mental health**

Everyone has mental health. Mental health is how someone is feeling in their mind. It is about feelings, thoughts and wellbeing.

## **Neglect**

Neglect is when someone does not look after you properly.

## **Neurodivergent**

Neurodivergent means people with brains that work in a different way to others. Like Autism and ADHD.

## **Poverty**

Poverty is when someone does not have the important things they need to live well. This means they lack things like food, clothing, healthcare and education.

## **Priorities**

Priorities are the things that are most important.

## **Rape**

Rape is a type of sexual assault.

## **Refugee**

A person who has had to leave their country because they were in danger there. For example, maybe there was a war. Or maybe they were being threatened.

## **Self-harm**

Self-harm is when someone hurts themselves on purpose.

## **Sexual assault or sexual violence**

Sexual assault or sexual violence can happen to anyone. It is a sex act done to someone when they do not agree to it. It is against the law.

## **Suicide**

Suicide is what we call it when a person ends their own life.

## **Substance misuse**

Substance misuse means taking drugs or drinking too much alcohol.

## **Vulnerable**

Vulnerable means people who might need help and support to stay safe and well.

## **Wellbeing**

Wellbeing is being comfortable, healthy or happy.