



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Understanding: The Suicide Prevention and Self-harm Delivery Plan for Wales 2025-2028

Year One Activity

Annual Update Report 2025-2026

1. Introduction

[Understanding – The Suicide Prevention and Self-harm Strategy for Wales](#) was published on 1 April 2025. The Strategy sets out our ten-year focus on building understanding, prevention, intervention, and compassionate support for those who self-harm or have suicidal thoughts, and everyone affected.

This Strategy is guided by **six strategic objectives and sixteen core principles**. The Strategy aims to reduce suicide deaths; establish holistic and person-centred pathways for people who self-harm or have suicidal thoughts; and continuously improve support for those bereaved by suicide.

The title of the Strategy is ‘*Understanding*’ as this is the principle upon which the success of the Strategy ultimately rests. Part of this is about gathering and consolidating evidence to equip us with the knowledge and skills to understand who is affected, why and what support is needed. It is also about developing society’s understanding of self-harm to tackle stigma and make it easier for people to reach out for support when they need it.

Achieving the vision and objectives within the Strategy will only be possible with cross-government and multisectoral working. By working across government departments and with our partners, we are tackling the root causes while ensuring immediate help is available to those who need it.

Our Suicide Prevention and Self-harm Strategy was developed by reviewing evidence and speaking to stakeholders to better understand the key drivers of suicide and self-harm in Wales. [A three-year Delivery Plan](#) was published alongside the Strategy setting out the more detailed actions which would move us towards achieving our long-term objectives.

2. Summary of activity since the strategy publication in April 2025

A detailed update against all actions in the Suicide Prevention and Self-harm Delivery Plan can be found in the [annual update \(progress against actions\)](#). A summary of the RAG (Red, Amber, Green) statuses which shows the progress against achieving the actions, is included at the end of this report.

Below are some specific milestones to note:

The National Centre for Suicide Prevention and Self-harm Research (NCSR) has made significant progress in terms of building capacity and establishing systematic structures which will allow for **enhanced and continuous understanding of suicide and self-harm**, including the Data, Evidence and Surveillance Advisory Group, the Experience to Experts Advisory Group and the jointly chaired Suicide, Self-harm, Mental Health and Wellbeing Research Network.

A Suicide Prevention and Self-harm (SPSH) Implementation Group has been established by the Welsh Government to **monitor delivery**. The first meeting took place in December 2025 and the first annual report from the NCSR will be published in September 2026.

Three national protocols have been consulted on – **rapid response, cluster response** and **locations of concern**. These will provide the framework for national responses to suicide events which will seek to protect those affected and prevent further loss of life.

A **Primary Care Self-harm Community pathway** has been developed, alongside the development of a **Basic Awareness Module for Self-harm** which is currently subject to public consultation. A [Quality Statement for Self-harm](#) was also published in March 2026 and describes the standards of care that need to be in place for people who self-harm, in any environment in which they may seek help.

Welsh Government has undertaken baseline surveys in both the substance misuse and Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) sectors to further **understand knowledge and training provision in these sectors that support people at high risk of suicide and self-harm**.

Discussions with stakeholders around the findings have been undertaken in the substance misuse sector and the VAWDASV responses are currently being analysed.

In response to the continued increase in male suicides, Welsh Government hosted a **National Summit** in February 2026 to raise awareness, promote early support and expand training in sports clubs. **An expert talk focused on male suicide was also held** for policy teams in Welsh Government to raise awareness of the risk factors and to inform evidence based actions across the Welsh Government.

As Welsh Government is a large employer which works closely with many at risk sectors across Wales, a **resource playlist for Welsh Government staff** has been developed, which includes e-learning and wider information resources. Two pilots of **suicide awareness and supportive conversations** lunch and learn **training sessions** have also been held.

In terms of developing a robust response to suicide events, an **independent review of the National Advisory and Liaison Service (NALS)** was conducted by the Support After Suicide Partnership (SASP) to ensure the service was being delivered in accordance with the service specification and relevant best practice standards.

A short, bilingual ***“What Happens Next?”*** **information and support booklet** which is based on [Help is at Hand Cymru](#) has also been developed. The booklet has been co-produced with stakeholders and individuals with lived experience, ensuring that the information is both relevant and sensitive to the needs of those affected.

3. Looking ahead

Work will continue across all delivery plan actions, with increased focus on areas where progress has been deemed as either red or amber.

Following a consultation completed by the Suicide and Self-harm Programme in NHS Performance and Improvement, progress will be made towards **publication of the three protocols** with Welsh Government working in collaboration with UK Government on establishing processes to address concerning suicide methods.

We will also continue to develop and embed the **National Advisory and Liaison Service (NALS)** following the review.

A **Monitoring and Evaluation Framework** will be developed for the Strategy with input from stakeholders, including people with lived experience. Engagement is also taking place with the NCSR and Administrative Data Research (ADR) Wales to **agree a set of year-2 research priorities** to support strategy delivery.

A key research priority for the Welsh Government will be **social media**, focusing on the evidence relating to its influence on suicide and self-harm. This will include an assessment of the evidence on social media restrictions and bans, the **impact of online safety measures** on suicide prevention and self-harm outcomes and evidence for unintended consequences or harms arising from restrictions on social media access.

The NCSR will also seek to contribute to the monitoring and evaluation of the proposed UK social media ban for under-16s, helping to ensure that emerging evidence is available to support future suicide prevention and self-harm policy development.

Baseline mapping of services supporting individuals at high risk of suicide and self-harm will continue, with a particular focus on the unemployment support sector and on identifying further services where people with co-occurring issues may present. Findings will inform the exploration and development of core training standards for support services that regularly engage with people at high risk of suicide and self-harm.

The increase in **male suicides** is a long-standing and persistent trend. Evidence suggests that the underlying risk factors have remained broadly consistent; however, some, such as poverty and substance misuse, are becoming more prominent. These are complex, structural issues that require coordinated cross-government action. The actions being taken forward through the Delivery Plan will continue to contribute to suicide prevention across the population. However, **targeted and tailored approaches** are required to address men's specific needs and maximise impact.

Cross government and multi sector working have been ongoing throughout year one and will remain a priority into year two and across the life of our Strategy. We will remain focused on **high risk factors**, whilst continuing to explore how actions in key areas such as **planning, transport** and the **online** space can make a real difference within suicide prevention and supporting those who self-harm.

Summary of the RAG (Red, Amber, Green) statuses showing progress against the actions of the six strategic objectives of the Strategy

