

Cabinet

14 November 2018



Adults Wellbeing and Health OSC – Review of Suicide Rates and Mental Health and Wellbeing in County Durham

Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Director of Transformation and Partnerships

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide members of Cabinet with the Adults Wellbeing and Health OSC review report into Suicide Rates and Mental Health and Wellbeing in County Durham.

Background

- 2 The review was undertaken between October 2016 and March 2017 following concerns identified by the Adults Wellbeing and Health OSC during consideration of Quarterly Performance Management reports which highlighted that suicide rates for County Durham were above the National and North East average figures.
- 3 Members examined statistics around suicides and suicide rates during a three year period 2012-14 in more detail rather than wider mental health illness or public mental health statistics. They also assessed the measures that the Council and its partners have put in place to ensure improved mental health and wellbeing and which aim to reduce the incidence of suicides within County Durham.
- 4 Members considered evidence based on 4 key themes of service strategies, policies and plans of Durham County Council; NHS partners and Safe Durham Partnership together with how the community and voluntary sector is involved in supporting suicide prevention and the promotion of mental health and wellbeing.
- 5 Key findings and recommendations have been identified by the working group and are detailed within the attached report and reproduced below:-
 - **Recommendation one**
That a suicide prevention strategy and action plan be developed and implemented as part of the refresh of the Public Mental Health Strategy for County Durham and that progress against the action plan be monitored by the AWHOSC.
 - **Recommendation two**
The existing suicide early alert system, whilst providing excellent support and interventions for those affected by suicide after the event, needs to develop appropriate systems to flag up those at risk of suicide and which could be used to target preventative mental health services and support to such individuals.

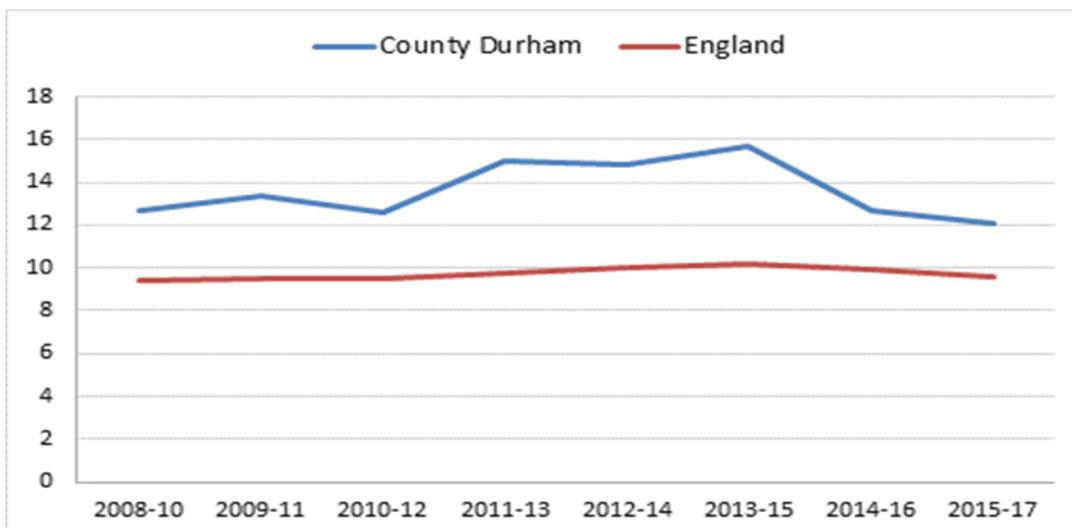
- **Recommendation three**
A multi-agency approach to develop learning from suicides is needed with case conferences introduced for each incident with shared learning across partner agencies including adult and children's social care and health services, NHS services and those within the criminal justice system.
- **Recommendation four**
The introduction of an appropriate coding/flagging system for self-harm/attempted suicide across all A&E department attendees should be promoted which identifies those potentially at risk of suicide and allows for proactive offers of access to mental health services and support
- **Recommendation five**
The current processes for referral into mental health services be reviewed to ensure that there is clarity available to potential service users to help them to identify the range of services available, whether the services allow for self-referral as well as referral by health professionals and the associated target timeframes for accessing services.
- **Recommendation six**
The accessibility of the out-of-hours mental health crisis service be reviewed to ensure that individuals suffering from crisis episodes have timely access to support and interventions.
- **Recommendation seven**
An audit of current health and wellbeing support and services within the Community and Voluntary sector be undertaken to evaluate their effectiveness and enable resources to be targeted at those interventions where demonstrable outcomes for improved mental health and wellbeing and reduced suicide risk are evident.
- **Recommendation eight**
That a systematic review of the report and progress made against recommendations should be undertaken after consideration of this report, within six months.

6 Following consideration by the Committee, the report is scheduled to be presented to Cabinet, the Health and Wellbeing Board and Safe Durham Partnership thereafter.

Service Grouping response

7 The NE rates for suicide remain significantly higher than the national average. In County Durham, the number of registrations in 2017 (56) was broadly similar to previous years, with the annual average for the previous 10 years being 59.1 registrations.

Table 1: Suicide rates over time, County Durham, 3 years pooled, 2008-10 to 2015/17 (ONS, 2015/17)



- 8 Since the commission of the Adults Wellbeing and Health OSC review, the national Mental Health Forward Plan identified £25 million in funding allocated to NHS England to support the reduction in suicide rates by 2020/2021. The dissemination of this funding is being managed through the NHS England south hub for the County Durham, Darlington, Tees Valley and Hambleton Richmondshire and Whitby Suicide Prevention Group.
- 9 In May 2018, the Local Government Association urged councils to change their focus on mental illness to helping everyone stay mentally well. This included shifting attitudes and approaches to mental health and mental health services, increasing investment in prevention, early intervention and life-time support.
- 10 Durham County Council are working with partners on a Local Government Association pilot focused on Prevention at Scale.
- 11 In Durham this has an emphasis on preventing suicides by promoting positive mental health across the workforce and tackling stigma and discrimination via Time to Change.
- 12 Durham County Council signed the employer pledge for Time to Change on 10th October 2018 as part of World Mental Health day. This committed the council to prioritizing the mental health and wellbeing of the workforce. The pledge is being supported by all partners within the Durham County Partnership.
- 13 The County Durham Mental Health Strategy is currently being refreshed to lead on the development of improved mental health systems and functionality across the county. This includes Suicide Prevention and the integration of the Mental Health Prevention Concordat for Mental Health.

- 14 The Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat are currently reviewing the work of the Crisis Team across County Durham to standardise the process and management of referrals into Intensive Home Treatment for those in crisis.
- 15 The County Durham Suicide Alliance has been initiated to deliver multi agency approach of the actions highlighted in the Suicide Alliance Prevention Action Plan (2018-20). This will include the recommendations from the Adults Wellbeing and Health OSC review report into Suicide Rates and Mental Health and Wellbeing.
- 16 A review of the County Durham Suicide Prevention Early Alert System will be conducted between October 2018 and January 2019. This will ensure systems for real time data source analysis are implemented between partners and post-vention support is targeted at those most in need.
- 17 A Suicide Prevention Coordinator was appointed in July 2018, to support the Suicide Prevention Alliance Action Plan to ensure the delivery of the plan and oversee support for those bereaved or affected by suicides, including families and the wider community.

Recommendation

- 18 Cabinet is recommended to:-
 - (a) Receive and note the review report and recommendations detailed at Paragraph 5 above.
 - (b) Agree to the submission of the review report and recommendations to the Health and Wellbeing Board and Safe Durham Partnership Board for consideration.
 - (c) Respond within a six month period for a systematic review of the recommendations.

Contact: Stephen Gwilym, Principal Overview and Scrutiny Officer
Tel: 03000 268140

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance - None

Staffing - None

Risk - None

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty – None

Accommodation - None

Crime and Disorder - None

Human Rights - None

Consultation - None

Procurement - None

Disability Issues - None

Legal Implications – None