

01 Background:

Suicide is defined as a deliberate act that is intended to end one's life. Data on suicides from mortality statistics is affected by difficulties in recording a suicide where intent is unclear and in relation to children in particular, there may be difficulties in recording a death either as a suicide or as an accident.

Over half of young people who die by suicide have a history of self-harm. Self-harm has risen in the last 15 years—in 2014, one in five young women reported having ever self-harmed, twice the rate in young men and three times higher than reported 15 years ago.

In January 2017, the Prime Minister announced a number of pledges to help young people with mental health conditions. These included a revised national suicide prevention strategy. ([Source: Suicide by Children & Young People July 2017](#))

Why it matters:

In the UK, suicide is a leading cause of death in young people, accounting for 14% of deaths in 10-19 year olds.

The UK has a relatively low rate of suicide by children and young people compared to other countries, but there has been a recent increase, reversing a decline over the previous 10 years.

Children and young people at risk of suicide may be in contact with a range of services including primary care, mental health, social care and the justice system. However, they may find it hard to access the services they need or fall between agencies. Children and young people who have been abused may not know who to turn to or find barriers to help-seeking.

07 What to do?

- Recognise that any child or young person who has self-harming behaviour is communicating their very real need for attention or help
- recognise the pattern of cumulative risk and "final straw" stresses that can lead to suicide

Further reading/links:

[How safe are our children? 2017 Mental Health & Suicidal Thoughts Papyrus](#)
[Regional Guidance Self-harm and Suicidal Behaviour](#)

Questions:

- Do I understand the risk factors?
- Am I clear about my role in suicide prevention?
- Do I know where to access specialist advice?

Suicide in children & young people

Information:

Suicide in young people is rarely caused by one thing; it usually follows a combination of previous vulnerability and recent events. Important themes for suicide prevention are support for or management of family factors (e.g. mental illness, physical illness, or substance misuse), childhood abuse, bullying, physical health, social isolation, mental ill-health and alcohol or drug misuse. Groups that may be more vulnerable young people who are bereaved, especially by suicide, those who have self harmed and LGBT young people who may have fears over disclosure of their gender identity and may face bullying conditions.

Information:

- Suicide rates rise sharply in the late teens.
- Often people who take their lives will have given warning of their intentions in the weeks prior to their death.
- However, many young people who die by suicide have not expressed recent suicidal ideas. An absence of suicidal ideas can not be assumed to show lack of risk.
- In a [recent study](#), 13% of suicides by children and young people were preceded by the suicide of a family member or friend.
- In the same study, 36% of the children and young people who died had a physical health condition, usually long-term.
- Bullying was reported in 22% This was usually face-to-face bullying.
- Social isolation or withdrawal was an antecedent in 25%
- Suicide-related internet use was an antecedent in 23% of deaths. This could be searching for information about methods, posting suicidal ideas or hopelessness on social media, or online bullying.
- Academic pressures were a factor before suicide in a number of cases.

Local helplines, services and national links

Northumberland Community Children and Young Peoples' Service (CYPS).

Telephone 01670 798 265

Email; NTAWNT.NoTCYPS@nhs.net

Based at Northgate Hospital Morpeth Northumberland NE61 3BP

Papyrus

Papyrus provide confidential help and advice to young people and anyone worried about a young person

Help others to prevent young suicide by working with and training professionals

<https://papyrus-uk.org/>

Hopeline 0800 068 4141

The Zero Suicide Alliance is a collaborative of National Health Service trusts, businesses and individuals who are all committed to suicide prevention in the UK and beyond. The alliance is ultimately concerned with improving support for people contemplating suicide by raising awareness of and promoting FREE suicide prevention training which is accessible to all. The aims of this training are to: enable people to identify when someone is presenting with suicidal thoughts/behaviour, to be able to speak out in a supportive manner, and to empower them to signpost the individual to the correct services or support.

Free training <https://www.zerosuicidealliance.com/training/>

Young Minds Crisis Messenger

Provides free, 24/7 crisis support across the UK if you are experiencing a mental health crisis

If you need urgent help text YM to 85258

All texts are answered by trained volunteers, with support from experienced clinical supervisors

Texts are free from EE, O2, Vodafone, 3, Virgin Mobile, BT Mobile, GiffGaff, Tesco Mobile and Telecom Plus.

www.samaritans.org

If you're in distress and need support, you can ring Samaritans for free at any time of the day or night.

Freephone (UK and Republic of Ireland): 116 123 (24 hours)

CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably)

www.thecalmzone.net

Offers support to young men in the UK who are down or in a crisis.

Helpline: 0800 58 58 58 (Daily 17:00-midnight)

www.childline.org.uk

If you're under 19 you can confidentially call, email, or chat online about any problem big or small

Freephone 24h helpline: 0800 1111

Sign up for a childline account on the website to be able to message a counsellor anytime without using your email address

Chat 1:1 with an online advisor

The Mix

www.themix.org.uk

If you're under 25 you can talk to The Mix for free on the phone, by email or on their webchat. You can also use their phone counselling service, or get more information on support services you might need.

Freephone: 0808 808 4994 (13:00-23:00 daily)