

Nottingham and Nottinghamshire

Self Harm and Suicide Prevention Strategy

2024-2029



Suicide prevention is everyone's business

This document includes the new co-produced vision and ambitions for self harm and suicide prevention in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. It includes further information on our approaches to developing the Strategy, guiding principles, priority at-risk groups and how the aims of the Strategy will be achieved.

Suicide and self harm can affect anyone. This Strategy is intended to be read by all professionals in health, care, voluntary and community organisations and by members of the public, as well as professionals who work in suicide prevention. We believe suicide prevention is everyone's business.

The aims and ambitions of this Strategy have been informed by a new local Suicide Prevention Charter. The Charter sets out principles which matter to local people with lived experiences of suicidality or bereavement by suicide. This document explains how organisations can pledge to enact these principles, and contribute to achieving our collective ambitions to prevent self harm and suicide in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.



Welcome and Foreword

Each death by suicide is tragic and suicide has lasting impacts for families, friends and colleagues. Self-harm behaviour is often a sign of significant distress. Thinking about how we might offer help or support to reduce these impacts is a responsibility on us all.

There is help available and we need to work together to join the dots between people who are struggling with their emotional wellbeing and available offers of support; it is important that we give mental health the same attention as physical health and it is indeed strategies like this that take us a step further to our ambition.

So, I am pleased to introduce a strategy that emphasises that suicide prevention is everyone's business. We all have a role to play in preventing self-harm and suicide, and in promoting hope. In many cases early intervention can save lives and it is crucial that all organisations in the city take a leading role in preventing harm.

I am particularly thankful to local people who have been affected by suicide and have selflessly contributed their time and experience in describing what matters to them. They have set our local vision.

In response to this, I'm inviting local organisations to identify the opportunities that you have every day in reducing stigma, promoting wellbeing, and ensuring support for your staff and customers, and to sign our local Charter.

Please consider the actions you will take – together we can save lives.

Councillor Pavlos Kotsonis

Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Health,
Nottingham City Council

Welcome and Foreword

The new Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Suicide Prevention and Self-Harm Strategy, sets out a vision and strategic ambitions, that organisations and people, can work towards to help reduce self-harm and suicide.

With a clear focus, we can create environments where mental health, suicidality and self-harm are openly discussed, stigma is tackled and people are supported, to access the right help, at the right time.

I am grateful to residents with lived experience of suicidality and bereavement by suicide, who have developed a Suicide Prevention Charter. This Charter is embedded within the Strategy, and it will serve as a guiding framework for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire's collective vision for suicide prevention. Central to its ethos, is a message of **hope** and a reminder, that recovery is possible.

As set out within the strategic vision, suicide prevention is everyone's business. Organisations and people from across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire will be asked to pledge their support to the Strategy and the Charter, setting out their actions to deliver on the vision and the ambitions within the Strategy. This will serve as a guiding light, for all of us to come together and help, to make a difference.

Suicide is a tragic and complex issue, that affects individuals, families, and communities. Every life lost to suicide is a tragedy, and the ripple effects of each loss, are felt far and wide.

By embracing co-produced strategies and by creating a call to action, we can, collectively, make a difference, whilst making a clear statement, that suicide is preventable.

Together we can make a difference. **Together** we can prevent suicide.

Councillor Scott Carlton

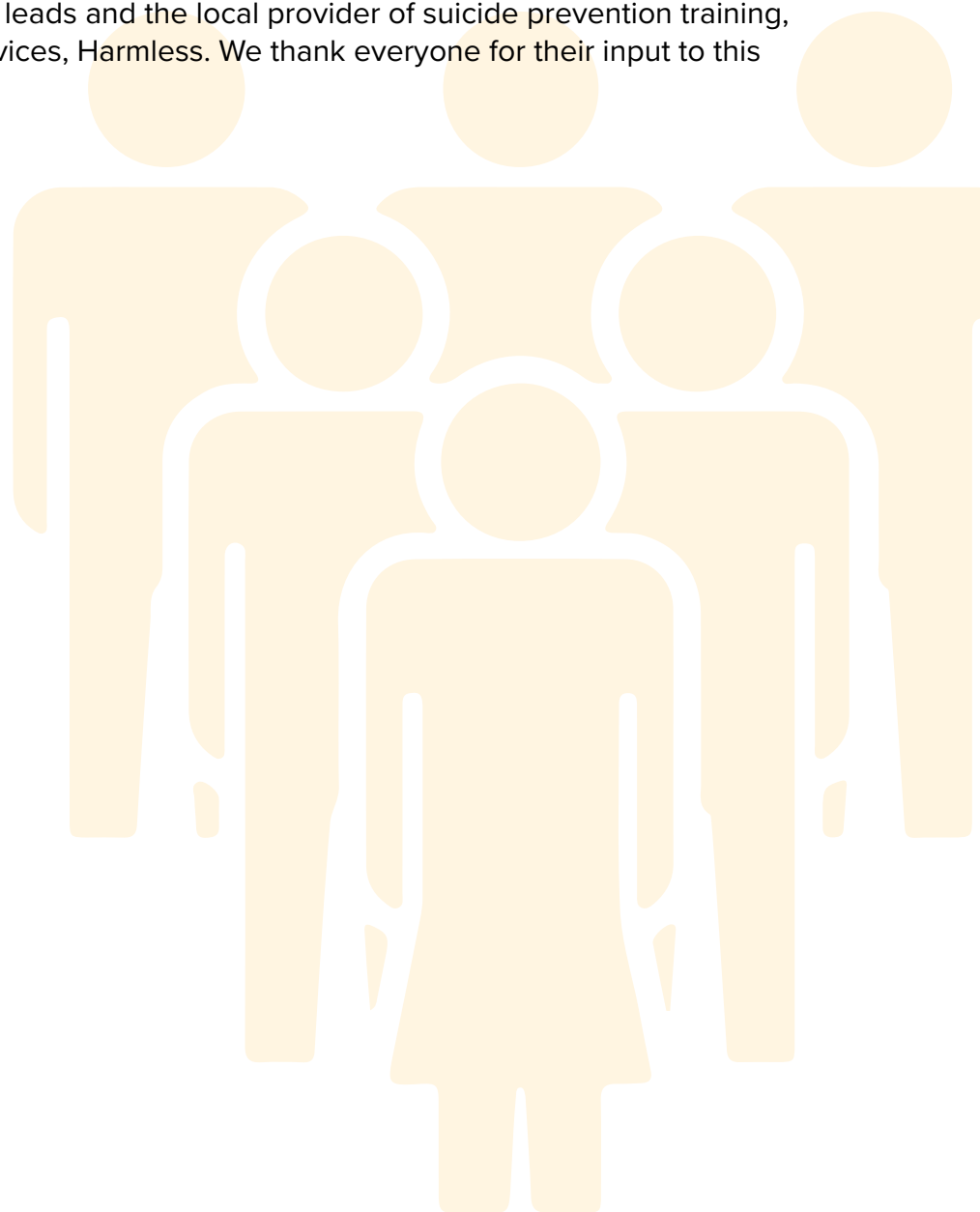
Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Health,
Nottinghamshire County Council

Acknowledgements

We are grateful for the time and efforts of key people and groups who were involved in the development of the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Self Harm and Suicide Prevention Strategy.

We are particularly grateful to people with lived experience of suicide and suicide bereavement who helped to develop the Strategy. This includes their work as part of a Suicide Prevention Charter Development Group and Suicide Prevention Strategy Task and Finish Group, set up in February 2024.

Members of the Task and Finish Group included representatives from Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County public health teams, the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board, Nottinghamshire Healthcare Foundation Trust, Bassetlaw Place Based Partnership, Nottinghamshire County Council commissioning teams, Children and Young People's Mental Health leads and the local provider of suicide prevention training, support and bereavement services, Harmless. We thank everyone for their input to this Strategy.



Advice when reading this document:

If by reading and reviewing this Strategy you become concerned about your own or someone else's suicidal or self-harm thoughts or behaviour we advise that you speak to a trained health care professional by either:

- Making an appointment with your GP
- Telephoning the Samaritans on **116 123**
- Telephoning the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Mental Health Crisis Line on **0808 196 3779**
- Messaging the Text Shout text messaging support service on **85258**.
Text the word Shout to start a conversation.
- Telephoning Childline, help for young people, on **0800 1111**

If by reading and reviewing this strategy you become concerned about your own or someone else's thoughts or behaviour as a consequence of a bereavement, we advise that you speak to a trained bereavement professional:

- Telephone Cruse Bereavement Care on **0844 477 9400**
- Telephone Childline, help for young people, on **0800 1111**

Or email the Tomorrow Project, the local suicide bereavement support service, to request support at **info@tomorrowproject.org.uk** (Please note this is not a 24/7 service)



A Glimpse into Suicide Bereavement

On the 24th of January 2022 I lost my daughter and best friend Elli to suicide. My world as I knew it ended. Elli was 18 years and 20 weeks old when she took her own life. Elli was kind, loving, funny, good at everything she put her mind to – especially sport and music, she was fiercely loyal, slightly chaotic and late for everything. Elli had not had the easiest couple of years.

Early in 2021 Elli had passed her driving test and she had chosen a new career path. Having turned 18, she was loving her job; enjoying festivals; going out with friends and having ups and downs with boys. Elli had a lot of plans for her future and the next few years. There were a lot of positives going on in Elli's life, but there were also lots of stresses and strains, which she admitted made her anxious and often low.

I was referred, very early on by the police, to 'The Tomorrow Project' for emotional and practical support, and by my GP to a trauma therapist. Having this early support provided me with some routine and structure which I found so valuable in those early months.

Over the last two- and a-bit years, with the support I have received, I am learning to live without my daughter. It doesn't go away, and every day is still difficult, but I am able to keep moving forward.

I ask - What could and should have been done to prevent my daughter from taking her own life and what could and should be done to prevent all the other thousands of lovely people from taking their lives each year?

From a voice of lived experience of bereavement by suicide

Guiding Principles

The development of the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Self Harm and Suicide Prevention Strategy has been guided by the following principles:

1 People with lived experience are at the heart of all that we do. We are guided by the principles of the Nottinghamshire and Nottingham Suicide Prevention Charter, developed by local people with lived experience.

2 Local data, insight and research evidence will underpin and inform our approaches.

3 Suicide prevention is everyone's business and requires communities and services to work in partnership.

4 Activities should be focussed on prevention and intervening at the point of need.

5 The right help should be available at the right time and at the right place providing quick, safe, flexible and skilled assessment and support.

6 Self harm and suicide prevention need tailored approaches that recognise and address a range of individual experiences.

7 Equity and inclusion are at the foundation of our work. We will ensure support is available across the life course for everyone who needs it, including tailored approaches for the most at-risk groups.

It is great to be in a position where I feel hopeful, I feel alive, I feel life again.

Julian

Vision Statement

Suicide prevention is everyone's business. Nottingham and Nottinghamshire will be a place where organisations and people understand what they can do to promote wellbeing and reduce suicide and self harm. Everyone affected by suicidality, suicide bereavement and self harm will be treated with respect and have access to resources to support them and opportunities to build hope.

Strategy ambitions

1 Promote a safe and stigma free environment

- Tackle stigma and raise awareness through effective communication
- Promote online safety to reduce exposure to harmful content and direct people in need to appropriate resources
- Support access to training to develop a skilled workforce that feel confident and comfortable discussing and signposting to self harm and suicide prevention support services
- Reduce access to means of suicide and make places safer

2 Promote wellbeing and reduce risk in at-risk groups

- Improve the wellbeing of people by promoting positive opportunities and inclusive environments
- Develop tailored approaches that recognise the challenging life factors that may lead to self harm and suicidal feelings

3 Ensure people get the right support, at the right time and in the right place

- Develop a compassionate and skilled workforce that is committed to embedding the Suicide Prevention Charter throughout their practice
- Support access to the right help and opportunities to establish coping strategies, manage distress and restore hope
- Offer guidance to friends, family and carers to help them support loved ones experiencing thoughts of suicide, self harm or suicide bereavement
- Provide effective crisis support services and timely follow-up
- Improve opportunities and pathways to identify, refer and provide timely support to people bereaved by suicide

4 Ensure local data and lived experience informs and drives self harm and suicide prevention

- Continue to develop Real Time Suspected Suicide Surveillance to identify risks
- Develop intelligence on self harm to identify risks and preventative approaches
- Commit to engaging with the local population to understand their lived experience of self harm, suicide, and bereavement to inform strategies and approaches

Role of Lived Experience

Through our guiding principles, vision and ambitions we have committed to listening to people's lived experience of self harm, suicidality and bereavement. This includes understanding the challenges that people from diverse communities face in their lives, as well as learning from the things that have worked and the things that have not. As part of that commitment, we wish to embed the principles of care outlined in our locally developed Suicide Prevention Charter.

Suicide Prevention Charter

The Suicide Prevention Charter sets out the key values and principles which matter to individuals with lived experiences of suicidality or bereavement by suicide. The Charter recognises the value of lived experience and acknowledges that these important voices should shape and influence local suicide prevention activity. It comprises statements which capture what residents affected by suicide want to see and what organisations should aspire to. A message of hope underpins this Charter and serves as a reminder that recovery is possible. More information on how the Charter was developed is included in the 'How we developed the Strategy' section of this document.



Suicide Prevention Charter

This Charter sets out the voice of people with lived experiences and the values and principles which are important to them. We ask organisations, partners, and stakeholders to 'pledge' their support and commitment to the Charter.

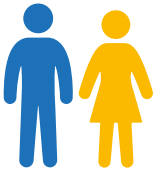
What we want	Your promise to us
"I want my mental health to be prioritised and supported at an early stage to avoid having to wait until a crisis to receive appropriate help".	We will prioritise your mental health and provide support as early as possible.
"I want to have a safety plan in place and a good support network around me".	We will co-develop a safety plan with you and help you to identify, access and create a support network.
"I want to be asked about my personal story and wellbeing at an early stage so the right help can be given, but then want to avoid having to repeat my story unnecessarily".	We will discuss your personal story and wellbeing with you to ensure the right help can be given but will ensure that you do not have to repeat your story unnecessarily.
"I want to be listened to, treated with respect, and supported in a caring and friendly way".	We will listen to you, treat you with respect, give you enough time and support you in a caring and friendly way.
"I want language to be used which is respectful, reduces shame, and supports me to have a conversation on suicide where I can openly express my emotions and feelings without being judged".	We will use respectful and appropriate language which validates your feelings and supports you to have a conversation on suicide, and we will not judge your emotions and feelings.
"I want clear, accurate and transparent information on my options including medication and waiting times and receive practical advice to support my mental health in the meantime".	We will give clear, accurate and transparent information and provide practical advice to support your mental health in the meantime.
"I want friends and family to be included, and for them to be treated with respect and compassion".	We will include friends and family unless you tell us otherwise, listen to them, and treat them with respect and compassion.
"I want to live the life I want and do the things I enjoy, and not be defined by a single experience".	We will support you to live the life you want and help you to do the things that are important to you

Further information on the Charter and how to get involved is available at <https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/suicideprevention>

SUICIDE

THERE WERE 291 DEATHS BY SUICIDE BETWEEN 2020-22

MALES WERE 3.75 times more likely to die by suicide than females¹



92% of suspected suicides between 2019 and 2023 were recorded as white British²



79% of deaths were male



15% of people who died by suspected suicides between 2019 - 2023 recorded a long-term physical health condition*: cancer diagnosis and chronic pain were the most common conditions²



21% of deaths were females¹



FOR MEN, 30-34 years was the most frequent age group



34% of people who died by suspected suicides between 2022 - 2023 were recorded as being known to mental health services in the six months prior to their death²



FOR WOMEN, 50-54 years was the most frequent age group²



SELF HARM

THERE WERE 1915 EMERGENCY HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS FOR SELF-HARM IN 2021-22

Among hospital admissions of children and young people for self-harm in 2019/20:

79% were females



21% were male



15-19 years was the most common age group³



*Where information was provided. Sources:

1. Suicide Prevention Profile. Fingertips. Office for Health Improvement Disparities
2. Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Real Time Suspected Suicide Surveillance Dataset
3. Mental Health Covid Impact Assessment 2023, Nottinghamshire County Council

Understanding the relationship between self harm, suicide and bereavement

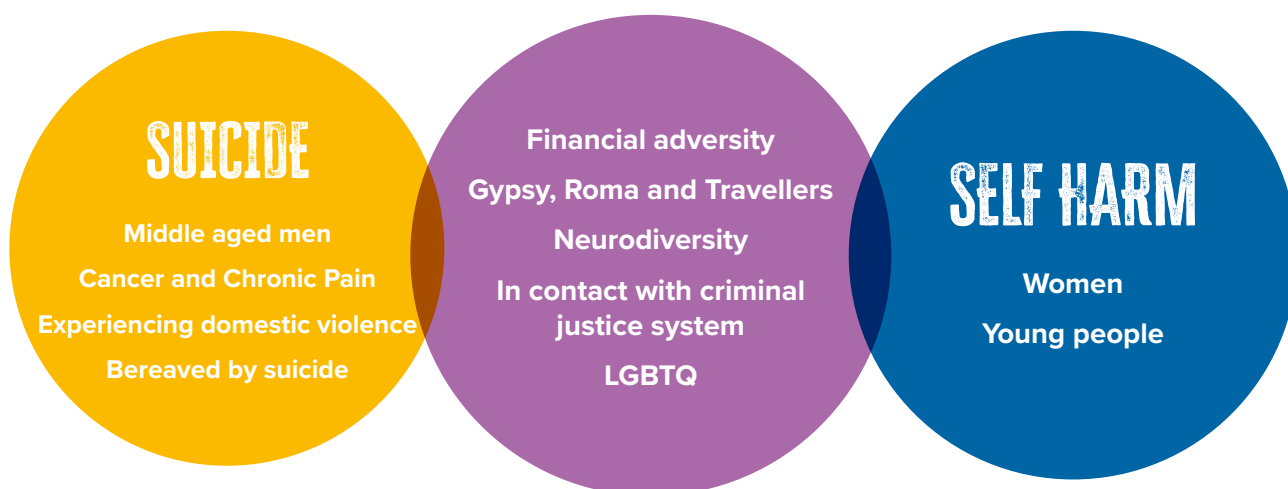
Suicide and suicide attempts are an act of self harm, and a history of self harm is a risk factor for suicide. A theory on the relation between self harm and suicide (called the Iceberg Model¹) suggests that for every young person's death by suicide, there is a greater number of people presenting at hospital with intentional self harm injuries and an even larger number of people who have self harmed, possibly unseen and unsupported. Research and local data also tell us that many of the risk factors for self harm and suicide are similar. Consequently, many of the actions to promote wellbeing and reduce risk in vulnerable populations will be similar.

However, it is also important to recognise the ways in which self harm and suicide are different. We know that not all self harming behaviour is a suicide attempt. People may self harm for a range of reasons, including as a way of coping with distressing emotions or to feel a sense of control, and messages about stopping without establishing alternative coping strategies can be unhelpful. We also know that there are some distinct and important differences in risk factors and prevalence of suicidality and self harm.



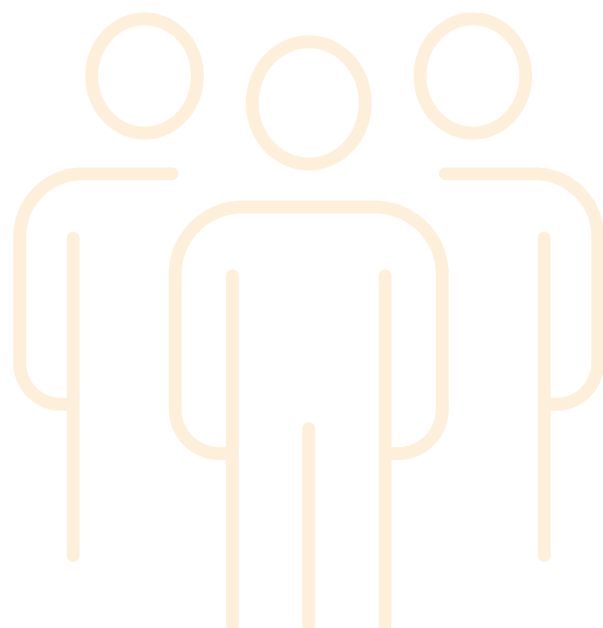
¹Incidence of suicide, hospital-presenting non-fatal self-harm, and community-occurring non-fatal self-harm in adolescents in England (the iceberg model of self-harm): a retrospective study - PubMed (nih.gov)

Priority at-risk groups



In 2023 Nottingham and Nottinghamshire jointly produced a [Suicide Prevention Joint Strategic Needs Assessment \(JSNA\)](#). The JSNA identified factors and groups at-risk of experiencing self harm and suicide by considering national data and local Real Time Suspected Suicide Surveillance (RTSSS) data. RTSSS data is information on the demographics and life events of suspected suicides collected by public health teams from the police and healthcare providers, shortly after a death. The diagram above identifies population groups and risk factors related to suicide and self harm separately, while the core circle represents where both suicide and self harm overlap.

Our strategic approach is based on principles of equity and inclusion. That means that we aim to provide support for everyone who needs it, as well as providing tailored approaches for people whose life experiences or identity may make them more vulnerable to feelings of suicide or self harm. We call these at-risk groups. It is important to note, that being part of an at-risk group is not a judgement on that identity or experience. Also, research tells us that experiencing discrimination and prejudice can contribute to feelings of suicide and self harm and that for some groups this may be part of their daily life experience.



Our approach to self harm and suicide prevention

Our approach is underpinned by a belief that self harm and suicide are preventable and that there are opportunities during a person's experience where we can collectively act and make a difference. There are three main ways and points in time that we can take action:

Prevention: The promotion of activities and services that help people become well and stay well, as well as addressing general life events and stressors to prevent them negatively impacting people's wellbeing and putting them at risk of self harm and suicide. This includes embedding preventative approaches across a wide of range of settings such as:



Intervention: The support and services that people can access when they experience suicidal thoughts or behaviours or compulsion to self harm. This includes support received directly and, where appropriate, advice and guidance given to friends and family to help them support their loved ones.

Postvention: Identifying, referring, and providing timely bereavement support services for people who have lost a loved one by suicide.

How we developed this Strategy

Nottingham and Nottinghamshire's Strategy outlines our ambition and approaches to supporting people at each of the phases described above. Throughout development of the new local Strategy we focused on the importance of co-production.

A Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Suicide Prevention Charter Task and Finish Group was formed in October 2023 consisting of people with lived experience of suicidality or bereavement by suicide. The purpose of the group was to develop a series of 'Charter statements' which would inform Strategy development.

In February 2024 a dedicated Strategy Task and Finish Group was set up, consisting of members of the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Self Harm and Suicide Prevention Strategic Steering Group, along with two people from the Charter Task and Finish group with lived experience of suicide and bereavement by suicide. The group reviewed the progress made against the last Suicide Prevention Strategy and mapped new priorities considering the findings of the JSNA and the evidence base around suicide prevention. The co-produced Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Suicide Prevention Charter, finalised in April 2024, also acted as a 'golden thread' informing Strategy development.



How will we make this happen?

The Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Self Harm and Suicide Prevention Strategy is owned and endorsed by the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Self Harm and Suicide Prevention Strategic Steering Group. This group will be responsible for monitoring outcomes and driving implementation of the Strategy.

As part of a process of engagement, the draft Strategy was presented to local partnership boards for input and feedback. This included the Nottinghamshire Social Care and Health Select Committee, the Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire Health and Wellbeing Boards, the Integrated Care System (ICS) Mental Health Partnership Board, and the Children and Young People's Mental Health Partnership Board. Senior leaders across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire support this work, champion its delivery, and will want to be updated on progress.

We ask local partner organisations to commit to the principles and aims of this Strategy and Charter. To help partner organisations identify how they will do this in practice, we ask them to complete the agreement and pledge document on page 18.

Alongside this Strategy document, we will develop a partnership action plan on how the Strategy will be delivered. Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Self Harm and Suicide Prevention Strategic Steering Group will support and monitor delivery of this action plan.

***I talked to my GP
who helped me understand
it was my emotional pain
not my life that I wanted
to be free of.***

Nathalie

Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Suicide Prevention Charter and Self Harm and Suicide Prevention Strategy Agreement

Joining up with Voices of Lived Experience

Residents with lived experiences of suicidality or bereavement by suicide developed a Suicide Prevention Charter to outline the key values and principles which matter to them. The Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Suicide Prevention Charter underpins the new Self Harm and Suicide Prevention Strategy and shapes the vision for the local approach to suicide prevention.

Our Collective Vision

We believe suicide prevention is everyone's business. Nottingham and Nottinghamshire will be a place where organisations and people understand what they can do to promote wellbeing and reduce suicide and self harm. Everyone affected by suicidality, suicide bereavement and self harm will be treated with respect and have access to resources to support them and opportunities to build hope.

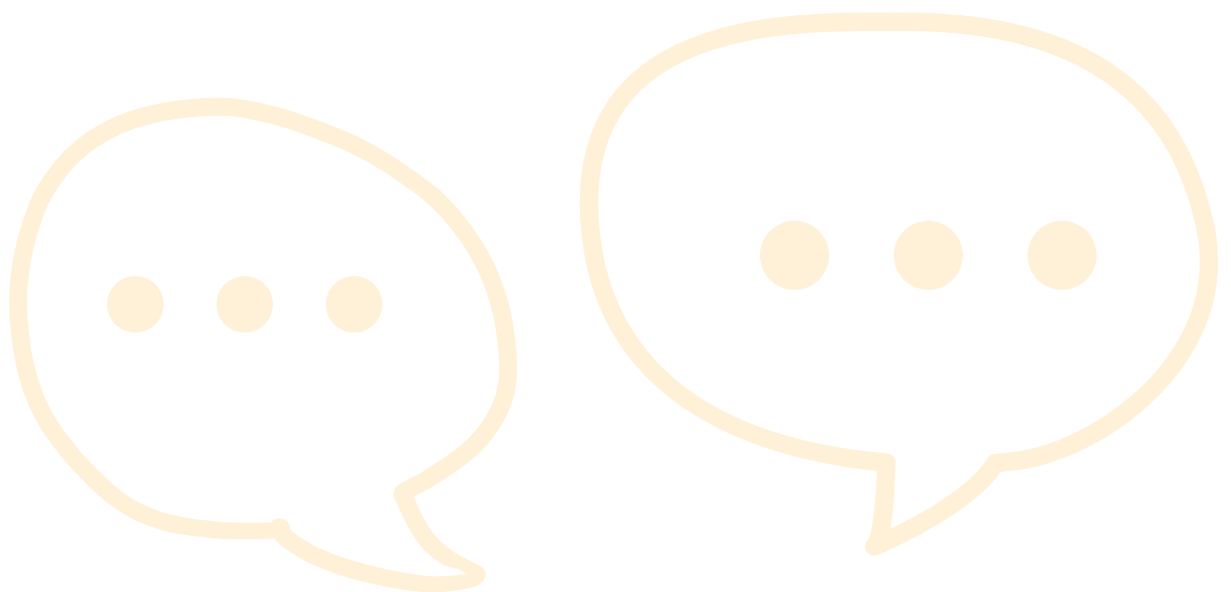
Our Collective Ambitions

- 1) Promote a safe and stigma free environment**
- 2) Promote wellbeing and reduce risk in at-risk groups**
- 3) People will get the right support, at the right time and in the right place**
- 4) Local data and lived experience will inform and drive self harm and suicide prevention**

The statements below are in response to the priorities set out by people with lived experiences in the Suicide Prevention Charter www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/care/adult-social-care/mental-health-wellbeing/suicide-prevention. On the webpage you will find our Suicide Prevention Charter Information Pack, which includes further useful information and resources. By signing this agreement, you pledge that your organisation will strive to deliver on these statements and commit to actions in delivering the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Self Harm and Suicide Prevention Strategy for 2024 - 2029.

Suicide Prevention Charter Commitments

- 1.** We will prioritise your mental health and provide support as early as possible.
- 2.** We will co-develop a safety plan with you and help you to identify, access and create a support network.
- 3.** We will discuss your personal story and wellbeing with you to ensure the right help can be given but will ensure that you do not have to repeat your story unnecessarily.
- 4.** We will listen to you, treat you with respect, give you enough time and support you in a caring and friendly way.
- 5.** We will use respectful and appropriate language which validates your feelings and supports you to have a conversation on suicide, and we will not judge your emotions and feelings.
- 6.** We will give clear, accurate and transparent information and provide practical advice to support your mental health in the meantime.
- 7.** We will include friends and family unless you tell us otherwise, listen to them, and treat them with respect and compassion.
- 8.** We will support you to live the life you want and help you to do the things that are important to you.



Pledge to the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Self Harm and Suicide Prevention Strategy

What 3 actions will your organisation commit to in delivering our shared local vision and ambitions?

Action

Please provide information on how your organisation will aspire to deliver on the values set out within the Suicide Prevention Charter. The Suicide Prevention Charter Information Pack provides ideas and examples to help you think about how to implement the Charter and it is accessible here: [suicidepreventioncharterinformationpack.pdf](https://www.nottingham.gov.uk/media/1000000000/suicidepreventioncharterinformationpack.pdf)

By signing here, you agree that your organisation will aspire to deliver on the Self Harm and Suicide Prevention Strategy and the Suicide Prevention Charter.

Signed:

Position:

Organisation:

Once signed, please email to suicide.prevention@nottsc.gov.uk



email: suicide.prevention@nottsc.gov.uk