

Dear Colleague

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION WORKING GROUP

I am writing to all Local Authority and NHS Chief Executives to inform you of the publication of the Scottish Government's refreshed National Strategy and Action Plan to Prevent Suicide in Scotland.

Background

In *Towards a Mentally Flourishing Scotland: Policy and Action Plan 2009-2011* (TAMFS), the Scottish Government (SG) made a commitment to take forward a further review of *Choose Life* in conjunction with key delivery partners. The Report, which has been published on the SG's website at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/10/26112102/0>, is the outcome of that process and proposes 6 new objectives for future suicide prevention work in Scotland, building on previous work and knowledge. The 6 new objectives are:

Objective 1: Identify and intervene to reduce suicidal behaviour in high risk groups;

Objective 2: Develop and implement a coordinated approach to reduce suicidal behaviour;

Objective 3: Ensure interventions to reduce suicidal behaviour are informed by evidence from research and evaluated appropriately;

Objective 4: Provide support to those affected by suicidal behaviour;

Objective 5: Provide education and training about suicidal behaviour and promote awareness about the help available; and

Objective 6: Reduce availability and lethality of methods used in suicidal behaviour.

The National Suicide Prevention Working Group and larger Reference Group met to prepare the Report between September 2009 and June 2010 and endorsed it at the final meeting of the Reference Group held on 11 October 2010. The Group agreed that it is timeous and appropriate to adopt a more focused and streamlined set of objectives to inform work for the remaining two years of the National Strategy and subsumed some of the earlier objectives in the new objectives, which will allow for a more focused evidence based approach targeting, in particular, high risk groups.

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Addresses

For information

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The Report sets out a clear framework for considering action to reduce suicide both nationally and locally and recommends that the SG creates a *National Suicide and Self-Harm Monitoring and Implementation Group*, as well as continue to maintain support for the annual *Choose Life* Stakeholder Forum.

Choose Life was established in 2002 as a ten-year suicide prevention strategy and is currently run by NHS Health Scotland. Since its inception the National Strategy has aimed to reduce the level of suicide in Scotland with the ultimate goal of reducing the suicide rate in Scotland by 20% by 2013.

Choose Life has already played a very important role in raising awareness, training frontline workers in suicide prevention, improving media reporting and ensuring sustainability of suicide prevention at local level.

Further Information

For further information please contact Basil Haddad, Head of Mental Health Improvement either by email: basil.haddad@scotland.gsi.gov.uk or by phone: 0131–244-5640.

Yours sincerely

GEOFF HUGGINS

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