

Minutes of **Overview and Scrutiny Task Group - Suicide Bereavement and Prevention**

Meeting date **Tuesday, 23 July 2024**

Members present: Councillor Samantha Martin (Chair), Councillor Arjun Singh (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Michelle Beach, Christine Heydon, June Molyneaux, Arjun Singh, Kim Snape, Jenny Whiffen, Neville Whitham and Katie Wilkie

Officers: Fisher, Clare Gornall, Bernie Heggarty and Liz Jones – Head of Communities and Housing; Chelsea Fisher, Social Prescribing Team Leader; Bernie Heggarty, Neighbourhood Priorities Officer; Clare Gornall, Democratic and Member Services Officer

In attendance: Karen Arrowsmith, Lancashire MIND
Marie Demaine, Public Health Specialist, Lancashire County Council

Apologies: Councillor Russ Green and Dedrah Moss

At the start of the meeting, the Chair drew attention to the fact that this Task Group, although open to the public, was not livestreamed on You Tube due to the sensitive nature of the topic which may be potentially triggering for some people. Members supported and approved this arrangement.

12 Minutes of the last meeting

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2024 be approved as a correct record.

13 Presentation by Lancashire MIND

Karen Arrowsmith from Lancashire MIND attended the meeting. She gave details of the latest campaigns and projects they offer relating to suicide prevention, including:

- The orange button pledge – a regional trial is being carried out this year, in partnership with the Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board and Samaritans, with a view to rolling out in future years.

- Self harm safe kits (in partnership with Lancashire and South Cumbria ICB) – they include first aid kits, signposting information and “distraction strips” for children
- Free e-learning

She indicated that Lancashire MIND was connecting with organisations supporting a range of vulnerable groups (including the five target groups such as LGBTQ+ and neurodiverse people) to deliver training on self harm and access to information that will be free for all.

The Chair thanked Karen Arrowsmith for her presentation and looked forward to working with Lancashire MIND to promote awareness and education around suicide prevention.

14 Exclusion of the public and press

Resolved – That the public and press be excluded from the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

Paragraph 1: Information relating to an individual.

Paragraph 2: Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual.

15 Information to be provided by LCC Public Health

Marie Demaine, Public Health Specialist at Lancashire County Council, gave a presentation regarding the latest position with regard to public health data on suicide.

She explained that a full audit was currently being carried out in Lancashire. Lancashire was in the top five highest suicide rates in the UK and as such had attracted funding.

The England average suicide rate was 2.5 per 100,000. Chorley’s suicide rate of 14.8.% was considerably higher.

In addition, suicide was one of the leading causes of death in men under 50, which was reflected in the Chorley figures as significantly higher for males.

She indicated that data for neurodiverse people was now recorded, but not yet publicly available.

She referred to the Suicide Prevention Strategy for England 2023 – 2028 which cited LGBTQ+ and neurodiverse people as vulnerable target groups.

A localised Action Plan was being developed for Lancashire.

Responding to a query from the Task Group, Ms Demaine indicated that she could provide more detailed mapping data for Chorley i.e. by ward, or locations most

associated with suicide risk, and other contributory factors. This would be part of the full audit being carried out.

The Chair thanked Marie Demaine for her attendance and looked forward to the additional data.

Chair

Date