

Cross Party Group on Suicide Prevention – sponsored by Lynne Neagle AM

Tuesday 28th January 2020

12.20pm – 1.20pm

The Pierhead, Seminar Rooms 1 & 2

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Minutes from the previous meeting and matters arising

Lynne Neagle AM opened the meeting, thanked everyone for attending and referred to the minutes from the previous meeting. The minutes were agreed and accepted. Lynne explained that the University of Manchester report has been delayed. A debate on suicide bereavement services took place in the Assembly last week. Lynne will follow up on the response made by Welsh Government in the debate. Lynne advised that if anyone was affected by what would be discussed in the meeting today to seek support or take a break from the meeting if needed.

3. Professor Ann John, Clinical Professor in Public Health and Psychiatry, Swansea University & National lead for suicide and self-harm prevention, Public Health Wales. Child Death Review Programme Thematic Review; Deaths of Children and Young People through Probable Suicide 2013 – 2017

Professor Ann John gave a presentation on the findings of the Child Death Review. Ann explained that the review looked at all deaths by suicide of young people aged 10-17 years old between 2013-2017 and looked for common themes between them. It is important to consider rates when looking at suicide figures. Ann added that self-harm is relatively common in young people, but suicide is rare. However, suicide is the leading cause of death for older adolescents.

Across the UK suicide rates in young people have been rising since 2010. Ann explained that there are increases in hospital admissions for self-harm, but this could be a sign of society getting better at responding to this. Also, older adolescent female suicide increase is linked to an increase in depression and anxiety. When someone takes their own life, it is best understood by looking at their individual circumstances. However, the review looked at any common themes. Ann talked through the presentation slides. Ann added that the review looked at services which were linked to young people and that it was important to acknowledge that not all young people have been in contact with support services before their death.

Ann commented that the review found that often the same young people are falling into different services. Accidental deaths were not looked at as part of the review although deaths where the intent was undetermined were.

Ann explained that almost half of the young people in the review had a history of self-harm and a number had a history of drug and alcohol abuse. A quarter had a history of being sexually assaulted or abused. It is thought that 1 in 20 young people have been sexually abused and many do not seek support. There were issues identified with isolation and shame and we need to remember that these are children and acknowledge that young people that are perpetrators of abuse and cyberbullying are also vulnerable.

Ann discussed how the evidence found that the risk factors for suicide include Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's). Ann referred to the opportunities not to be missed which are set out in the report:

- Management of self-harm
- Prevention of alcohol and substance misuse
- Better information sharing

- Mitigation of ACE'S
- Raising age of participation in education, employment or training
- Better knowledge and awareness

It was explained how some young people in the review were known to Child and Adolescent Mental Health services (CAMHS) but when they were between 16 – 18 years old they did not meet the threshold to access adult services. Ann commented how work needs to be done on how young people can transition over to adult services.

Ann referred to another study which found that young people attending A&E for alcohol issues often were not followed up with and explained that these issues can be markers that we should do something about. The study also found that some parents did not access the support services for their child and this highlights how stigma, awareness and understanding around accessing primary care and mental health services can be an issue. Often young people were not engaging with services or were not brought to appointments and we needed to design services around the individual and if they need to be in the system in order to receive follow up support.

Ann added that it can be challenging for non-mental health professionals to carry out assessments. How a young person is feeling can be fluid and that deeming someone as low risk and not offering them certain services may be a risk in itself. Ann highlighted not using risk assessment check box tools.

Schools are very important places for interventions, and this is an area that we should pursue. It is important that we train people how to have a difficult conversation and that having a non-judgemental conversation may have someone seek help in the future. Ann commented how most young people do not see anyone about their self-harm but more go to their GP than other health care settings and that Welsh Government have funded Swansea University to do some work developing training for GPs. Lynne thanked Ann for her presentation and explained that this review is a real opportunity for progress.

4. Kate Heneghan, Head in Wales PAPYRUS – Prevention of Young Suicide – response to the Thematic Review

Lynne introduced Kate Heneghan, Papyrus Head in Wales who gave a presentation on the work of Papyrus in Wales and their response to the Child Death Review. Kate explained how when parents have children in crisis, they can find it really difficult to find the right place to turn to for support. Kate added that we all have a duty to act if a child's life is at risk and that the Cross-Party Group and the National Advisory Group for Suicide and Self-Harm has to share information and there is a lot we can do.

Kate advised that we need to consider what we as individuals and as organisations are doing to affect real change. Also, when young people are in trouble and known to the police and criminal justice system we need to interact with these services. Frontline staff need training, so they know how to have conversations with young people about their emotional health and feel confident to ask whether someone is feeling suicidal and know what to say if the answer is yes. A video showing Papyrus work and featuring the experiences of those who have bereaved by suicide was played at the meeting.

5. Feedback, questions, discussion and agreement of further actions

Lynne thanked Kate and Ann for their presentations and asked the group for any questions or comments. Nikki Jones from the Manon Jones Foundation asked whether exam stress is a known risk factor to young people. Kate advised that Papyrus hear from young people that can be a very stressful time for them. Ann added that in the University of Manchester research it came across as a risk factor but not in the Child Death Review for Wales.

Gethin Matthews-Jones from the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health asked about the transition from child to adult mental health services and that it was timely to have the discussion about it as Welsh Government have just opened a consultation on this. It was asked what a good

transition process would look like for young people. Ann explained that she thought an adolescent service for young people 16-24 years old is needed and that many young people have reported that they are currently either sent to inappropriate adult services or put on paediatric wards with children which is problematic. Ann added that having clear auditing of pathways is needed.

Nikki Jones from the Manon Jones Foundation talked about the experience of her daughter had when she visited A&E the day after she was 16. She felt that she had previously been listened to and taken seriously but her experience was profoundly different in her moment of crisis.

Lynne thanked everyone for their comments and that the Children and Young People Committee want services for young people to go up to the age of 25. We need to build services around children and young people rather than expecting them to fit into adult services which may not be appropriate for their needs.

It was commented that every young person should have a psychosocial assessment and there is a need to look more at services which are available.

Sarah Stone from Samaritans added that the first Child Death Review struggled to achieve a formal response to its recommendations and that having a response to recommendations is very important. Sarah added that we need to follow up with real vigour and pace and use the report as a menu for follow up over the next few years. Lynne asked Ann whether Welsh Government have to respond to the report and Ann confirmed that they do not for this report but did for the previous report.

Lynne suggested that AM's could ask for a debate on suicide bereavement and opportunities of the report in government time where there could then be a motion. Janette Bourne from Cruse Cymru explained that Welsh Government have just produced a report on bereavement support in Wales. There is a lack of support services available and Welsh Government have contacted Cruse and other organisations supporting those bereaved by suicide and made some funding available to support some services and have been told it will form services in the future. Janette added that Cruse supported 360 people who have been affected by suicide of a loved one and we know that there is a risk to those people and more resources are needed to support them.

Nicola Abraham from the Jacob Abraham Foundation explained that there is an issue with men not speaking out and that her son Jacob had been to see his GP but did not ask about getting support with his mental health as he initially planned to. Nicola added that GP's need to ask patients whether there is anything else they would like to discuss. Ann commented how this highlights how important primary care is and shows that more training is needed. It was added that every single potential point of contact needs to be aware of this.

It was asked whether some young people are often diverted to services for behavioural issues when they should be referred to services for mental health support and a study carried out by the ACE Support Hub found that this had been the case for some. Ann explained that the review found that there were young people who came into contact with criminal justice/youth offending teams but had other issues that were causing them distress. There is a need for cross-sectoral support and to acknowledge that young people may fall into many services.

Lynne asked the group whether the group should write to Welsh Government to ask them to respond to the Child Death Review and the group agreed to this.

Action: It was agreed that Lynne and Samaritans Cymru will discuss potential topics for the next meeting.

Lynne thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

Attendees:

Alex Simms, National Assembly for Wales
Ana Laing, Samaritans
Becky Frohwein, Barnardo's Cymru
Bleddyn Jones, South Wales Fire and Rescue
Dai Lloyd AM
David Davies, Royal College of Occupational Therapists
David Williams, Farming Community Network
Geraint Davies, RCT County Borough Council/South Wales Police
Gethin Matthews-Jones, Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health
Ian Johnson, Mind Cymru
Janette Bourne, Cruse Bereavement Care Cymru
Jenny Rathbone AM
Kate Heneghan, Papyrus
Laura Frayne, Samaritans
Laura Havens, Hafal
Laura Tranter, Adverse Childhood Experiences Support Hub
Leeann Saunders, South Wales Police
Lisa Hammett
Liz Williams, Samaritans
Lynne Neagle AM
Meryl James, National Assembly for Wales
Nicola Abraham, The Jacob Abraham Foundation
Nicola Davies, HM Coastguard/Water Safety Wales
Nikki Jones, Manon Jones Foundation
Paul Owen, DWP
Professor Ann John, Swansea University
Rob Palmizi, Citizen's Advice Cymru
Sarah Keefe, Office of Police & Crime Commissioner for Gwent
Sarah Stone, Samaritans
Sarah Wills, Platfform
Steve Siddall, RNLI
Victoria Hage, Welsh NHS Confederation

Apologies:

Kirsty Williams AM, Dawn Bowden AM, Adam Price AM, Older People's Commissioner for Wales, Katy Stevenson – Groundwork Wales, Andrea Prevett, Caryl Stock – The Amber Project, Professor Keith Lloyd – Royal College of Psychiatrists, Laura Doel – NAHT Cymru, Robert Visintainer – Men's Shed's Cymru, Nicole Burchett – Mental Health Foundation.