

Cross Party Group on Suicide Prevention - sponsored by Julie Morgan MS

MINUTES

30 April 2025, 10.00am – 12.00pm

Hybrid Meeting – Seminar Rooms 1 / 2, Pierhead Building, Cardiff, CF99 1SN

Present: Julie Morgan MS (Chair), Eleanor Lancaster, (Member Support Staff), Keith Bowen (Samaritans Cymru), Katrina Munro (Samaritans Cymru, Secretariat) Prof. Ann John (Swansea University), Jon Lane (Welsh Government), Deborah Job (NHS Exec, North Wales), Si Martin (Heads above the Waves), Nia Bowen (DPJ Foundation), John Griffiths MS, Andrew Bettridge (Member staff), Jane Hutt (Cabinet Secretary), Becky Twose (Dyfed Powys P&CC Policy Advisor), Bryn Morgan (Jacob Abraham Foundation), Ceri Fowler (Cardiff & Vale UHB, NHS Exec.), Clare Sturman (Sammy-sized Gap), David Crews (South Wales Fire and Rescue Service), Ged Flynn (Papyrus), Georgie Price (UK SOBS), Maggy Corkhill (Co-alc Alliance), Meryl James (Member Support Staff), Olga Sullivan (Samaritans WNC), Vicky Case (DWP), Dafydd Huw (RCPsych.), Steve Siddall (RNLI), Chrstine Gwyther (Samaritans), Peter Johnson (Platform), Dean Cawsey (Adferiad), Nicola Abraham (Jacob Abraham Foundation), Dave Williams (NHS Executive), Rachel Beddoe (Children in Wales), Sarah Hanney (Case-UK), Kelly Lewis (Case-UK), Andrea Sullivan (Cardiff and Vale UHB), Tara Sullivan (Cardiff & Vale UHB), Neil Ingham (Samaritans)

Online: Ceri Griffith (Welsh Government) Apologies, full list of online attendees unavailable.

Apologies: Delyth Jewell MS, David Richards (Gwent police), Laura Tranter (NHS Executive), Mark Drakeford MS, Damian Rees (DHCW - PCMH Digital), Llyr Gruffydd MS, Lynn Rees (Hywel Dda UHB), Jackie Williams (Aneurin Bevan UHB)

1. Welcome and Previous Minutes

The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed and approved. Update on all actions given. Processes in hand for sharing email addresses of group members by Secretariat soon.

One minute silence.

2. The new Suicide Prevention and Self Harm Strategy: Understanding - Jon Lane, Welsh Government (Slides shared with Minutes)

Jon presented a summary of new 10-year strategy which is accompanied by a 3-year delivery plan highlighting the outcomes of annual reduction in suicides and better outcomes for people suffering from suicidal ideation and those affected by suicide.

Year 1 work streams will include the need for investment, governance and accountability, policy reviews and development and establishing protocols and systems.

Discussion took place about the need for improved governance through the Theory of Change work that will be published next month, holding people to account and cross governmental and cross sector working. The Strategy board will include representatives on Whole School Approach, Children and Young People, Online Safety, Samaritans, etc.

3. National Centre for Suicide Prevention and Self Harm Research - Prof Ann John, Swansea University (Slides shared with Minutes)

Ann explained the background and objectives of the new research centre, aiming to produce evidence and data to guide everyone to make the best choices and the best use of valuable resources. She highlighted the estimated annual economic cost of suicide of £460 billion and how until now only 0.3 p in a pound spent on mental health research, compared to £2.75 per pound spent on cancer research. The £2.5 million invested in the new Centre over 5 years will also increase scope for more investment in suicide prevention. The experienced team includes future leaders too and will research areas will include interventions to provide an evidence case for new interventions and will be working with Samaritans to manage lived experience panel and input. The Centre is currently in a mobilisation period but will provide lots of opportunities for involvement from government, public sector, third sector, researchers people with lived experience and the public.

Some discussion took place around governance and accountability via the Strategy Board and Ministerial Assurance Board, and protocols and systems ensuring engagement and learning. Ann also added that research would include looking at data with Co-Alc Alliance who had assisted with the consultation and following the national conference, the Centre is looking at data from the National Police Chief's Council in relation to links between domestic abuse and suicide.

4. DPJ Foundation - Nia Bowen (Slides shared with Minutes)

Nia presented on the work of the DPJ Foundation <https://www.thedpjfoundation.co.uk/>, a Welsh mental health charity to support those in agriculture and rural communities with mental health problems. Services include a helpline, counselling, outreach lorry, awareness raising and training.

5. Heads above the Waves - Si Martin

Si talked about his own experience with self-harm and poor mental health which led him to set up this charity <https://hatw.co.uk/>. He talked about coping mechanisms such as art/therapy, drumming, writing and meditation. The charity is led by people with lived experience not mental health professionals. They produce resources and hold workshops in schools and online for students, staff and parents and are also looking to hold more sessions away from schools.

6. North Wales update - Deborah Job, NHS Executive (Slides shared with Minutes)

The NHS Exec run a number of multi-agency forums and a number of subgroups that have been set up in the last 18 months. These include a diverse group serving Under-served communities. Pilot work in three areas includes support, awareness sessions and workshops on themes such as homelessness, domestic abuse, unemployment and equality and diversity.

Other subgroups include self-harm, older people group, and support after suicide task group including a new rapid response pilot for North Wales starting soon. A new agreement has been reached with Betsi Cadwaladr UHB to put suicide and self-harm as a priority in their equality plan which will mean there are opportunities for suicide and self-harm to appear higher on the agendas of all services not just mental health services.

The Exec are developing a suicide prevention and safeguarding protocol with clear processes to ensure people are not falling through the net.

The team are also working on Locations of Concern and ensuring, in line with the regional elements of the new SH&SP strategy, that there will be embedding leadership and a named lead for suicide prevention and self-harm within organisations.

7. Update on Whole School Approach – Ceri Griffiths (online) (Notes share with Minutes)

A letter from the Minister had been previously shared with the agenda.

Ceri reported good progress with continued working with Public Health Wales and their implementation coordinators who work with schools. 84% of schools have reported they are action planning their wellbeing plans but more to be done with schools using the self-assessment tool and completing their own wellbeing plans and policies. The Minister's priority is secondary schools and 98% of secondary schools are action planning.

Suicide prevention and postvention is a critical area for Cabinet secretary for Education and education is included in the new mental health strategy with an action point focussed on rolling out WSA in education with local authorities, schools, pupil referral units, education outside school, equity and education, working with early years and post 16 education teams.

Some research with Prof Ann John will take place in the next 12 months and what works in terms of intervention and more improvements in terms of availability and access to resources and policies. The team are working alongside colleagues in suicide prevention, bereavement pathways, health departments.

6. AOB

Reminded by Neil Ingham about the importance of both new strategies and further networking for third party groups.

Time had run out for further discussion, but reminder of next dates given.

Next CPG Meetings:

- Wednesday 24th September 2025, 10am to 12pm – Seminar Rooms 1&2, Pierhead Building, Cardiff Bay, CF99 1SN (In-person meeting only)
- Wednesday 10th December 2025, 10am to 12pm – Seminar Rooms 1&2, Pierhead Building, Cardiff Bay, CF99 1SN (Hybrid meeting)

Actions

Agenda Item	Action	Lead/s
1 (B/F)	Explore suicide data to seek to explain why younger age range in Wales. Also compare Wales stats in more detail with North England. <i>In progress.</i>	Samaritans
1	Processes are in hand for sharing email addresses of group members soon.	Samaritans
6	Progress to be made on informal networking for third sector and liaison with Nicola at Jacob Abraham Foundation about an existing group.	Samaritans