

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL
LEARNING AND FAMILIES COMMITTEE

3 MAY 2023

SUICIDE PREVENTION AND MENTAL HEALTH WORK

Report by Executive Director (Education and Children's Services)
(Report No. 23/130)

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report describes the current context and activity in relation to suicide prevention in Education and Children's Services (ECS). Through the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, ECS has supported mental health improvement actions and has worked on a Tayside framework to set up the Scottish Government funded programme of Counselling Schools. To supplement this work, the Community Mental Health Fund programme is funding a Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Co-ordinator post within Perth and Kinross Council (PKC).
- 1.2 The report draws on work with school staff, over perceptions of suicide ideation, in April and May 2022. The report details the actions taken to date, since the survey, detailing the work of the Mental Health Delivery Group and liaison with partner agencies. The report lays out some of the inherent challenges and describes the onward plans.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
- Notes the contents of the report and requests that the Executive Director brings back an update report on implementation of the actions.

3. STRUCTURE OF REPORT

- 3.1 This report is structured over the following sections:
- Section 4: Background
 - Section 5: Current Actions
 - Section 6: Next Steps
 - Section 7: Conclusion
 - Appendices

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The report, 'ECS Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Work', (Appendix 1), has been written to give an overview of current suicide prevention and mental health work within PKC. ECS has historically supported mental health in

schools through programmes such as Bounce Back and Community Link Workers group work.

There is now a clear focus on supporting relational approaches in schools through the Nurturing Relationships framework. During the pandemic, the focus turned to supporting responses of staff, parents and children and young people in areas such as anxiety management, self-harm and suicide prevention. Consultations with young people and adjusting plans accordingly has included work carried out through the 'Connected Tayside Emotional Wellbeing Strategy'. In late 2020, the Counselling in Schools programme was set up and one to one counselling for children and young people, over the age of 10 years old, began in January 2021.

- 4.2 To support this work, funding was agreed through the Scottish Government Community Mental Health Fund programme in 2021 to appoint an ECS Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Co-ordinator post within PKC, who was appointed in early 2022.
- 4.3 The post holder reports into the Community Mental Health Fund Programme Board and works with the Principal Educational Psychologist to agree strategic actions and priorities. Mental health strategy for ECS is overseen by the Mental Health and Wellbeing Overview group, a sub-group of the Children, Young People and Families Planning Partnership.
- 4.4 The post holder works closely with the Suicide Prevention Co-ordinator for Adult Services, and a structure for the overall strategic direction of suicide prevention work within PKC, is being taken forward through the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP). Further to this, both of the Suicide Prevention Co-ordinators will support, where possible, the implementation of the Scottish Government's [Creating Hope Together: Scotland's Suicide Prevention Strategy 2022-2032](#) and the [Creating Hope Together: Scotland's Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2022-2025](#).
- 4.5 On commencing, the post-holder worked with the Educational Psychology Service and undertook a survey with staff in PKC schools to gauge the extent of suicide concerns from their perspective.
- 4.6 The survey data was analysed alongside service level information and actions were drawn up. An understanding of the context to inform action planning for suicide prevention has been further supplemented by reviewing the circumstances around particularly high tariff situations for young people.

5. CURRENT ACTIONS

- 5.1 The survey and contextual review is set alongside the wider mental health context, with on-going work and actions by ECS, including the increase in Guidance teachers, the funding of crisis supports in schools through the Counselling in Schools programme and multi-agency work to enhance self-harm management and support in schools.

- 5.2 In respect of actions for suicide prevention following the survey, detailed guidance and training for staff within a risk management framework have been part of supporting a sense of safety and containment within the context of schools.

As described fully in Appendix 1, this has been led by the Mental Health Delivery Group to work with partners to identify and address areas of need in respect of mental health and suicide prevention for children and young people.

- 5.3 Work is underway to ensure that child protection procedures appropriately address the issue of suicide ideation and to link with multi-agency partners. The aim is to ensure that appropriate information sharing and collaboration over safety plans for young people occurs.

6. NEXT STEPS

- 6.1 The Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Co-ordinator will continue to work closely with Public Health Scotland to enhance the systems level work on multi-agency information sharing.
- 6.2 The Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Co-ordinator and Educational Psychology Service will continue to work together to support schools with further development of the risk management framework.

Together, they will take forward professional learning that encompasses the multi-agency self-harm management work, in partnership with The Light House, a local non-profit service offering crisis support to young people at risk of self-harm or suicide, and a professional learning plan that brings together suicide prevention, mental health and trauma informed practice alongside the development of the Nurturing Relationships framework.

- 6.3 The Mental Health Delivery Group, led by the Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Co-ordinator, will continue to lead guidance and training development work, in detail, with school communities to further inform relevant actions.
- 6.4 The work of this group will further develop to review the continuum of mental and emotional wellbeing support in schools. The agenda of this work can usefully be steered towards a renewed focus on supporting universal resilience and coping skills.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The work on mental health in ECS has benefited from the establishment of the role of Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Co-ordinator. The focus and pace of the work has led to a better understanding of the needs within schools and supported the development of a risk management framework and enabled support for enhanced confidence in this area. Partnership working is critical and has led to some sector leading work, further strategic level work on joint identification of need and information sharing around situations of high risk is required.

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Approved

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	Yes/None
Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement	Yes
Corporate Plan	Yes
Resource Implications	
Financial	N/A
Workforce	Yes
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	N/A
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	N/A
Strategic Environmental Assessment	N/A
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	N/A
Legal and Governance	N/A
Risk	
Consultation	
Internal	Yes
External	Yes
Communication	
Communications Plan	N/A

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement

- 1.1 This section sets out how the proposals relate to the delivery of the Perth and Kinross Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement in terms of the following priorities:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life;
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens;
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

This report relates to Objective No. (ii) and (iv).

Corporate Plan

- 1.2 This section sets out how the proposals relate to the achievement of the Council's Corporate Plan Objectives:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life;
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens;
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

This report relates to Objective No. (ii) and (iv).

- 1.3 The report also links to the Education & Children's Services Vision, Values and Priorities in respect of the following key Priority area:

- Health and wellbeing

2. Resource Implications

Financial

- 2.1 Funding is provided for the Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Co-ordinator post through the Scottish Government Community Mental Health Fund, until March 2024.

Workforce

- 2.2 Appendix 1 provides information on staff perceptions of suicide risk and improvement actions. It details professional learning plans for education and partner staff.

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

- 2.3 Not applicable

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties.

The proposals have been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:

- (i) Assessed as **not relevant** for the purposes of EqIA.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.2 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals.

- 3.2.1 The proposals have been considered under the Act; however, no action is required as the Act does not apply to the matters presented in this report. This is because the Committee are requested to note the contents of the report only and the Committee are not being requested to approve, adopt or agree to an action or to set the framework for future decisions.

Sustainability

- 3.3 Under the provisions of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, the Council has to discharge its duties in a way which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. Under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 the Council also has a duty relating to climate change and, in exercising its functions must act:
- In the way best calculated to delivery of the Act's emissions reduction targets.
 - In the way best calculated to deliver any statutory adaption programmes.
 - In a way that it considers most sustainable.
- 3.3.1 N/A

Legal and Governance

- 3.4 The Head of Legal and Governance Services has been consulted in relation to the content of this report. There are no legal implications arising from this report.
- 3.5 N/A

Risk

- 3.6 Risks related to the content of this report are being addressed through the actions outlined in Appendix 1.

4. Consultation

Internal

- 4.1 The Mental Health Delivery Group includes representation from schools, Educational Psychology and the Inclusion Service.

External

- 4.2 The Mental Health Delivery Group includes representation from the Children Young People and Families Service, Police Scotland, NHS Scotland and the third sector.

5. Communication

- 5.1 N/A

2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 2.1 No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (and not containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

3. APPENDICES

3.1 Appendix 1 – ECS Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Work