



MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL

Manchester Suicide Prevention Plan 2025–2030



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Introduction

This is Manchester's third local suicide prevention plan, and it has been developed in collaboration with partners who have a role in reducing suicides within our city. It builds on established partnership working and our previous plans (published in 2017 and 2020) and aligns with the current Greater Manchester Suicide Prevention Strategy, which draws on national research and evidence about risk factors and interventions.

Since 2017, much has been achieved across Greater Manchester and within Manchester, including raising suicide prevention awareness through campaigns and online resources, increasing access to suicide awareness training and bereavement support, and using data to increase understanding about high-risk locations and emerging trends.

A new Greater Manchester Suicide Prevention Plan is currently in development, and Manchester now has a Mental Wellbeing Strategic Framework that supports our wider approaches to improving mental wellbeing and preventing mental ill-health for individuals and communities within the city, linking to our Making Manchester Fairer plan for reducing health inequalities.

We recognise that everyone has a role to play in suicide prevention, and through this plan we will continue to connect with local partners and colleagues across Greater Manchester to reduce suicides across the city region, in support of the national goal to reduce the suicide rate in the next five years.

Context

Deaths by suicide continue to be a significant cause of avoidable early deaths, with over 5,000 such deaths in England and Wales every year on average. In 2023, 340 deaths were registered as suicide in Greater Manchester. It is currently difficult to draw clear conclusions about whether the rate of suicides is increasing, stable or decreasing, as there are several variables that may have affected rates in recent years. In 2018, the standard of proof by which a coroner decides whether to register a death as suicide was reduced, meaning that more deaths are likely to have been registered as suicide than previously. The Covid-19 pandemic between 2020 and 2022 led to a significant increase in the number of deaths awaiting coroner registration leading to increased delays between death and registration, meaning that current data on suicide numbers and rates includes registered deaths that happened in previous years.

Nevertheless, it remains the case that every suicide is both an individual tragedy and a loss to society, with a devastating impact on friends, families, services and communities. The male suicide rate in England remains three times higher than the female rate, and suicide and self-harm have increased among younger people (aged up to 35) over recent years, although overall numbers are still relatively low.

It is estimated that every year around one in every four adults will experience mental health problems, most commonly anxiety, depression, stress and low mood. These issues can be made worse by the pressures of life, such as problems with work, money, housing or relationships. Suicidal thoughts and self-harm are not mental health diagnoses but can be experienced by people struggling with their mental health and wider life circumstances, particularly if they are not receiving any support or treatment. Around two-thirds of people who die by suicide are not in contact with mental health services at the time they die. Talking about and supporting people with their general wellbeing is therefore an essential element of suicide prevention, as is access to mental health support and treatment.

The current national suicide prevention strategy **Suicide prevention in England: 5-year cross-sector strategy** was published under the previous government in September 2023. The aims of the strategy are to:

- reduce the suicide rate over the next five years – with initial reductions observed within half this time or sooner
- improve support for people who have self-harmed
- improve support for people bereaved by suicide.

The priority action areas to achieve these aims at a national level are:

- improving data and evidence to inform interventions and their effectiveness
- providing tailored and targeted support to priority/higher-risk groups in the population
- providing early intervention and tailored support to address common risk factors linked to poor mental health and suicide
- promoting online safety and responsible media content to reduce harms and improve support and signposting
- providing effective crisis support across sectors for those reaching crisis point
- reducing access to means and methods of suicide where this is appropriate and necessary as an intervention to prevent suicides
- providing effective bereavement support to those affected by suicide
- maximising our collective impact and support to prevent suicides.

The national strategy identifies groups within the population that may be at higher risk of suicide:

- children and young people
- middle-aged men
- people who have self-harmed
- people in contact with mental health services
- people in contact with the justice system
- autistic people
- pregnant women and new mothers.

The national strategy identifies several common risk factors linked to suicide:

- physical illness
- financial difficulty and economic adversity
- gambling
- alcohol and drug misuse
- social isolation and loneliness
- domestic abuse.

Greater Manchester strategy

NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care Partnership (NHS GM ICP) leads on suicide prevention at a Greater Manchester level, through the **Greater Manchester Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2024–2029**, and a programme of work which includes campaigns and information (eg. Shining a Light on Suicide), training (eg. Zero Suicide Alliance), bereavement support (eg. Greater Manchester Bereavement Service), peer support for people with lived experience (eg. Sing Their Name Choir) and initiatives to improve availability of data (eg. real time suspected suicide data sharing processes with local coroner's offices). Development of the future suicide prevention plan for Greater Manchester is currently under way, working with partners (including representatives of the ten Greater Manchester local authorities) through the Greater Manchester Suicide Prevention Steering Group, which is chaired by NHS GM ICP.

The current position in Manchester

Suicides in Manchester

Information on suicide numbers and rates is provided nationally by the Office for National Statistics, using data submitted by local coroner's offices. The table below indicates the numbers and rates for Manchester over the last ten years.

Table 1: Suicide rate (persons) in Manchester, rolling three-year-aggregate, 2012–14 to 2021–23

Period	Number of deaths	Rate per 100,000 (ASMR)	95% confidence limits	
			Upper	Lower
2012–14	138	10.9	9.0	12.9
2013–15	130	10.4	8.5	12.3
2014–16	131	10.5	8.5	12.4
2015–17	113	9.1	7.3	11.0
2016–18	113	8.6	6.9	10.3
2017–19	121	8.8	7.1	10.4
2018–20	129	9.2	7.5	10.9
2019–21	154	10.6	8.8	12.4
2020–22	168	11.8	9.9	13.6
2021–23	205	14.2	12.1	16.3

NOTES

1. Rate per 100,000 persons is an Age Standardised Mortality Rate (ASMR), which reflects changes in the age structure of the population over time.
2. In July 2018, the standard of proof used to determine whether a death was caused by suicide was lowered to the 'civil standard' (balance of probabilities). Previously a 'criminal standard' was applied (beyond all reasonable doubt).
3. In England and Wales, all deaths by suicide are certified by a coroner and cannot be registered until an inquest is completed. Suicide rates are based on the year of death registration. Registration delays since 2020 mean that 41 per cent of deaths registered in 2022 had a date of death in the same year, 50 per cent occurred in 2021 and the remaining deaths occurred in 2020 or earlier.
4. In Manchester, median registration delays (the difference between the date each death occurred and the date it was registered) have been higher than the national average since 2020, reaching a peak of 546 days in 2021. They have since reduced (394 days in 2022, 332 days in 2023) but are still higher than the average for England (199 days in 2023). This is likely to be a factor in the apparent increase in the number and rate of suicide deaths in Manchester between 2020 and 2023.

Around three-quarters of suicides registered in England and Wales in 2022 were males. Within this, the highest rate is in the 45–64 years age group, followed by the 25–44 age group. Nationally, rates among younger people (10–24 years) are relatively low and have levelled off, although in 2022 there was a slight increase among younger women.

Progress since the 2020–24 plan

Since 2020, delivery of suicide prevention activity in Greater Manchester and Manchester has taken place across a range of themes.

Leadership

Leadership for Manchester's suicide prevention plan is through the Manchester Suicide Prevention Steering Group, which is chaired by the Deputy Leader of Manchester City Council, and meets quarterly for partners to share information, connect activities and identify possible new areas of work. The Council's Public Health Department co-ordinates the steering group, and membership includes a range of statutory and voluntary sector services. The Council's Public Health Department is also a member of the NHS GM ICP Suicide Prevention Steering Group, which meets quarterly and includes representatives of Greater Manchester-wide organisations (eg. health services, police and probation).

Evidence, data and intelligence

Evidence, data and intelligence on suspected suicides is collected through the Greater Manchester Real Time Surveillance Hub notification system, which has been in place since 2022. This system was preceded by Manchester's local arrangements to monitor apparent suicides in real time since 2019. Greater Manchester coroner's offices submit notifications of suspected suicides to the hub, and these are shared with the relevant local authority (in Manchester's case, the Council's Public Health Department). The Public Health Department monitors these notifications to identify clusters or trends, and liaises with partners to explore additional preventative measures, and signpost to support for individuals who may have been affected by the incident.

NHS GM ICP also has an agreement in place with Greater Manchester Police to share data on incidents they attend on motorway bridges. This data is shared monthly with Greater Manchester local authorities, who use the data to identify potential high-risk locations and liaise with partners to identify, recommend and implement additional safety measures.

Campaigns and communications

Campaigns and communications are co-ordinated at a Greater Manchester level through NHS GM ICP's **Shining a Light on Suicide** campaign which aims to de-stigmatise conversations about suicide and mental health and raise awareness about the support that is available for people who are struggling, concerned about someone else or affected by suicide in other ways. The Shining a Light on Suicide website includes a wide range of information and resources, including targeted information for high-risk groups. The Council's Public Health Department and Strategic Communications Department amplify these communications locally and advise on reaching Manchester's diverse communities.

During the previous Manchester Suicide Prevention Plan (2020–2025), Manchester City Council carried out a wide range of suicide prevention campaign activities, including supporting a Shining a Light on Suicide presence at key local events such as Manchester Pride and Windrush Day, hosting the Baton of Hope, launching the Greater Manchester Suicide Memorial Quilt at Manchester Art Gallery, and promoting the Greater Manchester Month of Hope and World Suicide Prevention Day awareness-raising campaigns across local networks.

The Samaritans organisation also provides [media guidelines for reporting suicides](#) and online resources, which aim to support the highest standards of coverage of suicide in all forms of media. Local media outlets are encouraged to use these.

Workforce information and training

Workforce information and training in suicide awareness and suicide prevention is available through the Zero Suicide Alliance's free online [Suicide Awareness training course](#). Zero Suicide Alliance also provides further targeted suicide prevention awareness courses for particular groups and settings – examples include training focusing on veterans, people with autism, university students, and prisons and probation settings. This training is either available through the Zero Suicide Alliance website, or through organisational training and development programmes.

Information about training is shared with local organisations through the Greater Manchester and Manchester Suicide Prevention Steering Groups and through local campaigns and communications activity.

Manchester Suicide Prevention Steering Group has also supported workforce development events in different sectors, eg. the group chair presenting on national and local suicide prevention plans and activity to the NHS Manchester Foundation Trust staff conference.

Crisis, clinical and other mental health support

Crisis, clinical and other mental health support for people of all ages is commissioned by NHS GM ICP. Mental health services for adults in Manchester are provided by [NHS Greater Manchester Mental Health Foundation Trust](#) and include a free mental health crisis helpline (available via NHS 111 'mental health' option or 24/7 freephone 0800 953 0285) and two Crisis Cafés in Manchester (one of which is run in partnership with Turning Point), as well as a range of inpatient and community-based treatment and care services. [Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services](#) for young people are provided by NHS Manchester University Foundation Trust and include a range of services to support different mental health conditions and circumstances.

Crisis support is also available from Samaritans, which offers a free telephone helpline 24 hours a day, 365 days a year on 116 123. Other non-crisis mental health support services for Manchester residents include Manchester Mind, 42nd Street and NHS Talking Therapies.

Information about mental health and crisis support is shared with local organisations through the Greater Manchester and Manchester Suicide Prevention Steering Groups and through local campaigns and communications activity.

Bereavement support

Bereavement support is commissioned and provided by NHS GM ICP through the **Greater Manchester Bereavement Service**, which is for anyone who has been bereaved or affected by a death, no matter the cause of death or how long it's been, and has dedicated suicide bereavement practitioners to ensure that those bereaved or affected by suicide can speak to someone who will have a greater understanding of what they may be going through and help them access appropriate support.

Post-incident support

Post-incident support (sometimes referred to as 'postvention support') usually takes the form of information and signposting about support services that are available for anyone who may be affected by a suicide, for example because they have been involved in dealing with an actual or potential incident in a public place.

Based on information received from the coroner's office about cases within Manchester, the Council's Public Health Department liaises with affected organisations to provide information on support services that are available.

Local 'postvention' guidance following a suspected suicide in a public space has been developed by the Public Health Department. This supports Council Neighbourhood Leads to assess if an immediate response is required and formulate actions.

Capacity building, sustainability and evaluation

Capacity building, sustainability and evaluation take place at a Greater Manchester level through the Greater Manchester Suicide Prevention Strategy, Steering Group and Programme workstreams. This includes understanding the impact of plans and activity on reducing suicide rates, working with partners to ensure policies and training plans are in place, and sharing learning across networks. In Manchester, the Council's Public Health Department liaises with local and Greater Manchester partners (eg. Manchester Children's and Adults' social care teams and safeguarding partnership, community safety domestic abuse team and NHS Greater Manchester) to identify learning from thematic reviews on suicides within specific contexts or groups, and opportunities to improve practice.

Our plan for suicide prevention for 2025–30

Greater Manchester strategy

The Greater Manchester Suicide Prevention Strategy is currently still in development. Updates from the NHS Greater Manchester programme lead for suicide prevention indicate that the Greater Manchester strategy will mirror the priority areas of the national strategy and include additional plans for:

- providing young people and their families with self-harm awareness and support information
- improved suicide awareness and training for those supporting autistic people
- increasing awareness of gambling addiction and support available
- a campaign targeted at men
- increased awareness of support for pregnant women and new mothers.

The Greater Manchester Suicide Prevention Steering Group will also identify additional priority groups such as suicide attempt survivors, older people and people with long-term conditions.

The NHS Greater Manchester suicide prevention work programme for 2025/26 also includes intentions to:

- work with education partners to improve on suicide awareness and training
- create a support resource specifically for primary care and pharmacies for men interacting with their service
- develop a suicide prevention campaign focused on the hospitality workforce
- increase self-harm and suicide awareness across Greater Manchester with a focus on older people
- further provide suicide prevention training opportunities for those working in the advice sector
- raise awareness with Greater Manchester taxi drivers of the suicide prevention training offer
- increase use of the Greater Manchester Bereavement Service website.

Manchester Suicide Prevention Plan 2025–30

Manchester will support the Greater Manchester strategy by linking with and supporting the Greater Manchester Suicide Prevention Plan and programme and delivering local priority actions over the coming five years. This will include work in the following areas.

1. Networks and communication

- 1.1. Convene Manchester Suicide Prevention Steering Group meetings**
Manchester City Council Public Health Department
- 1.2. Support delivery of Manchester Suicide Prevention Plan priorities and activities**
Manchester Suicide Prevention Steering Group members
- 1.3. Convene Greater Manchester Suicide Prevention Steering Group meetings**
NHS Greater Manchester ICP
- 1.4. Attend Greater Manchester Suicide Prevention Steering Group meetings and share information with Manchester Suicide Prevention Steering Group**
Manchester City Council Public Health Department
- 1.5. Develop and deliver the Greater Manchester Shining a Light on Suicide website and campaigns**
NHS Greater Manchester ICP
- 1.6. Promote and amplify Shining a Light on Suicide campaign messages through local channels and networks**
Manchester City Council Public Health Department, Manchester City Council Strategic Communications Department
- 1.7. Advise NHS GM ICP on targeting of campaigns and information to meet specific needs of Manchester residents, as necessary**
Manchester City Council Public Health Department

2. Services and support

- 2.1. Commission mental health treatment and care services including crisis support for Greater Manchester residents of all ages**
NHS GM ICP
- 2.2. Ensure that Greater Manchester mental health treatment and care services have robust suicide prevention policies and staff training plans in place**
NHS GM ICP
- 2.3. Commission Greater Manchester Bereavement Support Service including suicide bereavement support**
NHS GM ICP
- 2.4. Promote and share information about support services (including Greater Manchester Bereavement Support) through local networks and with Manchester-based partners**
Manchester City Council Public Health Department

- 2.5.** Co-ordinate partnership approaches to identifying and addressing 'high-risk locations' where data indicates the need for additional 'target hardening' approaches
Manchester City Council Public Health Department and Manchester Suicide Prevention Steering Group

3. Information and capacity building

- 3.1.** Commission Real Time Suspected Suicide System for Greater Manchester coroner's offices and share data with localities to facilitate post-incident support
NHS GM ICP
- 3.2.** Broker arrangements with other Greater Manchester and regional organisations for sharing data on incidents eg. Greater Manchester Police and North West Ambulance Service
NHS GM ICP
- 3.3.** **a)** Receive and analyse Real Time Suspected Suicide System data for Manchester to identify potential clusters or trends and local services that may need post-incident support
b) Proactively share information about available training and support with affected local organisations/individuals following suspected suicide incidents
Manchester City Council Public Health Department
- 3.4.** Promote free online suicide awareness and prevention training from Zero Suicide Alliance to Greater Manchester and Manchester-based organisations and encourage participation
NHS GM ICP, Manchester City Council Public Health Department
- 3.5.** Commission targeted suicide awareness and prevention training for priority groups and organisations as appropriate and when resources are available
NHS GM ICP
- 3.6.** Liaise with NHS GM ICP and other Greater Manchester locality suicide prevention leads to support identification of priority groups for training and promote commissioned training
Manchester City Council Public Health Department
- 3.7.** Ensure that Greater Manchester and Manchester Suicide Prevention Plans and activities connect with wider work to address risk factors and prevent and treat mental ill-health in the general population and in high-risk/priority groups eg. children and young people, maternal mental health and men's mental health
NHS GM ICP Manchester City Council Public Health Department
- 3.8.** Carry out a local suicide audit to collate and analyse data on deaths registered as suicides by Manchester coroner
Manchester City Council Public Health Department

Governance

Manchester Suicide Prevention Steering Group will provide oversight of delivery of the Manchester Suicide Prevention Plan and ensure that the plan is reviewed periodically to reflect any changes that affect its delivery. The steering group will support members to develop their organisational suicide prevention responses if required, but is not responsible for assurance that organisations are delivering this activity. Administrative support for the steering group will be provided by the Public Health Department. The steering group will report routinely to the Manchester Health and Wellbeing Board, and at agreed intervals to other bodies.

Public Health Department officers will represent Manchester City Council and the Manchester Suicide Prevention Steering Group within the Greater Manchester Suicide Prevention Steering Group.

Sources of support

In an emergency or crisis

NHS 111

Call: 111 – Mental health option connects to Greater Manchester Mental Health Trust Crisis Helpline

Greater Manchester Mental Health Trust Crisis Helpline

Call: 0800 953 0285 – available 24 hours a day, seven days a week

Samaritans

Call: 116 123 – free telephone helpline, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week

HOPELINE247

Call: 0800 068 41 41 – free telephone helpline for children, young people or young adults experiencing thoughts of suicide, or concerned for others

For more information

Shining a Light on Suicide

<https://shiningalightonsuicide.org.uk>

Samaritans

www.samaritans.org Email: jo@samaritans.org

Zero Suicide Alliance

www.zerosuicidealliance.com

Papyrus UK (Prevention of Young Suicide)

www.papyrus-uk.org Email: pat@papyrus-uk.org

Greater Manchester Bereavement Service

<https://greater-manchester-bereavement-service.org.uk>