



Although a formal committee of Brighton & Hove City Council, the Health & Wellbeing Board has a remit which includes matters relating to the Sussex Integrated Care Board (ICB), the Local Safeguarding Board for Children and Adults and Healthwatch.

Title:	Brighton & Hove Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2024-2027 – progress update
Date of Meeting:	8 April 2025
Report of:	The interim Director of Public Health
Contact:	Bernadette Alves, Consultant in Public Health
Email:	Bernadette.alves@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Wards Affected:	All
FOR GENERAL RELEASE	
Executive Summary <p>Reducing deaths by suicide is a national, regional and local priority. Every death is a tragedy and a cause of profound distress to friends, families, and communities.</p> <p>Reducing suicide is a priority for Brighton & Hove (the “city”) and helps to meet the goals and aims of the Brighton & Hove Council plan (2023 to 2027) and the Brighton and Hove Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2019 to 2030).</p> <p>Locally there is a high level of need. Between 2021 and 2023, the suicide rates within the city were 1.5 times higher than the England average. There was an average of 43 deaths by suicide per year in the city.</p> <p>Action to reduce deaths by suicide takes place at both Sussex and city level and is underpinned by the Brighton and Hove Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2024 – 2027 which was signed off by the Health and Wellbeing Board in November 2023 and the Sussex Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan 2024 – 2027</p> <p>This paper provides an update on progress against both the Brighton & Hove and Sussex plan.</p>	

1. Decisions, recommendations and any options

1.1 That the board:

- 1.1.1 Notes progress against the three-year Brighton & Hove Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2024-2027
- 1.1.2 Supports future progress of the Brighton & Hove Suicide Prevention Action Plan.

2. Relevant information

2.1 Introduction and Context

- 2.1.1 Reducing deaths by suicide is a national, regional and local priority. Every death is a tragedy and a cause of profound distress to friends, families, and communities. The impact is widespread and it is estimated that for every one suicide there can be up to 135 people significantly impacted.
- 2.1.2 Reducing suicide is a priority for the city and helps to meet the goals and aims of place-based and Sussex strategies and plans including:
 - [Brighton & Hove Council Plan \(2023 to 2027\)](#)
 - The Brighton and Hove [Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy \(2019 to 2030\)](#)
 - The Brighton & Hove [2022 Joint Strategic Needs Assessment on Mental Health and Wellbeing](#)
 - The Sussex Health and Care Strategy [Improving Lives Together](#)
- 2.1.3 Action to reduce deaths by suicide takes place at both Sussex and city level and is underpinned by the following documents:
 - [Sussex Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2027](#)
 - [East Sussex Suicide Prevention Framework and Action Plan 2024 – 2027](#)
 - [Brighton and Hove Suicide Prevention Action plan 2024 – 2027](#)
 - [West Sussex Suicide Prevention Framework and Action plan 2023 - 2027](#)
- 2.1.4 The Sussex strategy and place based frameworks and action plans align with the aims of the national Suicide prevention Strategy for England which is a 5-year cross sector strategy which aims 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.
- 2.1.5 Our vision is that Sussex is a place where:
 - We are committed to reducing the risk factors and increasing the protective factors for suicide across the life course.
 - We build individual and community resilience to improve lives and prevent people falling into crisis by tackling the risk factors for suicide.
 - We recognise that suicides can be prevented, and that people do not inevitably end up considering suicide as a solution to the difficulties they face.
 - We create an environment where anyone who needs help knows where to get it and is empowered to access that help

2.1.6 In November 2023, the Health and Wellbeing board signed off the Brighton and Hove suicide prevention action plan and noted the Sussex strategy and action plan. This paper provides an update on progress against both plans.

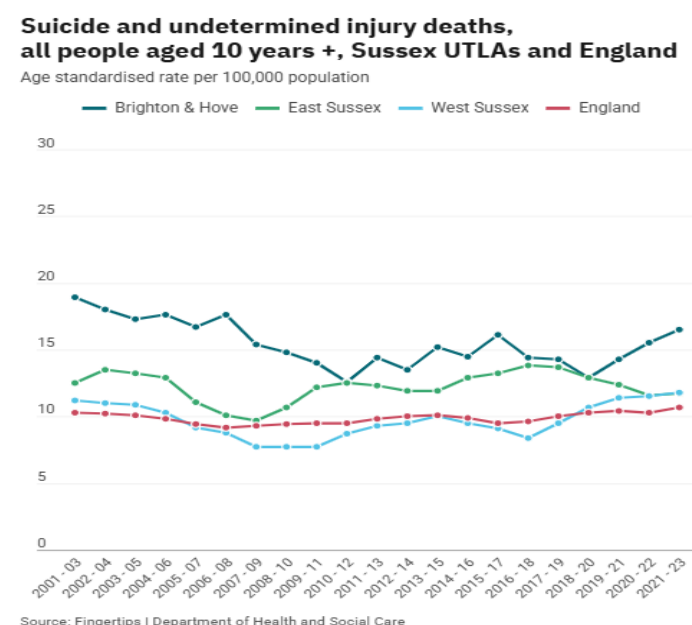
2.2 Local intelligence on suicide & self-harm

2.2.1 Suicide rates

The city has high need. Suicide rates in all three areas of Sussex are above the England average (10.7 persons per 100,000 in 2021-2023). Figure 1 shows that over more than two decades, rates in Brighton and Hove have been, and continue to be, higher than England, East Sussex and West Sussex.

Between 2021 and 2023, city suicide rates were 1.5 times higher than the England average. Overall, Brighton & Hove has the sixth highest rate in the country and the highest rate for deaths by suicide in women. There was an average of 43 deaths by suicide per year.

Figure 1: Suicide and undetermined injury deaths in Brighton & Hove, East Sussex, West Sussex and England, 2001-2003 to 2021-2023.



Source: Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, Suicide Prevention Profile
[Suicide Prevention | Fingertips | Department of Health and Social Care](#)

2.2.2 Self-harm hospital admissions in 10-24 year olds

Self-harm is defined as intentional injury to the body, often as a way to express deep emotional feelings such as low self-esteem, or coping with traumatic events.¹ Self-harm is associated with an increased risk of suicide, and around half of all people who die by suicide have a history of self-harm.²

Most self-harm occurs in the community and does not lead to hospital attendance. Although hospital admissions can be seen as the “tip of the iceberg”, the data can be used to identify trends and patterns.

¹ [Self-harm :: Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust](#)

² [Preventing suicide in England: Third progress report \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

Self-harm is more common in younger people and both nationally and locally, there are higher rates in those 10 to 24 years. Figure 2 shows that for all three Sussex areas, over the last six years, the rates of admission for self-harm in those aged 10 to 24 are statistically significantly higher than England. In 2022/23, rates of hospital admissions for self-harm in Brighton and Hove were 1.5 times higher than the England average and there were 280 admissions.

Figure 2: Emergency hospital admissions for intentional self-harm, ages 10-24, directly age standardised rate per 100,000, Brighton & Hove, East Sussex, West Sussex and England, 2011/12 to 2023/24



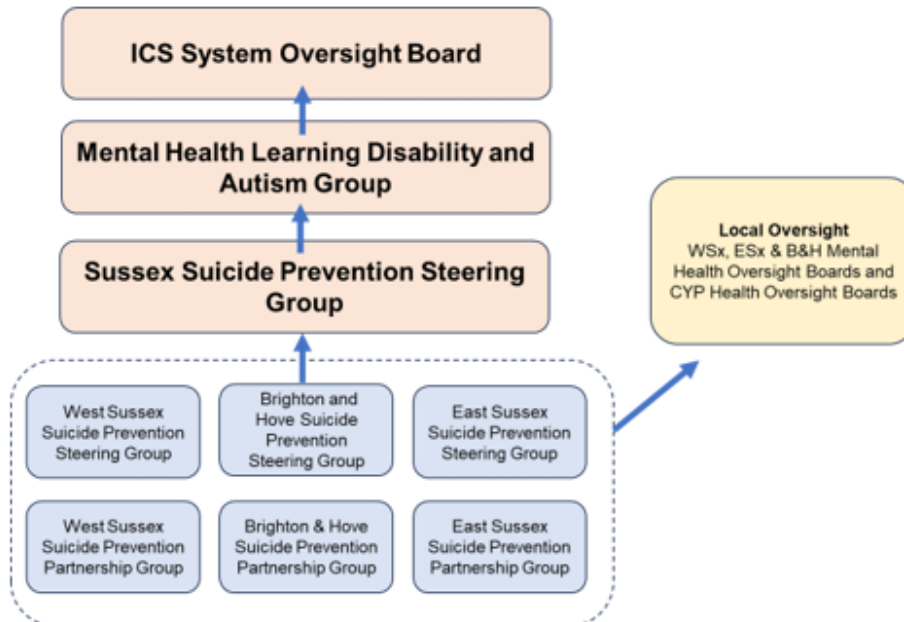
Source: Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, CYP Mental Health and Wellbeing Profile [Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing | Fingertips | Department of Health and Social Care](#)

2.3 Governance and oversight

- 2.3.1 Preventing suicide is everyone's business and is led by partnerships and governance structures at Sussex and city level, as shown in Figure 3.
- 2.3.2 Governance of the Sussex Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan is provided through reporting from the Sussex Suicide Prevention Steering Group to the Sussex Mental Health, Learning Disability and Autism (MHLDA) Board. An update was presented to the MHLDA Board in November 2024 and March 2025.
- 2.3.3 The city suicide prevention activity is delivered by the Brighton & Hove suicide prevention steering group. Led by Public Health, it has representation from organisations from across the city including the Council, NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board, Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Sussex Police, and Brighton & Hove voluntary and community sector organisations. It reports to the all-ages Mental Health Oversight Board which provides oversight.

- 2.3.4 The Brighton and Hove suicide prevention partnership of local organisations and stakeholders meets regularly to share expertise, knowledge, skills and good practise. It reports to the steering group.

Figure 3: Suicide prevention governance in Brighton & Hove and Sussex



- 2.3.5 Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust are developing a suicide prevention action plan as part of their Trust Strategy. It will be aligned with the Sussex Strategy
- 2.3.6 Sussex collaboration is growing and in October 2024, there was a successful Pan-Sussex suicide prevention conference. Held for the first time, there were over 200 attendees from over 60 different organisations

2.4 Progress made against the action plan

- 2.4.1 A summary of progress against the Sussex Strategy action plan priorities is found in Appendix 1. A detailed update on progress against the Brighton and Hove action plan can be found in Appendix 2. Key progress to note:

2.4.2 Suicide prevention in Neighbourhood Mental Health Teams and Integrated Care Teams.

The recent recommission of mental health support services for adults provided an opportunity to strengthen suicide prevention elements. The new service starting in October 2025 will include a focus on a sustained suicide prevention training, plus wider mental health strands including community engagement & development and tailored campaigns and communications. The service will be delivered through the three neighbourhood mental health teams that are aligned with the three integrated community team (ICT) areas within the city.

2.4.3 Tailored training for workforce

A joint NHS and Council funded programme of suicide prevention training for staff in general practice is underway. The development and delivery of the programme is being led by Grassroots Suicide Prevention which is a charity located within the city. It includes face to face training for clinical and non-clinical staff, a suite of e-learning

modules and podcasts on specialist topics delivered by local leaders and experts. Delivery began in March 2025 and will continue until March 2026.

A range of other training programmes have been delivered in the city: trauma-informed training to support asylum seeker and refugees (over 100 staff trained); suicide awareness training for youth sector (35 staff trained); suicide prevention training for water safety teams (23 staff trained); a programme of training for 120 staff who support adults with complex emotional and relational needs is underway until December 2025.

2.4.4 Systematic response to incidents. Response strengthened through:

Delivery of suicide bereavement support for those living in Sussex and the Sussex wide single point of access for bereavement support. Quarterly and annual reports received and network meetings conducted with suicide bereavement support providers across Sussex. Undertaking evidence review and stakeholder interviews for bereavement support for children and young people and adults which will inform re-procurement of bereavement services.

Delivery of a pan Sussex Real Time Surveillance workshop in March 2025 to strengthen our response to deaths by suspected suicide, collaboration and joint partner working

Expansion of the Multi-agency Mental Health and Education Triage service to support those most at risk in primary and secondary schools and colleges in Brighton & Hove

2.4.5 Suicide Audit/Learning

A review of three years of Coroner's records of people who died by suicide in Brighton & Hove between 2021 and 2024 has begun. Analysis and interpretation is underway and a workshop and report is planned for 2025. Findings and recommendations will shape the city action plan.

Deeper understanding of local need and intelligence in the city has been gained through the Health Counts survey of adults and Safe and Well at School Survey of school aged pupils.

2.4.6 Self Harm

Established a Pan Sussex Self Harm steering group in 2024 to develop and coordinate action on self-harm with a focus on children and young people.

The Sussex Self Harm Learning Network Conference ran in November 2024 to increase awareness of self-harm and support available. It was attended by over 100 professionals and community members. Feedback will be reviewed from the conference to inform future direction of self-harm activity.

The Sussex self-harm guidance for schools and colleges is being updated with input from partners across the system including Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.

2.4.7 Lived experience

In February 2024, a Pan-Sussex Suicide Prevention Lived Experience Group was set up by voluntary sector partners and members of the network presented at the Sussex suicide prevention conference in November 2024.

Lived experience networks have been mapped for mental health and suicide prevention across the city, Sussex, and the UK in July 2024.

The next steps are to identify opportunities to embed the voices of those with lived experience into suicide prevention activity, including through the suicide prevention

training for General Practice staff; the mental health and substance use pathways project; and the community engagement and development service as part of the Brighton & Hove mental health support service

2.5 Financial context

- 2.5.1 Funding for services delivering suicide prevention activity sits across the system and includes: Sussex specialist suicide bereavement support funded by the Integrated Care Board (ICB); elements of the Brighton and Hove mental health support service which is jointly funded by the ICB and the council; grants for city workforce training; and non-recurring programme spend. Where there are funding gaps, these are partly addressed through collaboration and partnership working across organisations.

2.6 Risks

- 2.6.1 The key risks associated with insufficient prioritisation and resources for the plan are:
- greater distress in those bereaved
 - Increased pressure in other parts of the system for both adults and children
 - Lower system ability and capacity to deliver on priority actions.
 - Variation in local funding for suicide prevention activity across the three places leading to differing system pressures, differing outcomes and different capacities for collaboration.

These risks may lead to worsening suicide rates. Mitigations include use of the national evidence-based framework, sustained funding commitments and collaboration at Sussex and Brighton and Hove level.

2.7 Conclusions and next steps

- 2.7.1 The paper provides a summary of the actions delivered at Sussex and city level over the first year of the Brighton and Hove plan. It demonstrates good progress across all action areas.
- 2.7.2 The plan is dynamic and will be amended and informed by changing needs, new intelligence such as the findings of the suicide audit and stakeholder feedback. Delivery requires sustained funding for key services and ongoing collaboration and commitment from system partners.

3. Important considerations and implications

Legal

- 3.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from this progress update on the Brighton & Hove Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2024-2027.

Lawyer consulted: Sian Stevens

Date: 17 March 2025

Finance

- 3.2 Funding for suicide prevention activity sits across organisations including Sussex Partnership NHS foundation Trust, Integrated Care Board (ICB), Brighton and Hove City Council, Grants from Health Education England and others. Where there are Brighton and Hove contracts, they are funded by the ringfenced Public Health grant (Families Children and Wellbeing directorate), NHS Sussex ICB or external grant funding.

Finance Officer consulted: Louise Hoten

Date: 14 March 2025

Equalities:

- 3.3 The B&H action plan commits to providing tailored support to communities at greater risk of suicide, based on national and local intelligence which identified that many risk factors associated with suicide are more common in people with one of more protected characteristics. This has been compiled into an Equalities Impact Assessment which was approved by the Equalities Team.

Sustainability:

- 3.4 The recommission of mental health support services in Brighton & Hove was approved by Council Cabinet in September 2024 and has taken account of the BHCC and NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board Sustainable Procurement Policy and Social Value Framework.
- In addition, the commission of suicide prevention training for general practice and the delivery of bereavement services included a requirement for Providers to minimise detrimental environmental and social impacts arising from the delivery of these contracts.

Health, social care, children's services and public health:

- 3.5 Suicide is a major public health issue with profound social, emotional and economic impacts for the population of Brighton & Hove and Sussex. The implementation of the suicide prevention action plan has been overseen by the B&H multi-agency steering group led by Public Health which meets regularly and includes representatives from NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board, adult social care, and children's services. The plan aims to reduce risk of suicide in the city and provide greater support to communities at a greater risk of suicide which is a local public health priority. A lack of sustained funding for suicide bereavement services will increase pressure in other parts of the health and care system for adults and children,

Supporting documents and information

Appendix 1: Sussex Suicide Prevention Strategy – summary of progress
Appendix 2: B&H Suicide Prevention Action Plan Progress Report 2025