



World Suicide Prevention Day

Creating Hope Through Action

September 10

Editorial

As we approach [World Suicide Prevention Day](#) on 10 September, writing this editorial has been a real challenge for me. The subject matter does not lend itself to quirky quips and light-hearted anecdotes, especially during a pandemic and its aftermath. Then I realised the issue is that I was focussing on the word suicide and not on the word prevention. We will know in time how many people have taken their lives during the pandemic, and every one is a personal and family tragedy: yet we have no way of counting how many suicides have been prevented.

Every conversation with a person in need, every time you have reached out to someone, and gone the extra mile, and asked how they are for a second time, is a moment that, coupled with all those other interactions, may well have prevented a suicide. Collectively we have probably avoided hundreds of lives lost. This should give us hope and encouragement to keep on with the work we are all doing as it is having an impact – we just don't always see it.

No one has been unaffected by Covid-19, the lockdowns, and the associated restrictions. We have all had highs and lows: good days when we thought this is ok as we coped with this 'new normal', and other days when we longed for some 'real' normality. Some people found lockdown hard whilst others found coming out of it even harder; we experience things differently even when we are facing a common foe. Whilst the vaccination programme is beginning to have positive impact on the virus, the full emotional and economic impact is yet to be seen. Yet, during the pandemic we have learned so much as to what does work, such as the [5 Ways to Wellbeing](#) that have made a difference. I am thinking particularly of the connectedness many of us have felt, (to friends, loved ones, green spaces and the Somerset countryside on our doorstep.

Unfortunately, too many people, too often, still feel unconnected to the people and places around them, leading to very dark thoughts and actions. This newsletter seeks to both encourage you to keep reaching out but also give you some resources and ideas how to better support people. The theme for World Suicide Prevention Day is creating hope through action. I would like to encourage you to keep focusing more on the word prevention and less on the word suicide as [small talk saves lives.](#)

Andrew Keefe

Chair Somerset Suicide Prevention Partnership, Clinical Commissioning Group

Welcome to the annual edition of the Somerset Suicide Prevention Partnership Newsletter – a creative compilation of hard work from organisations across the county, all joined together with the understanding that each and every suicide is devastating and has a profound impact on those around them. However, by raising awareness, reducing the stigma around suicide and taking informed action, we can together make a difference.

Events:

3rd & 10 September – South West Regional
Suicide Prevention Summit

[Event details and registration](#)

8 Sept – BBC Somerset Radio Wellbeing
Wednesday 7-8pm featuring suicide prevention
discussion with local organisations

September 6th-10th

Take The Training Challenge

[Working together to prevent suicide](#)

10 Sept – Men's Project, [Stepladder](#), launches
Innovation Fund.

10 Sept – Say My Name
6.30-8.30pm

A special Remembrance Event to honour
someone you've lost to suicide either
personally, or professionally. Light a candle in
memory of the person you are missing, and if
you want to, 'say their name' and share a few
short words about them with those present.

Afterward, there will be some time for informal
conversation with refreshments available.

If you would like to attend, please email

bereaved@mindinsomerset.org.uk

[Further information here](#)

11 Sept – Remembrance Book

At St Mary Magdalene Church, Church Square,
Taunton, TA1 1SA from 10.30am-2.30pm
Drop in to meet staff and write a few words, or
bring something to leave in one of our
Remembrance Books to honour someone
you've lost to suicide.



Somerset Recovery College

Somerset Recovery College is hosted by
Somerset NHS Foundation Trust. In
collaboration with the Somerset Community, our
aim is to provide learning opportunities that are
free of charge, Co-Produced and Co-Tutored.
Learning opportunities focus on a combination
of strategies to aid personal recovery and
practical skills to help students move forward
towards an even more meaningful life.

Our students are 18 and over and from the
Somerset community and can include current or
former service users of Somerset FT, families of
service users, professionals and anyone else
with an interest in wellbeing for themselves and
others. Somerset as a topic is an important
element of our courses - we do our best to
include local topics in everything we do and set
them up where there is local need. Popular
courses include walking, art, creative writing,
yoga, the art of resilience (which looks at
strategies to better respond to challenges that
arise in life from time to time) and grow you own
on the allotment.

Tuition is given in person at local venues, away
from medical settings or we can provide it
Online, however, we do not offer therapy. We
have class sizes of up to 10 students,
depending on the current social distancing
guidance.

**If you wish to register or for more
information, go to
www.somersetrecovery.co.uk or telephone
07342 063 735**

[Facebook.com/somersetrecoverycollege](https://www.facebook.com/somersetrecoverycollege)

Twitter: @somersetcollege

We look forward to meeting you soon!



Stepladder is a new community development initiative working with groups across Somerset to support men with their mental health and wellbeing. The project is delivered by Second Step and funded by Somerset County Council. Its aims are to reduce suicide amongst men, by providing more opportunities to promote wellbeing, improve journeys through mental health support and reduce the stigma that men can feel when asking for help.

Stepladder provides that step up to help communities, groups and individuals build their ability to support the men that they have contact with, enabling them to develop supportive networks. Working as part of Open Mental Health means that if men need direct support they can easily be linked in.

One of our priorities is to reach out to men before they reach crisis point. Most men that die by suicide haven't been in touch with specific mental health services in the preceding 12 months, but the majority have been in contact with other services such as A&E, GPs or debt agencies. We're promoting Stepladder in such places as well as focusing on places that men go to regularly.

Through a small grants fund we will help plug the gaps in service provision by helping communities or organisations set up new projects and invite others into Somerset to deliver support. It would be great to hear from you if you have ideas of what is currently missing in Somerset!

Further information: www.second-step.co.uk/mens-mental-health-project.

nick.dean@second-step.co.uk / 07855 012317

Somerset Foundation Trust

This year, Somerset Foundation Trust has created 2 secondments to Lead roles in Suicide Prevention in the Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Directorate. Debbie Wint, principal clinical psychologist, has moved into the role of suicide prevention lead and Dr John Parker combines his role as medical suicide prevention lead with his Consultant psychiatrist role in STEP (Early intervention in psychosis).

John and Debbie are focussing on improving training, learning and practice around suicide safety in the directorate as well as exploring ways to involve key family members and friends more in individuals' care. A number of related Quality Improvement projects are in progress within the service, including one focusing on self-harm with the aim of making information about coping with self-harm more accessible locally. John will focus on safer prescribing and improving physical health for people with mental health conditions. A project to recruit peer recovery and wellbeing workers has been led by Debbie, with Second Step and Mind, to work in Open mental health with people who have had recent thoughts of suicide. The aim is to offer intentional peer support, practical and emotional support towards recovery, and helping people to engage with local services.

Somerset Foundation Trust Colleague Support Service are supporting WDSP with a blog and a Twitter campaign. You can follow them : Colleague Wellbeing and Support @Wellbeing_NHS.



outstanding care
listening and leading
working together





Personal Story: Suicide Bereavement Support



In 2018 our world was turned upside down. Rob was the 27 year old father of my beautiful little girl. He was fun-loving, had a dark sense of humour, was stubborn beyond belief and was loved by everyone who had the pleasure of knowing him.

Despite all of this, he took his own life. Suicide isn't like any other grief you will ever experience, there is nothing nor nobody to blame, except the person you love. I spent months re-reading messages, looking for answers, blaming myself for not seeing his sadness and the guilt was overwhelming. I was so very angry that he could do this and leave us all behind. How dare he! At the same time I was feeling totally broken that someone I loved so much could've been feeling so worthless and I just didn't realize. Still dealing with the stigma, I felt unable to open up about these feelings, even to those people closest to me; this is when I found what I needed with the service. Not knowing how to cope with the weight I carried, this bespoke service held my hand with one to one support, specialist counseling and a fantastic buddying system. Suddenly I wasn't alone. Surrounded with the caring attitude of everyone at Mind, I found the strength to join the local peer group, a terrifying prospect, but the best decision I made. I didn't want anyone trying to pull me out of my darkness and grief at that time, I just needed someone to sit alongside me, just knowing that they understood. This is one of the reasons the peer group that this wonderful service offers is so important, knowing you're not alone makes a world of difference.

I spent 2 years attending the peer groups, surrounded by people who knew my pain all too well, but were happy to share it even though they were suffering themselves. I will never be able to express how important that was to me. While my confidence was growing with the continued support I was receiving, I spent time keeping up to date with mental health developments, it was here I came across a statistic that shook me – 'Anyone affected emotionally by a suicide is at least 60% more likely to attempt suicide, contemplate or die from suicide themselves'. It was at that moment I realized my journey with Mind wasn't nearing it's end, it was barely just beginning. I knew I had to do everything in my power to protect my baby from this fate and if I could stop one single family going through the heartbreak we endured and are still dealing with to this very day, then everything would be worth it. I volunteer with the 'Buddy Program' to share lived experience with new service users and support them through the early stages of their grief. I also help to facilitate the Peer Groups that only a few years earlier had saved me. Suicide doesn't stop the pain, it simply passes it to another, but, with this fantastic service we are fighting every day to help break that cycle.

My hope for the world is that with the help of MIND, we can ask the question more openly – 'Have you had suicidal thoughts?', end the stigma and fill the world with kindness. Nothing will ever bring Rob back, but I will endeavor to make sure his death was not in vain.

24 hour helpline:
0300 330 5463

Hayley, aged 31



Mindline – “A virtual arm around the shoulder” of Somerset for 20 years

Mindline is currently celebrating its 20th anniversary as Somerset’s mental health and emotional support helpline run by the mental health charity - Mind in Somerset. The onset of Covid last year saw the service rise to meet the challenge of the pandemic as it expanded to become a 24/7 operation. Since that time calls have increased more than ten-fold from approx. 60 per week to in excess of 600 and total over 30,000 to date.

Whilst the age demographic of callers has widened and the helpline is seeing more and more young people looking for mental health support, work is ongoing to encourage engagement and remove any obstacles to using the service.

The gender split has remained constant with females representing over two thirds of callers but with male suicide rates disproportionately high both nationally

and in the county the service is looking to reach out to the male population to encourage conversation and help halt, and ultimately reverse, this worrying trend as part of a wider Suicide Prevention strategy.

As part of Mind in Somerset involvement in the Open Mental Health partnership - ‘Crisis Safe Space’ is a new face-to-face service aimed to catch and hold those in danger of a mental health crisis.

This is just one way in which we aim to make it easier and more comfortable for people to reach out and talk. To book a session please use the Mindline contact numbers below:

Tel: Freephone 0800 138 1692 or locally on 01823 276 892 – Open 24/7.

Awareness of Mindline as a service is key and all opportunities to promote the line are greatly accepted and appreciated. Promotional material is available digitally should you wish to print and display or distribute – details for this are below. For any digital promotional material please contact:

mark.woodberry@mindinsomerset.org.uk



**6th-10th Sep - Hands of Hope
twitter campaign**

- at @Wellbeing_NHS. Join in using the hashtags #SomersetHope and #WSPD by decorating a picture of a hand reaching out with messages or words of hope about how you will support suicide awareness and hold hope for others. Led by Somerset NHS Foundation Trust and the Emotional Wellbeing and Support Service

Open
Mental
Health

**Giving you the
support you need,
when you need it.**

Lots of things can impact our mental health. If you are an adult living in Somerset and need support Open Mental Health are here to help
24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Contact our team at Mindline Somerset on 01823 276892

Taunton Rail Responders

All human life passes through a railway station. Many are enroute to a holiday or a celebration, but some are travelling to a funeral or a hospital appointment - emotions vary considerably. 'Rail Responders' was created in Taunton after British Transport Police approached Taunton Team Chaplaincy for help. The chaplaincy recruited twelve volunteers, who now offer a friendly greeting and a listening ear to passengers who appreciate a chat whilst waiting for their train. Wearing a distinctive blue uniform Rail Responders seek to respond to human need with God's love, following Jesus' call to care for those who suffer and struggle with many aspects of life.

Samaritans delivered training to the group to help them engage appropriately with anyone showing signs of distress or anxiety. They now make regular patrols through the station and the Obridge Viaduct nearby. The team engages with hundreds of travellers who have welcomed the initiative - with many appreciating the offer of prayer or a chance to share any personal concerns that they may have.

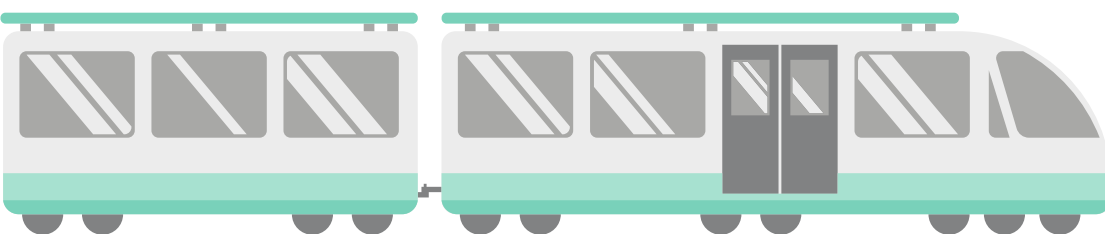
Anyone indicating that they may require ongoing needs are signposted too the Samaritans' 24/7 phone line (116 123), other mental health charities or NHS services.

The experiences of similar schemes elsewhere in the UK have shown that a timely intervention can prevent someone making a decision which has irrevocable consequences. If it is followed up with an appropriate referral to professional support, most will not repeat their action.



Like the now familiar Street Pastors, Rail Responders do not preach but they provide a caring, listening and reassuring presence in an informal manner. Working in teams of three or four, each volunteer patrols at least once a month, at different times of the day. They also help rail operators spread basic safety messages among young people, who sometimes act dangerously near fast trains. Initiatives also bring the added bonus of a reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour on and near the stations they serve.

**For further details about the Rail Responders team visit:
www.tauntonteamchaplaincy.org or call 07581 424 420**



Local Suicide Prevention Planning - a review of the year

Somerset local suicide prevention planning is led by a multi- agency group of statutory and voluntary organisations co-ordinated by Public Health, Somerset County Council. The group is chaired by Deputy Director of Commissioning - Mental Health, Autism, & Learning Disabilities, Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group. The Somerset Suicide Prevention Strategy aims to achieve a reduction in the suicide rate and to provide better support for those bereaved or affected by suicide. Additional meetings were held to review and agree priorities during the pandemic. Below are some highlights of activities in the last year:

Reduce risk of suicide in high risk groups

- 1 • Mindline was developed to become a 24/7 helpline. Front door to enhanced support managed by the new community mental health service, Open Mental Health.
 - Men's mental health project, Stepladder launched

Tailor approaches to mental health support in specific groups

- 2 • Wellbeing for Education Recovery programme delivered to Somerset schools supported by the Somerset Wellbeing Framework, whole school approach.
 - Farming Community Network produced an awareness raising video.
 - Over 700 staff completed on-line suicide awareness training on World Suicide Prevention Day last year.

Reduce access to the means of suicide

- 3 • Suicide in Public Places group established involving Highway Agency, Environment Agency, national railway, Police, SCC engineers, Samaritans and mental health services. Site visits have taken place and new Samaritan signs fitted to fixtures

Provide information and support to individuals bereaved by suicide

- 4 • Somerset's Suicide Bereavement Support Service received additional funds to reach more young people and expand community support.
 - The service supported people throughout the pandemic offering additional telephone support, on-line support groups, social media presence and support for staff impacted by a suicide through work.

Contact Louise Finnis lfinnis@somerset.gov.uk - Public Health Specialist

Local Suicide Prevention Planning - a review of the year - continued

Support the media to report appropriately on incidents of suicide

- 5 • Two on-line media and suicide workshops held with Samaritan's media team.
• On-going monitoring of local media reporting

Implement research, data collection and monitoring

- 6 • Public Health Team continue to collect real time suspected suicide data to be reviewed for themes and patterns.
• Somerset is one of ten sites involved in a national real time surveillance pilot. Avon and Somerset Police have a new real time surveillance system working with two Public Health teams to receive immediate notifications of a suspected suicide and enable early contact with people bereaved by suicide who have requested support

Contact Louise Finnis lfinnis@somerset.gov.uk - Public Health Specialist





The Farming Community Network in Somerset has been working alongside people who make their living in the agricultural industry since 1995 - giving pastoral support and practical help for those going through tough times. Simply by standing by people in times of need and listening to their concerns, we know that we make a huge difference in their lives.

Our 35 volunteers in Somerset all have farming experience which is really vital for their role. The farming lifestyle is unique – so who better to understand their needs or be able to empathise with their anxieties, than someone who is themselves from an agricultural background. For some farmers, there is little time for anything but their work - all volunteers have a good understanding of the pressures they are under and the worries they have. Other volunteers have specific skills such as veterinary, financial, legal or mental health knowledge – some of them also do shifts supporting the national helpline where they talk to people in the industry from right across England and Wales.

The support that our volunteers give can take many forms it may be talking to local farmers on the telephone or visiting them at their farms. We also have members of the team who attend cattle markets and local events to raise awareness. We all feel that being a volunteer and being let into someone's life is a great privilege. It can take weeks to build a good trusting relationship, but it is something we all enjoy. It has given our older retired volunteers a real purpose in their lives as they want to help other farmers and give back something to their community.

Sometimes we have lived through the experiences and worries of the people we serve so we understand all too well their suicidal thoughts, grief or anger giving them confidence to confide in us.

The organisation helps with many different issues, but we are mainly there for people struggling with bereavement and loss, mental and physical health issues, financial hardship and bureaucratic problems. There is never any time limit on our support – we are there for farming families for as long as it takes. The last 18 months have been tough for us all, but farmers have been able to carry on with their work and farm children have loved being on the farm. However, it has brought increased problems for families, and we have seen an increase in coercive control and relationship breakdowns. Mental health issues and loneliness have also increased dramatically.

Somerset FCN joined the Mental Health in Agriculture group to enable them to find ways to help people struggling with mental health issues and suicidal thoughts.

Our first project was to bring out a Z card - 'Are you worried about someone you know on the farm' which has been distributed far and wide and encourages people to share their concerns about mental health. The second project was a short film called The Hill Farmer about an Exmoor farmer suffering with depression and suicidal thoughts. This film has been very well accepted and used in training.

www.newleaf.uk.com/news/the-hill-farmer-mental-health-in-agriculture

General Farming Community network Contact:
Helpline 03000 111 111 a helpline volunteer will make sure an appropriate person will call them back quickly.



App Reviews

The [Stay Alive](#) app is a suicide prevention resource full of useful information to help you stay safe or if you are concerned about someone else.

I like that the app splits needing help or for someone else, then talks you through like someone is there. I like the fact it has a Safety/well ness plan and even a breathing exercise and pushing the reasons for living .I think both apps are great, the amount of info I have received from them for my job is great.

Honestly, I am quite blunt and honest with things, I can't find anything bad, or they could do better with - Peer Recovery Worker

The [distrACT](#) app aims to help you better understand urges to self-harm, and how to monitor & manage your symptoms.

The app seems to have a fair disclaimer at the start. Then what I love for me is that the information is bullet pointed out and I could have seen when I was poorly or someone that needs my help, this being a valuable aid, as I feel the last thing you need is loads of jargon when you need to access help, for me this app is amazing and covers everything from concerns, to support to accessing help. I wish I had used this app.

I really enjoyed this app although I had a minor problem with other similarly named apps that could cause confusion. I really liked the support feature and how it is easily broken down into countries within the UK. I love the online safety plan, having a paper copy of a safety plan can be great for sticking to your fridge at home, but when out, remembering to take a piece of paper with you (that will inevitably become tatty over time) could be a pain. Having this feature ensures that a person can access their safety plan anywhere that they take their phone, which in today's world, is virtually everywhere! I loved the Worried About Someone feature, I found this very informative and particularly liked the debunking of myths around suicide.

I think this area is informative and keeps things simple. There is a lot to read though so I think this would need to be digested prior to a crisis situation. I also really liked the support advice for the person providing the support; supporting the supporter is crucial to enable the individual experiencing thoughts of self-harm and/or suicide to maintain a strong support network. Another great app that gets a big thumbs up from me 😊Peer Recovery and Wellbeing Worker

I love everything about this app, although initially I didn't realise it was primarily for support around self-harm. I really liked the find support feature, there is so much invaluable information. The emergency section is well thought out and gives information on the most common types of self-harm injuries. I particularly liked the explanations of what would happen if the individual went to A&E; I felt that this would help lessen the anxiety a person may feel upon deciding they needed medical intervention. I also really liked the Calm Zone, a great way of supporting individuals to access media that may help them to feel calmer in those tricky moments of escalation. I think the media could be expanded upon to include more suggestions, but I really loved the ones that are there. I wanted to watch It's Kind of a Funny Story, but annoyingly it has been removed from Netflix now. Overall, I think the app is well put together, informative, and supportive 😊 Peer Recovery and Wellbeing Worker

Somerset Suicide Bereavement Support Service

For every person who loses their life to suicide, it has been estimated that 125 people overall are emotionally affected by the loss, like a ripple effect ranging from direct to moderate. Promoting the mental health of people bereaved through suicide is the key aim on the national and local suicide prevention strategy, and it is the main focus of the Somerset Suicide Bereavement Support Service, which is why early and appropriate support to those bereaved by suicide is vital to facilitate the complex bereavement process, as well as reduce the risk of long term mental health problems.

The approach of the SBBSS is to be a listening ear and support people as they work through their whirlwind of emotions. The service will attend meetings with clients, including inquests, and act as an advocate when communicating with 3rd parties such as schools or employers. We also aim to provide useful tools and resources for all demographics on our website, keeping it updated with relevant news articles, books, YouTube videos, learning resources and even podcasts so everyone has 24/7 access to bundles of relevant resources, as well as keeping our social medias regularly updated to maximise community outreach.

"I am such a public face of suicide bereavement that I needed a safe place to be able to bring my real grief too. I needed to feel safe emotionally and professionally"



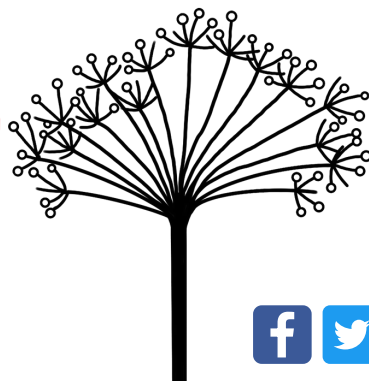
'We have been to other peer support groups but it feels safe here.'

24 hour helpline:
0300 330 5436

What We Offer:

- One to one bereavement support for anyone aged 5+ who has been affected by the death of someone through suicide. Sessions one hour a week and can be via Zoom, Teams, WhatsApp, telephone as well as face to face sessions.
- Bereavement buddies can provide support by phone, volunteers who lived experience.
- Dedicated Samaritans support calls on agreed days and times for anyone who is feeling vulnerable.
- Peer support group for young people & adults, which are available in different localities across Somerset once a month.
- [Website full of relevant links & resources for all demographics.](#)
- Support for groups or communities impacted by a suicide
- Professional support for those affected in a professional setting eg. workplace

"When you offered to see us all as a family it was a great relief for me, I didn't and still don't understand how my husband could leave us and leave me to cope with all this. I needed help immediately for me and the kids"



@somensetsuicidebereavement



Samaritans from Taunton and Yeovil branches continue to work with the Somerset Partnership for Suicide Prevention to support people who are suicidal and in emotional distress. During an extraordinary year for everyone, our volunteers continued going into our branches to answer calls throughout. Over the year Taunton branch answered over 22,000 calls, whilst nationally we answered a call every 7 seconds.

Our Listening volunteers are local people of all ages and walks of life. People worked hard to learn new systems and the training teams had to work fast to learn how to teach online.

In the middle of all of this Yeovil Samaritans celebrated their 50th anniversary. Founding volunteer Mary 88 was interviewed on BBC Somerset about the changes she has experienced as a Samaritan over 50 years.

Our Central Charity launched a [special NHS/Social care line](#) aimed at staff on the front line and manned by shielding volunteers working from home.

A new [Samaritans self app](#) was launched to help people get through day to day, encouraging people to be kind to themselves.

The research team at Central Office analysed over 4 million contacts, and surveyed volunteers who took calls throughout lockdown. They concluded that even though overall suicide trends might stay the same, we may see increases in certain groups with key risk factors such as; Self-harm, Mental ill health, Unemployment and financial stress, Domestic violence and Loneliness and loss of support.

Samaritans has re-launched its campaign [Small Talks Saves Lives](#) on the railways and in other settings, to encourage people to start a conversation if they see anyone whom they are worried about. Yeovil Samaritans aims to work with local agencies to have a stand in town to raise awareness that suicide is everyone's business over the weekend of World Suicide Prevention Day in September.

Taunton Samaritans has engaged with the public at Taunton Station for the first time since lockdown, hearing how the support of listening volunteers has been a lifeline for so many during the past year. Its project to raise awareness is ongoing, with over 40 signs put up on walkways, cycle paths, parks and sporting venues in Taunton, Wellington, Bridgwater and Hinkley Point.

Contact Samaritans on 116 123 or email jo@samaritans.org



Did You Know...

[Every Mind Matters](#) - mental health resources include tailored advice, as well as practical tips on coping with anxiety, depression, sleep and self-care.

[When it is darkest: why people die by suicide and what we can do to prevent it](#): by leading suicide prevention author, Professor Rory O'Connor (University of Glasgow. President of IASP (International Association of Suicide Prevention) .

[Samaritans have launched online safety and troubling content](#) - Guidance on staying safe online, co-designed by young people with lived experience of self-harm and suicidal feelings and experience of supporting others at risk.

R;pple

Launch date - 10th September 2021

A browser plug-in that prompts an automatic pop-up when users search for information on self-harm or taking their own life, launching on [World Suicide Prevention Day](#). Free to download, Ripple provides support and resources for people suffering from poor mental health, including a message of hope.

[Get Outside in Somerset](#) - is a joint initiative from Somerset Activity and Sport Partnership (SASP), The Community Council for Somerset (CCS), Spark Somerset, and Somerset Wildlife Trust, funded by Somerset County Council Public Health. We are here to help people gain confidence to get back outdoors and move more to promote their physical and mental wellbeing.

Discover
simple steps
to look after
your mental
health

every
mind
matters

NHS

10 things to know & do to support suicide prevention

1 - Suicide takes a high toll

In 2018, there were 6,507 suicides registered in the UK. Each and every suicide is devastating and has a profound impact on those around them.

However, by raising awareness, reducing the stigma around suicide and encouraging well-informed action, we can reduce instances of suicide.

[World Suicide Prevention Day](#) is an opportunity to raise awareness of suicide and to promote action that will reduce the number of suicides. This year's theme is, Creating hope through action. Get involved and support World Suicide Prevention Day.

2 - There are specific groups of people at higher risk of suicide

Three in four deaths by suicide are men. People in the lowest socio-economic group and living in the most deprived geographical areas are 10 times more at risk of suicide than those in the highest socio-economic group

Familiarise yourself with the local mental health in crisis offer [Mental health crisis - Somerset NHS Foundation Trust \(somersetft.nhs.uk\)](#)

Upload this link to a video [Thinking about suicide?](#)

Suicide Prevention Alliance offers good insight into suicide [warning signs and risk factors](#)

3 - There are specific factors that increase the risk of suicide

The strongest identified predictor of suicide is previous episodes of self-harm. Mental ill-health and substance misuse also contribute to many suicides.

MindEd offers interactive self-harm training as e-learning or as a group workshop.

[Suicide and Self-harm prevention for adults](#)
[Suicide and self-harm prevention working with children and young people](#)

Look up the [self-injury pages](#) on the Somerset Public Health portal

4 - Preventing suicide is achievable

Working together to offer services that build community resilience and target groups of people at heightened risk of suicide, can help reduce suicides. Support is needed at the highest level within all organisations.

For World Suicide Prevention Day [complete one of the on-line suicide prevention courses outlined here.](#)

5 - Suicide is everyone's business

A whole system approach is required. No one agency can prevent suicides alone. Communities as well as statutory and voluntary organisations need to help prevent suicides.

Help promote the Samaritan campaign [Small Talk Saves Lives](#)

Please watch and share the video [Lets Talk about Suicide](#)

6 - Restricting access to the means of suicide works

Research tells us that restricting access to the chosen means of suicide can be effective in improving opportunities for intervention. Around a third of all suicides take place outside the home, in a public location of some kind.

Read national guidance on reducing [suicides in public places](#)
If you have concerns about a site please contact lfinnis@somerset.gov.uk

7 - Supporting people bereaved by suicide is an important component of suicide prevention strategies

Individuals bereaved by suicide have an increased risk of suicide and suicidal ideation, depression, psychiatric admission as well as poor social functioning.

Please familiarise yourself with the [Somerset Suicide Bereavement Service website](#) and ensure it is included in your resource lists and directories.

8 - Responsible media reporting is critical

Research evidence shows that certain types of media depictions, such as explicitly describing a method, sensational and excessive reporting, can lead to imitational suicidal behaviour among vulnerable people.

Please read and share [Samaritans' Media Guidelines](#)

9 - The social and economic cost to suicide is substantial and adds to the case for suicide prevention work

The economic cost of each death by suicide of someone of working age is estimated to be £1.67 million. This covers the direct costs of care, indirect costs relating to loss of productivity and earnings, and the intangible costs associated with pain, grief and suffering.

Read about the new proposed [Online Safety Bill](#) and use the [Online Harms guidelines_FINAL.pdf \(nspa.org.uk\)](#).

10 - Local suicide prevention strategies must be informed by evidence

Local government should consider the national evidence alongside local data and information to ensure local needs are addressed.

Here are two sites that regularly posts reports and research
[Sign up for the monthly newsletter from National Suicide Prevention Alliance](#)
[National Confidential Inquiry into suicide and safety in mental health \(NCISH\)](#)

This newsletter has been produced by Somerset Suicide Prevention Partnership with support from Jasmine Williams, Social Media Lead & Project Assistant from Somerset Suicide Bereavement Service - September 2021