

**THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA
ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH SELECT COMMITTEE**

12 OCTOBER 2023

REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY MANAGER

SUICIDE PREVENTION AND ADULT MALES AS A HIGH-RISK GROUP

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out the select committee's proposal to establish a working group to carry out an in-depth review in the municipal year 2023/2024.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Select committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Review the scoping document for the working group and agree the terms of reference and membership as set out in Appendix 1.

3 SUICIDE PREVENTION STRATEGY AND ADULT MALES

- 3.1 The Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee has a remit to scrutinise the provision and performance of adult social care services, partnerships associated with the delivery of adult social care, Public Health, and related plans and strategies. The select committee also has a remit to scrutinise NHS organisations, Trusts and health providers and to review healthcare services.¹
- 3.2 On 2 May 2023 the select committee discussed a report on the Bi-Borough Suicide Prevention Strategy 2022-2025 and one-year action plan. The report set out that nationally around three quarters of registered suicides are by adult males, particularly in the 45-54 age group, and that reducing the risk of suicide in high-risk groups, including middle-aged men, is a priority. The 2022/2023 action plan is working to mitigate risk factors in males, particularly those in middle age.
- 3.3 The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and City of Westminster Bi-Borough Public Health Team leads on the action plan and co-ordinates the Suicide Prevention Partnership Group which includes mental health and care services, primary care representatives, community-based organisations, voluntary agencies, employers, schools, colleges, universities and people with lived experience.
- 3.4 The Department of Health and Social Care has recently published a [national strategy](#) on suicide prevention 2023 to 2028. The new national strategy

¹ Part 5 Section 3 RBKC Constitution

identifies middle-aged men as one of seven priority groups, and states that middle-aged men have the highest rates of suicide of any other group. The strategy cites national evidence which shows that these men experience risk factors such as living in highly deprived areas, experiencing unemployment or financial difficulties such as debt, housing problems, alcohol or drug misuse, contact with the justice system, relationship problems, and social isolation.

- 3.5 There is a London-wide initiative, led by the London Health Board and the Mayor of London, to help improve mental health among communities in London, which has as one of its six aims making the capital a zero-suicide city.
- 3.6 There is a significant amount of academic literature and research on male mental health and suicide prevention. In particular, this includes the 2021 study 'Suicide by Middle-Aged Men' by the National Confidential Inquiry into Suicide and Safety in Mental Health led by Professor Louis Appleby. Professor Appleby also led on the report Suicide Safety in North Kensington, commissioned by Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust, published in 2020, and which was discussed at select committee on 19 April 2021.

4. SCOPE OF THE WORKING GROUP

- 4.1 In line with the 2019 statutory guidance on overview and scrutiny, the development of the scoping document and terms of reference have considered:
- outcomes for a scrutiny members' working group on this issue
 - a clearly focused terms of reference and how the work on this subject can be best carried out
 - timeliness
 - engagement with the Lead Member and officers.²
- 4.2 The scoping document in Appendix 1 sets out the potential themes for each evidence session. The working group will need a clear idea of what it hopes to get out of each session and how this will contribute to an evidence-based report.
- 4.3 The final output of the working group will be a report with recommendations. Recommendations should be evidence-based and SMART, i.e. specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timed. The working group will share the draft report and recommendations with interested parties. It is suggested that six to eight recommendations are sufficient to enable a complete response.³
- 4.4 A project plan, shared with officers and members, will be produced to support the working group, which will report back to select committee with a full report and recommendations on 25 April 2024 for members to agree.
- 4.5 There will need to be ethical considerations when carrying out this work, particularly in the evidence-gathering stage.

² 2019 statutory guidance overview and scrutiny

³ ibid

FOR DISCUSSION

Jacqui Hird
Scrutiny Manager

Background papers used in the preparation of this report:

'Suicide Prevention Strategy Update' 2 May 2023, Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee

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APPENDIX 1:

Scoping Document: Select Committee Working Group

Process:

1. Proposal

Initial outline of the proposed review is proposed at select committee or as part of the review of the Annual Scrutiny Work Programme agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

2. Scoping document

If agreed in principle, a working group or member will work with the Scrutiny and Policy Officer to agree on the scoping document, involving executive directors and heads of service, the chair of the select committee and the chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

3. Select committee agreement

If the scoping document is agreed a select committee agree the terms of reference, based on the scoping document, and membership including the chair and any co-opted members.

4. Start review

Members of the working group complete the review supported by the Scrutiny and Policy Officer, according to a project plan highlighting the evidence sessions and participants.

5. Complete review

The working group will report back to the select committee within a specific timescale and deliver a full report and recommendations within its original terms of reference.

Review Title:
Suicide Prevention and Adult Males as a High-Risk Group
Select Committee:
Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee
Outcomes:
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To engage with the voluntary sector, community organisations and affected residents, the academic community, NHS and Public Health professionals to understand the key issues relevant to suicide and suicide prevention amongst men.2. To produce recommendations to influence the local authority and partnership's suicide prevention strategy and action plan.3. To contribute to the development of proposals in the Suicide Prevention Strategy's action plan, particularly to reduce the risk factors for men.

Terms of Reference:

1. To understand in-depth the population profile of adult males who are at a higher risk, and the influence of the wider determinants of health.
2. To assess the risk factors affecting adult men as well as the protective characteristics among men which can inform prevention.
3. To review the issue of men's engagement with wider services, preventative services, barriers to seeking help or support at an early stage, and stigma.
4. To gain insight from the third sector, communities and community organisations in RBKC.
5. To review best practice in support services which may be tailored to men specifically from local and national charities and local third sector organisations.

Evidence Gathering:

The proposal is to start with two evidence sessions. The themes for these sessions to include:

Session 1

Review of local and national reported suicide data, risk factors particularly relevant to men, current priorities and actions.

Session 2:

Review of CNWL workstream on mental health and suicide prevention for men and engagement with representatives from national charities and the third sector in RBKC to understand best practice, preventative approaches and support for adult males and propose amendments and/or additions to current plans.

This will be followed by two other evidence sessions, including engagement involving the national third sector, and national experts as the working group develops.

Membership:

Cllr Lucy Knight, Chair
Cllr Mona Ahmed
Cllr Gerard Hargreaves