



Connecting for Life Strategy Implementation Monitoring Report

Q3 2024

HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention



Connecting for Life



Connecting for Life



Introduction and Overview This Period



Overview of Progress on Strategic Goals



Needs Attention and Off Track Actions



Connecting for Life



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Introduction and Overview This Period

This is the Q3 2024 implementation monitoring report for Connecting for Life. It provides an overview of the work carried out by strategy lead agencies from July 2024 - September 2024. To date in this period, of the 67 actions in CFL, updates were received on 61. Of the 61 actions for which updates were received, 3 were logged as needing attention. No actions were logged as off track. The majority of actions were considered to be on track. Further detail on the needs attention actions are provided at the end of this report.

The NGO quarterly CFL implementation report (Q2 2024) has been completed and is available at: www.connectingforlifeireland.ie

Some highlights from this period include:

- The new National Physical Activity Plan will be published later this year.
- Since launch 9,994 people have used My Mental Health Plan.
- The draft Online Safety Code has undergone a process under Directive EU 2015/1535 and has received no comments from the European Commission. An Coimisiún intends to adopt the code later in 2024. A public consultation has been launched on the revision of Broadcasting Codes to reflect updates necessary for the revised AVMS Directive.
- A media event "Safe and Sensitive Reporting of Suicide" was held by the WHO, Dept Health and HSE NOSP. It included a roundtable meeting and conference.
- NOSP Training Figures for Q2, 2024: safeTALK - 1648, ASIST - 751, USH - 275, USH Online - 27, One Day Bereavement Training - 241, STORM - 39. Let's Talk About Suicide - 1735 enrolments in Q3. A paid media campaign for World Suicide Prevention Day was launched focussing on the Let's Talk About Suicide programme.
- Ethical approval has been granted for a realist evaluation of social prescribing. Report from pilot study of Minding your Wellbeing programme for older people published. Stress balance online programme tested with community panel and programme refined.
- Draft suicide prevention guidance has been completed by TUSLA.



- An umbrella review of the social determinants of suicide has been completed by the NSRF. Manuscript has been submitted to 'Epidemiological Reviews' and is currently under review.
- Post-primary schools to benefit from additional support to enhance Student Support Team capacity. A service provider appointed to work closely with the NEPS over a 3 year period. Updated SPHE spec designed as a mandatory component to support 60hrs of teaching & learning over 2 years, reflecting the importance of SPHE for young people at this stage in their post-primary education.
- New National Clinical Lead for Self-harm & suicide related ideation Clinical Programme has commenced in role. Dates to visit EDs with no MH Assessment rooms agreed.
- New suicide bereavement campaign for GPs developed by HSE NOSP with pack distributed to 800 GPs.
- Overarching evaluation of CfL underway with fieldwork to commence mid-October.
- Final edit of HSE Community Suicide Response Guidance Document has been signed off. Consultation and field work regarding feasibility study due to be completed in Q3.

This period, updates were received from 20 partners.

Coimisiún na Meán (CnM)
 Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine (DAFM)
 Department of Children, Disability, Integration, Equality and Youth (DCDIEY)
 Department of Defence (DoD)
 Department of Education and Skills (DES)
 Department of Health (DoH)
 Department of Justice (DoJ)
 Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD)
 Department of Social Protection (DSP)
 Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media (DTCAGSM) - Sports
 Health and Safety Authority (HSA)
 Higher Education Authority (HEA)
 HSE Acute Hospital Operations (HSE Acute Ops)
 HSE Health and Wellbeing (HSE H&W)
 HSE Mental Health Operations (HSE MH Ops)
 HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention (HSE NOSP)
 HSE Primary Care (HSE PC)
 Irish Probation Service (PS)
 Local Government Management Authority (LGMA)
 TUSLA

This period, updates were not received from 2 partners.


Press Council of Ireland
 Irish Prison Service (IPS)



Connecting for Life




2 Overview of Progress on Strategic Goals



Connecting for Life
7 Goals 69 Actions

1



Improved Understanding

2



Empowered Communities

3



Focus on Priority Groups

4



Better Access to Support

5




High Quality Services

6



Reduced Access to Means

7



Better Data & Research





Goal 1: Better understanding of suicidal behaviour.

1.1 Improve population wide understanding of suicidal behaviour, mental health and wellbeing, and associated protective and risk factors.

- NSRF/NOSP presentation using Health Ireland data on - physical and mental health impact of suicide bereavement given in ESSB conference in August. **(HSE NOSP)**
- Face-to-face steering committee meeting planned for October. The objectives are: to highlight the successes of Stronger Together as this month marks the half way point of implementation and to spotlight and discuss next steps in two action themes specifically: Belonging Well and Growing and learning. **(HSE H&W)**
- Working group established to work on redraft of Plan. Redrafted Plan will be submitted to CMO for consideration. Some minor delays due to annual leave over the summer months. **(DoH)**
- Continued promotion of My Mental Health Plan through paid search and social media throughout Q3. Video On Demand ran in August encouraging visits to yourmentalhealth.ie. **(HSE MH Ops)**
- IOAD webinar held 30.08.24 and 6 public CPR and naloxone demonstrations 31.08.24. Ongoing ED collaboration. Dissemination and delivery of training and info re: Hidden Harm. **(HSE PC)**
- The development of the new National Physical Activity Plan is ongoing and will be published later this year. **(DTCAGSM) - Sports**

1.2 Increase awareness of available suicide prevention and mental health services.

- Between Jan 1st & Sep 20th My Mental Health Plan had 77,286 page views, 9,994 people used it, and 9,582 completed it.
In collaboration with SpunOut, work commenced on build of new online signposting and navigating tool for young people (14-34) who are engaged with online help-seeking. **(HSE MH Ops)**





- Continued to promote positive mental health to priority groups via social media posts. Key dates for Q3 include: Alcohol Awareness Week, Leaving Cert results, Safer Nightlife campaign – Electric Picnic and World Suicide Prevention Day. Expanded to reach audiences via TikTok and Snapchat. **(HSE MH Ops)**

1.3 Reduce stigmatising attitudes to mental health and suicidal behaviour at population level and within priority groups.

- Green Ribbon campaign commenced. Range of local events took place with the support of ROSPs (Resource Officers for Suicide Prevention). Rebranding of See Change and Headline under Shine underway. WSPD channels across HSE (press release, partner pack, mailouts, and social) in line with theme 'Change the Narrative' and LTAS. **(HSE NOSP)**

1.4 Engage and work collaboratively with the media in relation to media guidelines, tools and training programmes to improve the reporting of suicidal behaviour within broadcast, print and online media.

- Scheme for nominated bodies is under development. The draft Online Safety Code has undergone a process under Directive EU 2015/1535 (the "TRIS Directive") and has received no comments from the European Commission. An Coimisiún intends to adopt the Online Safety Code later in 2024. **(CnM)**
- No complaints have been received under Principle 3 of COPS. A public consultation has been launched on the revision of Broadcasting Codes to reflect updates necessary for the revised AVMS Directive. Respondents are also asked for submissions on issues to be addressed in future revisions of Codes. **(CnM)**
- Media event "Safe and Sensitive Reporting of Suicide" successfully delivered with partners, including roundtable on previous day. Mental Health Media Awards - NOSP participating in judging. **(HSE NOSP)**





Goal 2: Supporting communities to prevent and respond to suicidal behaviour.

2.1 Improve the continuation of community level responses to suicide through planned multi-agency approaches.

- Working with Action Leads and Key Partners, HSE Resource Officers for Suicide Prevention continue with activity to implement Local Action Plans and to input into the evaluation of current CfL strategy. All 10 Local Action Plans for Connecting for Life are currently being implemented. **(HSE MH Ops)**

2.2 Ensure that accurate information and guidance on effective suicide prevention are provided for community-based organisations (e.g. Family Resource Centres, Sporting Organisations).

- Draft of deaths in public places toolkit has undergone expert review and is at final design stage. Launch event planned for Q4 2024. **(HSE NOSP)**

2.3 Ensure the provision and delivery of training and education programmes on suicide prevention to community-based organisations.

- Training Figures for Q2, 2024: safeTALK - 1648, ASIST - 751, USH - 275, USH Online - 27, One Day Bereavement Training - 241, STORM - 39. No Train the Trainer events in Q3. Let's Talk About Suicide - 1735 enrolments in Q3. **(HSE NOSP)**
- Ethical approval granted for realist evaluation of social prescribing and planning underway for data collection. Report from pilot study of Minding your Wellbeing programme for older people published. Stress balance online programme tested with community panel and programme refined. **(HSE H&W)**





Goal 3: Targeted approaches for those vulnerable to suicide.

3.1 Improve the implementation of effective approaches to reducing suicidal behaviour among priority groups.

- A draft suicide prevention guidance has been completed and revision will be ongoing until presentation to NPOC in Q4. **(TUSLA)**
- SafeTALK training continues to be delivered on demand to DSP employees. Two officers have been trained to deliver ASIST and will commence the rollout of this in DSP in Q.4. **(DSP)**
- Review of Defence Forces capacity to deliver SafeTALK and ASIST complete - new instructors and reactivation of qualified personnel identified. **(DoD)**
- The policy handbook being developed by the Department of Taoiseach has still not been finalised. This action will be further progressed upon its development. **(DoH)**
- On Feirm Ground 2 updated content has been rolled out and delivered to almost 400 participants. 20 projects awarded funding for farm safety, health, and wellbeing projects. DAFM / HSA media campaign on fatigue is due in November. Partnership with SHINE to highlight mental health awareness and stigma. **(DAFM)**
- The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) continues to support initiatives in line with CfL. The Empowering Communities Programme (ECP) provides information and link-ins with mental health and wellbeing services in the programme areas. **(DRCD)**
- The Emergency Medicine Clinical Programme, the National Office for Suicide Prevention and HSE Access and Integration are currently working jointly to advance a bespoke online training system and scenarios for "Lets Talk About Suicide" designed for ED staff. **(HSE Acute Ops)**
- Continued collaboration with HSE Disability Services in implementation of its Roadmap for Service Improvement 2023-2026: Disability Services for Children and Young People **(HSE MH Ops)**





- Work is ongoing. **(TUSLA)**
- Deaths by suspected suicide protocol between the HSE and An Garda Síochána has been approved by the Garda DPO and will be tabled for signing at the next Garda Senior Leadership Team meeting (held monthly). Engagement with HSE Public Health about a surveillance system is ongoing. **(HSE NOSP)**
- Inclusion Mental Health Team is continuing to deliver supports to homeless population with severe and complex mental health needs with or without comorbid substance use issues. HF Programme: By the end of August 2024, posts have been delivering supports to an additional 67 Housing First tenancies. **(HSE PC)**
- Umbrella review of the social determinants of suicide completed by the NSRF. Manuscript has been submitted to 'Epidemiological Reviews' and is currently under review. **(HSE NOSP)**
- NOSP meeting with ICGP to determine feasibility of STORM training for GP trainee scheme, proposed pilot delivery to a County scheme in line with Sligo pilot delivery. STORM Train the Trainer scheduled October 21st- 25th. **(HSE NOSP)**
- Planning underway for national Showcase event for the Traveller Wellbeing through Creativity initiative scheduled for Nov 13th @ IMMA, Kilmainham. **(HSE H&W)**

3.2 Support, in relation to suicide prevention, the Substance Misuse Strategy to address the high rate of alcohol and drug misuse.

- Continue to deliver SAOR training. Begin SAOR Train the Trainer programme for 18 new trainers. **(HSE PC)**

3.3 Enhance the supports for young people with mental health problems or vulnerable to suicide.

- Over two thirds of primary & post-primary schools now taken part in training to engage in the wellbeing SSE process. Also providing 'In school supports' to participating schools. New inspection model to evaluate wellbeing underway. Pilot to continue with ongoing consultation with partners in Sept. **(DES)**





- Post-primary schools to benefit from additional support to enhance Student Support Team capacity. A service provider appointed to work closely with the NEPS over a 3 year period to deliver additional supports to complement what already exists for wellbeing and mental health in post primary. **(DES)**
- Implementation ongoing, review of Framework on track to commence Q4. **(HEA)**
- Cineáltas Showcase and Sharing of Best Practice Presentation Event for schools taking place in Croke Park on September 25th. **(DES)**
- Senior Cycle SPHE specification recently approved by Minister Foley. Schools advised on 3 Sept. Updated SPHE spec designed as a mandatory component to support 60hrs of teaching & learning over 2 years, reflecting the importance of SPHE for young people at this stage in their post-primary education **(DES)**
- 10 WTEs approved (to support provision of psychological care for young people around substance use issues) and received Primary Notification numbers, awaiting funding confirmations. **(HSE PC)**
- Recommendations of the two improvement plans developed by the Youth Mental Health Transitions Specialist Group were incorporated into the Action Plan of the HSE Child and Youth Mental Health Office. **(HSE MH Ops)**





Goal 4: Improved access, consistency and integration of services.

4.1 Improve psychosocial and psychiatric assessment and care pathways for people vulnerable to suicidal behaviour.

- Report on findings from research into shared care models complete & being designed for publication. Consultation documents on consultation/liaison model and shared physical healthcare in final draft. CHO1 recruitment of Solace Cafe staff complete; training in process & due to operationalise. **(HSE MH Ops)**
- PPI evaluation group continue to support peer researchers in advance of the evaluation commencing. NDTRS system live. Slight delay with content for HSELand module. CHO4 commenced July with limited services. Recruitment issues impacting all sites. SASSY team enhancements progressing well. **(HSE MH Ops)**
- Guidance document suicide and self-harm, awareness, assessment and response in the health services reviewed by HSE Clinical Programme team for Self-Harm and Suicide Related Ideation. Feedback received and incorporated into the document. **(HSE MH Ops)**
- Dates to visit ED's with no MH Assessment rooms agreed with Clinical Lead for Emergency Medicine. Data form progressed and will enter testing in Q4 in at least 2 SCAN sites. National Clinical Lead has commenced in role. Additional 4 CNS SCAN posts delayed. Training and education programmes continue. **(HSE MH Ops)**

4.2 Improve access to effective therapeutic interventions (e.g. counselling, DBT, CBT) for people vulnerable to suicide.

- The Principles Paper for Talk Therapies in Primary Care was presented to MH in Primary Care Workstream & feedback taken. Initial engagement & consultation with key senior stakeholders in the HSE & DoH. HSE Oversight Group continued to monitor delivery of guided online CBT programmes. **(HSE MH Ops)**

4.3 Improve the uniformity, effectiveness and timeliness of support services to families and communities bereaved by suicide.





- Safe Harbour content published on YMH.ie. Braille version launched with Vision Ireland. Safe Harbour working group contributed to Irish Times article on explaining suicide to a child and the development of Safe Harbour. Worked with Inform Ireland & bereavement NGOs to develop a MediPack for 800 GPs. **(HSE MH Ops)**
- NSRF work ongoing re suicide bereavement supports for children and young adults with lit review circulated. ROSP postvention guidance doc working group set up. Article on Adapting Complicated Grief Therapy for Use With People With Intellectual Disabilities published in JARID. **(HSE NOSP)**





Goal 5: Safe and high quality services.

5.1 Develop and implement national standards and guidelines for statutory and non-statutory organisations contributing to suicide prevention.

- Q2 2024 NGO CfL report published on CfL website. Monthly networking calls with NGO funded partners continue to be hosted. The SLA process 2025 has been initiated with NGO partners. **(HSE NOSP)**
- Guidance unit continues to develop resources in line with action 6.6 of Framework. New Programme for Whole School Guidance in final stages of devp to lead to more consistent approach to guidance nationwide. Information note on access, inclusion & universal design in whole school guidance under draft. **(DES)**
- CPD Directory (renamed to Teacher Professional Learning TPL Directory) is published on gov.ie for the coming academic year and highlights appropriate mental health and suicide prevention training for teachers **(DES)**
- CfL newsletter ongoing - 2 newsletters delivered to 1900 subscribers
c.1500 followers now on LinkedIn
Internal SharePoint in place
Annual Report published in July
ROSP social media resource doc published
Handover of admin of healthpromotion to NOSP completed
LTAS partner pack in circulation **(HSE NOSP)**

5.2 Improve the response to suicidal behaviour within health and social care services, with an initial focus on incidents within mental health services.

- Guidance document for suicide and self-harm, awareness, assessment and response in the health services reviewed by HSE Clinical Programme team for Self-Harm and Suicide Related Ideation. Feedback received and incorporated into the document. **(HSE MH Ops)**
- These policies and procedures are a system to provide learning from data collected. **(TUSLA)**





5.4 Ensure best practice among health and social care practitioners through (a) the implementation of clinical guidelines on self-harm and (b) the delivery of accredited education programmes on suicide prevention.

- Review initiated during Q3 of organisational capacity within DF to conduct internal and external suicide awareness and prevention training in all formations and overseas. **(DoD)**
- NOSP Training continues to be promoted to teachers and relevant educational stakeholders **(DES)**
- Infographic regarding various suicide awareness courses issued to Department of Health Staff in Q3 2024. **(DoH)**
- Tusla continues to work with NOSP in relation to training. **(TUSLA)**
- SafeTALK continues to be delivered to DSP staff where requested. 50 staff members attended the training during Q3 2024. This brings the total number of staff that completed the course in 2024 to 134. **(DSP)**
- DAFM has successfully completed its Equality Diversity Inclusion (EDI) survey and analysed results to inform the Department's EDI strategy which is due to be published in early October. **(DAFM)**
- Q3: There was not any suicide awareness (Safetalk or STORM) training provided to Probation staff in Q3 2024 **(PS)**
- Training needs continue to be reviewed by the sector as required. As previously stated the 'Let's Talk about Suicide' free training programme is a great initiative that can be promoted and utilised. **(LGMA)**
- Storm Skills training developed for Oberstown, pilot rolled out in September. Interview process for Storm Skills Training facilitator-EOI-commenced. 449 staff working in 111 IPAS have completed 579 HSE/NOSP suicidal awareness training courses. **(DCDIEY)**





- Guidance document 'Psychosocial Risk Assessment – Exposure To Sensitive Content' developed by the Health & Safety Authority and the State Claims Agency was published. Webinars and seminars on managing work-related stress, psychosocial hazards, and bullying were held. **(HSA)**
- NOSP and DoH following up with contacts made at the Regulators forum in an effort to advance suicide prevention education. **(DoH)**



Goal 6: Reduce access to means.

6.1 Reduce access to frequently used drugs in intentional drug overdose.

- Contributed narrative in support of proposal for funding under Budget 2025 for development of national DUMP scheme. Considering next steps regarding iSympathy data relating to prescribing of benzodiazepines and SSRIs. **(DoH)**
- Second survey analysis presented to Paracetamol working group meeting on 19th September, with full report to follow. WG review of mystery shopper proposal for pharmacy and retail sectors conducted. Ethical approval to be obtained on final proposal iteration. **(DoH)**

6.2 Reduce access to highly lethal methods used in suicidal behaviour.

- The work underway with the Advisory Group is coming to a close as the final Toolkit is signed off and ready for publication. Engagement as required will take place with the sector to promote awareness. **(LGMA)**
- The updated Ligature Risk Reduction Policy and Audit Tool Policy is with AND for Mental Health for sign off before being circulated PPPG office. **(HSE MH Ops)**



Goal 7: Better data and research.

7.1 Evaluate the effectiveness and costeffectiveness of Connecting for Life.

- Overarching evaluation of CfL underway - fieldwork has been scheduled - to commence mid-October (i.e., 20 participant interviews, 3 x rapid insight sessions); preparation underway for area level survey of CfL. Evaluation of the Suicide Observatory has commenced - 3 meetings with evaluation team conducted. **(HSE NOSP)**

7.2 Improve access to timely and high quality data on suicide and self-harm.

- As per Q2 update these systems are ongoing. **(TUSLA)**
- Final edit of HSE Community Suicide Response Guidance Document (supporting the HSE Incident Management Framework) Doc has been signed off. Consultation and field work regarding feasibility study underway and due to be completed towards end of Q3. **(HSE MH Ops)**
- Final draft of paper with IPH/HRB on gambling as a risk factor for suicide mortality in Ireland - for submission to Addictive Behaviour ; drafting paper on women and suicide (IPSDS data) with Prof. Siobhan O'Neill (Mental Health Champion N Ireland) & paper on risk factors for farmer suicide. **(HSE NOSP)**

7.3 Review (and, if necessary, revise) current recording procedures for death by suicide.

- CSO Suicide Mortality Statistics Liaison Group meetings held in July. Potential data linkages with CSO data being explored by NOSP, DoH and the CSO. National Probable Suicide Monitoring System (NPSMS) being progressed by the HRB and NOSP. 2020-21 SADA report published. **(DoJ)**

7.4 Develop a national research and evaluation plan that supports innovation and is aimed at early identification of suicide risk, assessment, intervention and prevention.

- HEA continues to support work of NSRF. **(HEA)**





- CfL ExAG meeting scheduled for November - will include a workshop with evaluation team. CfL Evaluation Stakeholder Group meeting scheduled for October 2024. Attended the 1st UCD Agri Mental Health Stakeholder Steering group meeting in August. Ongoing work with the IPH and HRB (gambling & suicide) **(HSE NOSP)**
- Farmers Project - UCD Psychology/Ag: 6 week programme to support farmers in dealing with stress has been developed- recruitment underway to test (this on-line skills based one-to-one) intervention. NUIG Safety Planning Intervention - work underway - Dr. McInerney presents on Project in UCC -10 Oct. **(HSE NOSP)**





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At a Glance: Needs Attention

Goal 3

3.1.1 Integrate suicide prevention into the development of relevant national policies, plans and programmes for people who are at an increased risk of suicide or self-harm.

- Review of Defence Forces capacity to deliver SafeTALK and ASIST complete - new instructors and reactivation of qualified personnel identified. **(DoD)**

Issue(s): *Training*

Time and external support needed to reactivate already qualified and to identify and qualify new instructors.

3.1.2 Develop and implement a range of agency and inter-agency operational protocols (including protocols for sharing information and protocols in respect of young people) to assist organisations to work collaboratively in relation to suicide prevention and the management of critical incidents.

- Deaths by suspected suicide protocol between the HSE and An Garda Síochána has been approved by the Garda DPO and will be tabled for signing at the next Garda Senior Leadership Team meeting (held monthly). Engagement with HSE Public Health about a surveillance system is ongoing. **(HSE NOSP)**

Issue(s): *Stakeholder Buy-In*

Data sharing agreement has not yet been signed. Progress update sought from Garda Commissioner's Office in Sept 2024.

Goal 5

5.4.2 Deliver training in suicide prevention to staff in government departments and agencies who are likely to come into contact with people who are vulnerable to/at risk of suicidal behaviour.

- Review initiated during Q3 of organisational capacity within DF to conduct internal and external suicide awareness and prevention training in all formations and overseas. **(DoD)**





HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention

October 2024



Connecting for Life