

REPORT TO: Health and Wellbeing Board
DATE: 20th March 2024
REPORTING OFFICER: Director of Public Health
PORTFOLIO: Health and Wellbeing
SUBJECT: Reducing Suicides in Men
WARD(S) Borough Wide

1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 Report will provide an overview of work taking place to reduce suicides in men in Halton.

2.0 **RECOMMENDED: That the Board:**

1) **Note the report; and**

2) **Consider if there is further action which can be taken to support this work.**

3.0 **Background information**

Nationally three times as many men die by suicide each year (75%) compared to women, with suicide being the biggest cause of death in men under the age of 50. Local data shows over the last 3 years 66% of all suicides in Halton are male. Although this figure is slightly lower than the national data which is encouraging it still demands a specific focus locally.

The reasons men take their own life are complicated, not yet fully understood and requires further research. However, we do know men can be impacted very differently to women in terms of the problems they coping with, how they behave when they feel they are struggling as well as the unhelpful coping strategies, they tend to turn to in order to get some relief. We also know through national research that only 34% of men would talk openly about how they feel and 31% would feel embarrassed about seeking help for a mental health problem. Finally, we are aware that men are less likely to take notice of generic marketing material as they think it isn't for them.

To reduce the number of men taking their lives locally a dedicated member of staff has been recruited to lead on this area of work and an action plan is being developed

3.1. **What Action are we taking?**

Local Action plan

The newly recruited Health Improvement specialist is working collaboratively with lived experienced champions, the local mental health and wellbeing lead and partners to develop an evidenced based action plan to:

Raise awareness of what men can do to look after their mental health.

Raise awareness of specific support available for key issues men are facing.

Share lived experience stories of local men who have overcome challenges.


The ultimate overall aim of the action plan is to reduce the number of males taking their life locally. Although the action plan is being finalised, certain work is already under development or has been completed.

3.2 Calm Your Mind Campaign

[Calm Your Mind](#) is a campaign and local website designed with local men for local men with the aim of improving men's mental health and reducing suicides. The campaign focusses on:

- Sharing information specifically for men helping them to understand why they react the way they do to certain situations and problems.
- Raising awareness of positive practical things men can do to calm their minds and think more clearly.
- Sharing details of support available for specific problems to help them get back on their feet.
- Raising awareness of support available via text, web chat and face to face to help them offload in confidence as we know men often don't like worrying their family and friends.

The campaign uses local men's stories to raise awareness of the issues that men can face but more importantly the actions that can help overcome them and get back to a better place. The Health Improvement Specialist works with local lived experienced champions to ensure the campaign continues to meet the needs of local men reflecting the issues they are facing.



JEFF'S STORY

Jeff's story is a powerful reminder of how the shock and stress of losing a family member to suicide can be a traumatic experience that can leave a lasting impact on how you think and feel. This tragedy made him realise that there are so many men struggling alone. He now makes it his mission to be open and honest about how he is feeling and encourages others to do the same.

To listen to local men's stories, visit <https://calmyourmind.co.uk/hear-from-others/>

A variety of assets have been created to enable local organisations and community groups to get involved. Examples of posters and social media visuals can be found below.

CALM YOUR MIND

GET BACK TO A BETTER PLACE.

Life doesn't always run smoothly. For advice hints and tips on keeping yourself well, visit Calm your Mind.

Scan the QR code with your camera or visit calmyourmind.co.uk

CALM YOUR MIND

For practical tips to manage your mental health and wellbeing visit calmyourmind.co.uk

CALM YOUR MIND

WHEN I TRY TO TALK ABOUT MY FEELINGS ITS BRUSHED OFF AS NOTHING.

Life doesn't always run smoothly. For advice hints and tips on keeping yourself well, visit Calm your Mind.

Scan the QR code with your camera or visit calmyourmind.co.uk

I DON'T WANT TO SPEAK TO SOMEONE I KNOW IN CASE THEY JUDGE ME.

CALM YOUR MIND

GET BACK TO A BETTER PLACE

Realising you need help is one of the strongest things you can do. For practical hints and tips to look after your mental health, visit calmyourmind.co.uk

To access assets, visit <https://calmyourmind.co.uk/get-involved/>

Since the campaign website had a soft launch in June 2023 further improvements driven by local lived experienced champions Include: the development of a specific page focussed on suicidal feelings, the inclusion of local men's groups as well as the development of 3 new lived experience champion videos.

The campaign and website have been active since June 2023 and receive just under 400 visitors per month. Although it is too early to evaluate its impact, the number of notifications for male suicides in 2023 is just over half of what it was in 2022.

3.3 Exhibition in a box

An exhibition in a box resource has been created for local organisations to hire free of charge to enable them to raise awareness of Calm Your Mind. The exhibition contains a variety of resources to enable a mini 'exhibition' to be set up within their organisations or group to raise the profile of the campaign and website. Resources

included are: Calm Your Mind pop up, Calm Your Mind tablecloth, Calm Your Mind business cards, posters, pens and badges. The exhibition also includes details of local support including men's groups as well as resources to help start conversations. The resource will be available to hire from the 1st of April 2024 and will be widely promoted to local organisations and community groups.

3.4 **Training**

To educate front line professionals and members of the public on men's mental health specific training is under development. The training will focus on the type of issues that are more likely to impact men, how men in distress tend to present differently to women, the types of unhelpful coping styles men are more likely to adopt and how we can support men who are struggling. The training will be ready to pilot from the 1st of April 2024.

3.5 **Family Hubs**

The Health Improvement Specialist is working collaboratively with Family Hubs to ensure any development to Calm Your Mind compliments the work Family Hubs is developing with dads. Work is underway to create a section on Calm Your Mind specifically for dads as we know there are certain stresses and worries common to dads.

3.6 **Working Collaboratively with partners**

The Health Improvement Specialist is keen to work collaboratively with local partners and community groups to raise the profile of Calm Your Mind. For Men's Health week in June 2024 discussions are underway with Widnes Vikings exploring how we can work together to raise the profile of Calm Your Mind.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no new Policy implications as a result of this report

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There is an economic cost of approximately £1.6 million for every person who takes their own life. Work to reduce suicides mitigates against this economic cost and the unseen implications on the wider system.

6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES [\(click here for list of priorities\)](#)**

6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

Working to reduce male suicides will reduce the number of children and young people who are bereaved due to suicide, contributing to the safeguarding of Children and Young people.

6.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

Working to reduce male suicides will contribute to employment prospects of residents through the improvement of men's mental health.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Working to reduce suicides in males will contribute to a healthier community by working to improve men's mental health.

6.4 A Safer Halton

Working to reduce suicides in males contributes to a safer Halton through the reduction in suicides.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

No implication on Urban Renewal

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 None

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 The risk of suicide is inequitable and impacts those in areas of high deprivation and males.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 No climate change implications identified at this time.

10.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

None under the meaning of the Act.