

# Here to Listen Strategy



A vertical poster for suicide prevention. At the top left is a yellow circular logo with a spiral and the text 'HERE TO LISTEN'. At the top right is the East Ayrshire Council logo and the text 'East Ayrshire Council' and 'Comhairle Siorrachd Air an Ear'. The main title 'SUICIDE PREVENTION' is in yellow, and 'HERE TO LISTEN' is in large white letters. Below this is a close-up photograph of a person's eye. At the bottom, it says 'ASK ABOUT THE WARNING SIGNS AND HELP' in white, followed by 'SAVE LIVES' in large yellow letters. At the bottom left is the 'Breathing Space' logo with the phone number '0800 83 85 87' and website 'www.breathingspace.co.uk'. In the center is the 'ChooseLife' logo and the 'SAMARITANS' logo with the phone number '116123'. At the bottom right is a QR code.

# Opening Thoughts



- Suicide is a difficult and challenging subject matter, one of the ultimate taboo's.
- Everyone has a view on suicide, people rarely have a neutral stance.
- There is still a lot of ignorance around suicide and the reasons why people take their lives.

# Scottish Perspective



## The Facts:

- 784 people completed suicide in 2018
- On average 2 people take their own life each day in Scotland
- Scotland currently has the highest rate of suicide in the UK
- Suicide in under 25's at highest annual rate since 2007
- Men are 3 times more likely to take their lives than females.

# East Ayrshire Perspective



- In East Ayrshire, our suicide rates increased by 116% in 2018 in comparison to the previous year
- In 2018 more people took their lives than in the previous two years combined
- In a 6 month period alone 8 people took their lives
- In the last 2 years we have lost 4 staff members to suicide.

# Construction Perspective



Facts: According to Office for National Statistics

- 1419 people working in the construction industry took their lives between 2011 -15
- Of that number 1409 were men
- The construction sector has the highest rate of suicide of all professional sectors
- Risk of suicide in the building and construction trades 1.6% higher than the national average
- Roofers, Tilers and Slaters risk of suicide was 2.7% higher.

# Construction Risk Factors



- “Macho” culture
- Mental health stigma
- Working away from home
- Poor working conditions
- Inconsistent pay
- Job security



Poor mental health is likely to be masked by alcohol and/ or drugs.

# Prompted to Action



- In April 2018 contractor completes suicide at major construction project.
- Suicide Prevention Action Plan created with 3 key aims:
  - Create an image for our strategy
  - Raise awareness and break stigma
  - Introduce peer support.



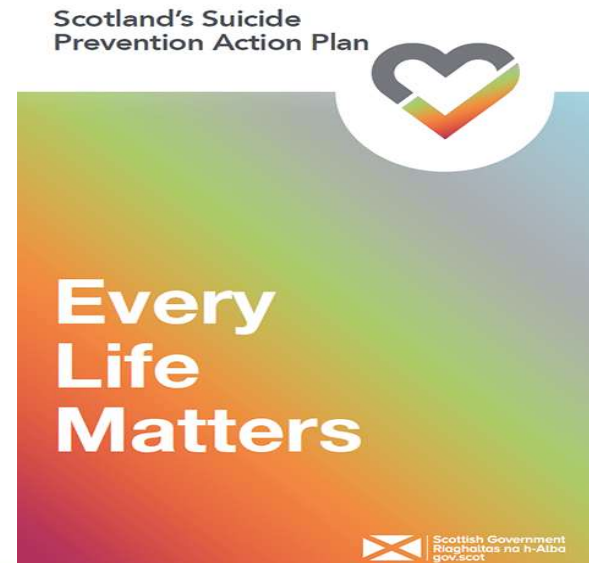
# Every Life Matters



- Scottish Government Suicide Prevention Action Plan launched in August 2018

## Vision and Key Aims:-

- Aspire to a Scotland where suicide is preventable
- Reduce suicide rates in Scotland by 20% by 2022
- Make suicide prevention everyone's business.





# Tragedy Prompts Rethink



- Colleague completes suicide despite receiving peer support
- This tragedy had a huge impact on everyone involved
- It prompted self reflection
- Ultimately we continued, but with a clear emphasis on supporting those providing support
- We introduced Whatsapp Groups, support networks, professional counselling and regular meetings

# Strategy Achievements



- 73 Asist trained suicide first aiders providing peer support
- 150 trained in SafeTalk
- 400 trained in suicide awareness
- 70,000 Z cards produced and 40,000 circulated
- Internet support resource introduced
- Here to Listen support directory for adults and young people created
- 700 Here to Listen posters created and circulated
- Suicide First Aider posters created.

# Communities and Beyond



Throughout 2019 we have worked to take the Here to Listen strategy and resources out into our communities by:-

- Opening Asist training to community volunteers, so far 21 have been trained
- Work collaboratively with NHS, Scottish Police and publicans taking part in the PubWatch and Best Bar None schemes to distribute posters and Z cards
- Delivering SafeTalk and suicide prevention training to community groups and organisations.

# An Often Used Line



***“Suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem.....”***

Words are powerful, they can discourage or encourage; wound or heal; tear down or build up.

When a person is in crisis the best thing you can do is actively listen and be non-judgemental.

# Close



- Suicide **IS** preventable



- Strategies are important but actions make the difference
- Stigma is the barrier to progress in preventing suicide – we need to get people talking!
- Peer supports do work, but remember that those who provide support also need support.