

# Public Consultation Report. Preventing Suicides in Southwark Strategy 2023-2028

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# Background

## Consultation objectives

Anyone can be affected by suicide and it also our collectively responsibility to prevent them. This means that engaging with residents and our community is an important part of developing an effective strategy.

The purpose of the consultation was to give people who live and work in Southwark the opportunity to influence Southwark's Preventing Suicide Strategy and Action Plan for 2023-2028.

Through undertaking this process, we aimed to improve our understanding of what could be done better or differently to reduce suicide and the impact it has on people, families and communities in Southwark.

## When, how and who we consulted

The online consultation survey was open for a period of eight weeks, from 23rd June to 20th August 2023. Over this time, we also engaged with residents through focus groups and at in-person events.

We consulted using different methodologies. The different methods consisted of:

- An on-line eight week consultation which was widely promoted across the Borough via online, offline and face to face methods (44 responses were received)
- A focus group with Southwark Community Health Ambassadors
- A webinar and Q/A session with the Old Kent Road Mosque
- Face to face engagement with individuals attending the Rotherhithe festival

## Other Stakeholder Engagement

This report primarily relates to our public consultation, which was aimed towards obtaining the views of Southwark residents. To help develop the strategy, we also engaged with a range of external and internal stakeholders including key community, statutory and non-statutory organisations. The Southwark Suicide Prevention Stakeholder Group (representation is provided in the main strategy document) met in May and September 2023 to help develop and sign off on the strategy. In addition, a number of one to one meeting with key stakeholder organisations took place between June and September 2023 to help develop the strategy. A summary of this work is provided in appendix 4b of this document (page 20).

# Consultation Activity

## Digital Promotion

The online consultation was open for a period of eight weeks, from 23rd June to 20th August 2023. During this time, the online consultation survey was widely promoted digitally:

- Southwark Council Consultation Hub (June to August 2023)
- The Southwark Council resident enewsletter (July 2023)
- Southwark Council business enewsletter (July 2023)
- The Southwark Healthwatch enewsletter (August 2023)
- Southwark council's internal Viva Engage posting board (August 2023)
- OneHub Southwark Page (July 2023)
- Southwark Community Health Ambassadors WhatsApp Group (July 2023)
- Community Southwark Network Bulletins (July 2023)
- Sent to recently trained Southwark Mental Health First Aiders (June 2023)
- Sent to Southwark Tenant & Homeowner Involvement Officers (August 2023)
- Sent to London South Bank University students and staff (August 2023)
- Sent to members of SLaM Involvement Register (August 2023)

## Group Discussions

While the consultation was open, we engaged with residents through organising group discussions, which covered key consultation questions:

- A one hour focus group with Southwark's Community Health Ambassadors (11 attended)
- Old Kent Road Mosque's O You Who Believe Suicide Prevention Webinar (55 attended)

## Other Public Engagement

We engaged with residents, handed out leaflets or verbally promoted the survey at the following in person events/ spaces:

- Southwark Council Southwark Faith Leaders Conference (July 2023)
- Community Southwark's Mental Health Network In-Person Meeting (July 2023)
- Community Southwark's Disabilities Providers Network In-Person Meeting (July 2023)
- Rotherhithe Festival (July 2023)
- London LGBTQ+ Community Centre (August 2023)

# Summary of Results

This section summarises the results of our online consultation survey and the other consultation activity detailed in the above section. The consultation was open for a period of eight weeks. Over this time, 44 online responses were received.

## 1) Do you think there are any other key groups, especially those who may be at particular risk for suicide or self-harm who require special consideration, and have not been listed below?

### Background to question

Through reviewing local and national data and evidence, the groups below have been identified as being at a higher risk of suicide or self-harm in Southwark or needing a tailored approach to improve mental health and reduce suicide:

- Middle-aged men
- People in the care of mental health services, including inpatients, or people with untreated depression
- People with a history of self-harm
- Specific occupational groups for example construction workers
- People in contact with the criminal justice system
- Children and young people (CYP)
- Survivors of abuse or violence, including sexual abuse
- Veterans
- People living with long-term physical health conditions
- People in difficult social and/or economic circumstances
- People who misuse drugs or alcohol
- LGBTQIA+ people
- Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups
- Asylum seekers and refugees
- People in the perinatal period (any time from becoming pregnant up to a year after giving birth)

### Responses

There were 29 responses to this question in the online survey. In addition to the above list, groups most frequently identified by respondents as needing consideration in the strategy included:

- People experiencing loneliness and or social isolation
- Older Adults
- People experiencing homelessness or insecure housing
- People experiencing domestic violence

## 2) What specific things do you think could be done to reduce the suicide or self-harm risk in any of the above priority groups, or any other groups that you have identified?

### Responses

There were 42 responses to this question in the online survey. Themes identified in the consultation survey and during engagement are listed below:

- More suicide prevention and mental health training being offered to key community groups
- Greater promotion of mental health services and community support to residents, including offline promotion for those who are not online
- More being done to raise awareness of mental health issues and support in a culturally appropriate way
- Involving the community to tackle the stigma and shame in different community and faith groups around mental health and suicide
- More support to connect people who may be experiencing social isolation and loneliness
- Work to tackle the root causes of mental health issues and suicide, for example substance misuse, poor quality housing, financial issues and insecure immigration status
- Improved access to, and funding of, mental health support services
- Work more closely with faith groups to promote mental health and suicide prevention training and support

## 3) To what extent do you agree or disagree with our draft priority areas for Southwark?

### Background to question

We have drafted five priority areas for Southwark. These have been built around the national priorities for suicide prevention, and tailored to local data and needs. The priority areas are:

1. Reducing the risk of suicide, attempted suicide and self-harm in high risk groups
2. Preventing suicide in high-risk locations and reducing access to the means of suicide
3. Reducing the risk of suicide, attempted suicide and self-harm among children and young people (CYP), and providing support to educational settings
4. Monitoring and collecting data on suicide, attempted suicide and self-harm
5. Supporting the media in delivering sensitive approaches to suicide and suicidal behaviour

### Responses

Results are from the online consultation survey only and we received 44 answers to this question. Responses under each priority areas are summarised below:

- **98% agreed or strongly agreed** that our first draft priority *Reducing the risk of suicide, attempted suicide and self-harm in high-risk groups* is an important area to prioritise in the strategy
- **80% agreed strongly agreed** with our second draft priority - *Preventing suicide in high-risk locations and reducing access to the means of suicide* is an important area to prioritise in the strategy
- **98% agreed or strongly agreed** with our third draft priority area - *Reducing the risk of suicide, attempted suicide and self-harm among children and young people (CYP), and providing support to educational settings* is an important area to prioritise in the strategy
- **80% agreed or strongly agreed** with our fourth draft priority - *Monitoring and collecting data on suicide, attempted suicide and self-harm* is an important area to prioritise in the strategy
- **82% agreed or strongly agreed** with our fourth draft priority - *Supporting the media in delivering sensitive approaches to suicide and suicidal behaviour* is an important area to prioritise in the strategy

#### 4) Do you think there are any other areas we should prioritise in the strategy to prevent suicide and self-harm in Southwark?

##### Responses

There were 38 responses to this question in the online survey. Themes identified in the consultation survey and during engagement are listed below:

- Provide more support to those experiencing substance misuse issues
- Produce more data to explore the triggers and reasons for suicide
- Provide more training and education on suicide prevention to the community
- Improve mental health services and make them more accessible

#### 5) Reflecting on your answers for questions 3 and 4 above, what do you think should be done to support these priority areas?

##### Responses

There were 40 responses to this question in the online survey. Themes identified in the consultation survey and during engagement are listed below:

- Develop more community safe spaces and help groups
- Provide more funding for mental health services and practitioners
- Provide more mental health and suicide prevention training for professionals and the community
- Do more to raise awareness of mental health and suicide and the support available
- Work closely with Southwark Community Health ambassadors and faith groups to promote mental health support in a culturally appropriate way

**6) Do you have lived experience of suicide or self-harm? This may be a personal experience, or an experience of a friend or family member that affected you.**

**Responses**

There were 40 responses to this question in the online survey. 64% reported that they had lived experience of suicide or self-harm.

**7) If you answered yes, and feel comfortable to do so, use this space to tell us about your own experience of suicide or self-harm. If you accessed any mental health, bereavement or crisis support services in Southwark during this time, feel free to include your experiences of these services.**

**Responses**

There were 29 responses to this question in the online survey. Themes identified in the consultation survey and during engagement are listed below:

- Personal cases or cases of loved one attempting or completing suicide or self-harm
- Overcoming suicidal ideation or attempts through accessing support
- Mental health issues
- Poor experiences with mental health services

**8) Please select the suicide prevention support services you were aware of before taking this survey from the list below.**

**Background to question**

The below results are from the online consultation survey. The services below are all suicide prevention, mental health, bereavement support or crisis support service that are free to Southwark residents.

**Responses**



There were 44 responses to this question. Responses under each type of support service are provided below.

### **Suicide prevention support**

- 91% of respondents were aware of The Samaritans
- 41% of respondents were aware of The Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM)
- 18% of respondents were aware of The Papyrus Hopeline
- 30% of respondents were aware of The Listening Place

### **Mental Health Support**

- 48% of respondents were aware of The Southwark Wellbeing Hub
- 98% of respondents were aware that their GP can give them advice on how to manage and treat their mental health
- 80% of respondents were aware of Southwark's NHS Talking Therapies Service
- 25% of respondents were aware of The Nest
- 34% of respondents were aware of Kooth

### **Bereavement support**

- 25% of respondents were aware of The South East London Suicide Bereavement Service
- 32% of respondents were aware of The Cruse Bereavement care helpline

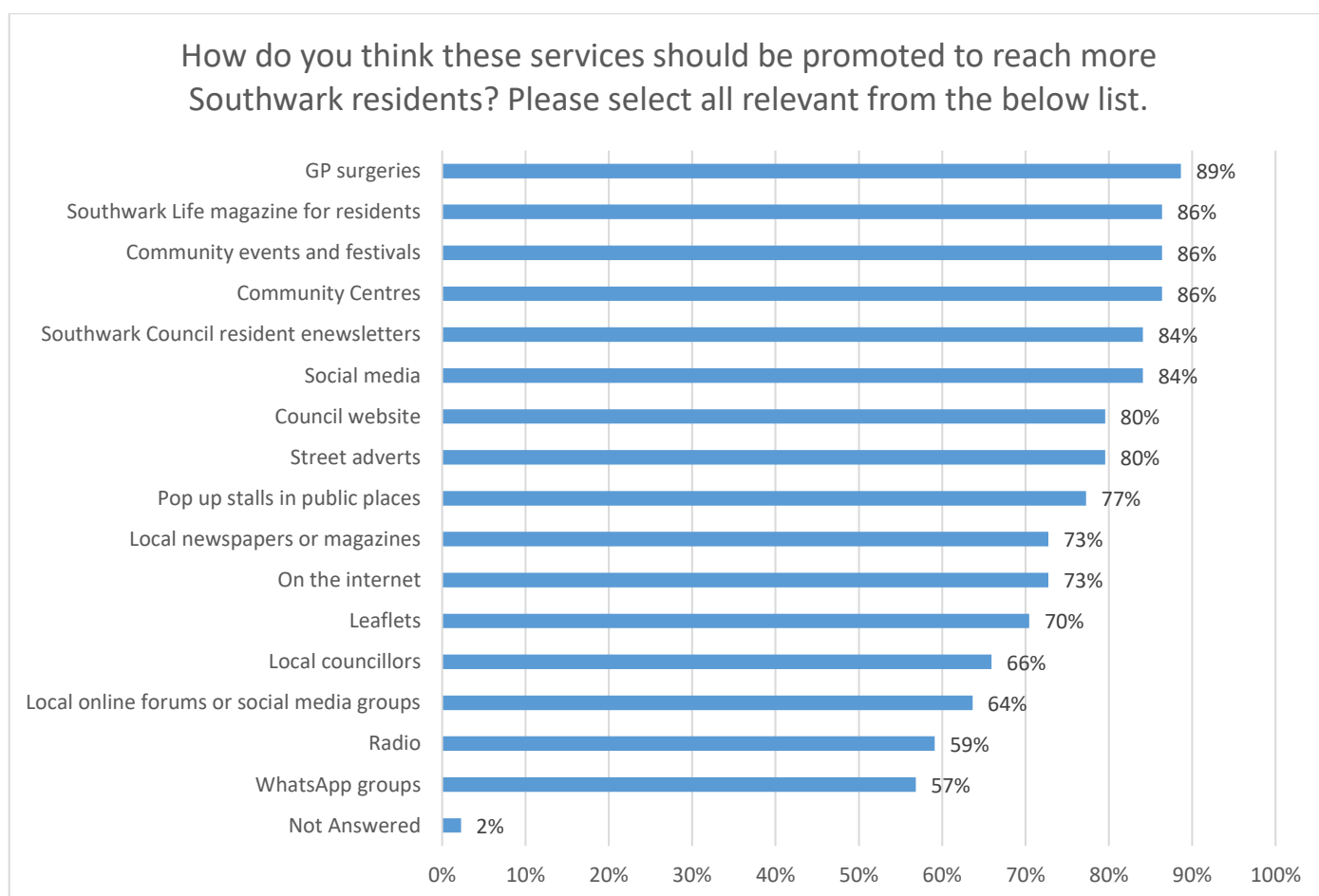
### **Crisis Support**

- 32% of respondents were aware of The South London and Maudsley Hospital's mental health crisis line – 0800 731 2864 (option 1)
- 59% of respondents were aware of The NHS free helpline – 111

**9) How do you think these services should be promoted to reach more Southwark residents? Please select all relevant from the below list.**

**Responses**

The below results are from the online consultation survey. There were 43 responses to this question. The graph below shows the percentage of respondents who selected each of the options in the list provided.



**10) Is there anywhere else where you think these services should be promoted to reach more Southwark residents? If so, please write these below.**

Suggestions on where to promote services to reach more residents from our engagement activities and online survey are provided below (there were 33 responses to this question in the online survey):

- Schools
- Places of worship
- Focus groups with the community
- Through community health ambassadors and VCSE organisations
- Bus shelters/ on busses
- Social housing providers
- Shops
- Pubs
- Hospitals

**Demographic data**

Demographic data was collected from those answered the equalities questions in the online consultation survey. The results from these questions are provided in Appendix 4a of this document (pages 15-19).

# Conclusions

## What happened next?

We received detailed and valuable feedback from residents on what is needed to prevent suicides in Southwark. We have also gained a better understanding of people's lived experience of suicide and self-harm and people's awareness of local and national mental health support services. The findings of the consultation were presented to the Southwark Suicide Prevention Stakeholder Group meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2023 and were used to help develop the strategy and action plan. We also published an analysis of the online consultation survey findings on the Southwark Council Consultation Hub on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

## Impact

The findings of the consultation helped develop our Preventing Suicides in Southwark Strategy 2023-2028. Some of the key impact it has had on the strategy and action plan is provided below.

Going forward, we will establish a Suicide Prevention Community Network, including people with lived experience and voluntary community sector organisations working with those at greatest risk of suicide and self-harm. We will ensure representation from a range of ethnic and religious groups who can promote conversation and discussion from a religious perspective, and in a culturally sensitive manner. The network will support a co-production approach to suicide and self-harm prevention, and will work with the Southwark Suicide Prevention Stakeholder Group to ensure the action plan and activities of individual stakeholders are delivered equitably and address local needs.

During the first two/ three years of the strategy, we will offer free Mental Health First Aid and Suicide First Aid training to hundreds of members of voluntary and community sector organisations and faith groups in Southwark. We will work with the Suicide Prevention Community Network and Southwark Community Health Ambassadors to promote this and other training opportunities as widely as possible across the community.

We will do more to promote mental health, suicide prevention, bereavement and crisis support services and in the community through digital and non-digital methods as detailed in our action plan. We will also work closely with Southwark's Community Health Ambassadors and the Suicide Prevention Community Network to ensure culturally appropriate messaging to certain groups and translate more of our mental health promotional material into different languages. We will also map community-based initiatives to support groups at risk of poor mental health and loneliness to understand provision currently available, identify gaps and propose mitigations.

Because of what the community told us, we have updated our list of priority groups in the strategy to include people experiencing loneliness and or social isolation, older adults, people experiencing homelessness or insecure housing and people experiencing domestic violence.

## Thank you to the community

We would like to thank everyone who took the time to contribute to the consultation through completing the online survey or engaging with us at face-to-face events and in-group discussions. The feedback we received has been hugely valuable and has will help us to improve our work to prevent suicide.

# References

1. **Department of Health and Social Care.** *Preventing suicide in England: fifth progress report of the cross-government outcomes strategy to save lives.* 2021.
2. **Office for National Statistics.** *Deaths registered in England and Wales: 2020.* 2021.
3. —. *Suicides in England and Wales by Local Authority.* 2022.

# Appendix 4a: Online Consultation Survey Community Area and Equalities Questions Responses

Demographic data was collected from those answered the equalities questions in the online consultation survey. The results from these questions are provided below.

If you live in Southwark, which community area do you live in?

Option	Total	Percent
Bermondsey	n = 5	11%
Borough & Bankside	n = 0	0%
Camberwell	Fewer than 5*	n/a
Dulwich	Fewer than 5*	n/a
Elephant and Castle	Fewer than 5*	n/a
Nunhead	n = 5	11%
Peckham	Fewer than 5*	n/a
Rotherhithe	Fewer than 5*	n/a
Walworth	Fewer than 5*	n/a
Not Answered	n = 17	39%

Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

\*Data has been suppressed to avoid disclosure.

## Equalities questions

### Age

Option	Total	Percent
Under 17	n = 0	0%
18-34	n = 9	20%

35 - 44	n = 5	11%
45 - 54	n = 12	27%
55 - 64	n = 12	27%
65+	Fewer than 5*	n/a
Not Answered	Fewer than 5*	n/a

Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

\*Data has been suppressed to avoid disclosure.

### What is your ethnic background?

Option	Total	Percent
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh	Fewer than 5*	n/a
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	n = 11	25%
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	Fewer than 5*	n/a
White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British	n = 15	34%
White: Irish	Fewer than 5*	n/a
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller, Roma or Other White	n = 5	11%
Other ethnic background	Fewer than 5*	n/a
Not Answered	Fewer than 5*	n/a

Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

\*Data has been suppressed to avoid disclosure.

### Are you disabled?

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	n = 14	32%
No	n = 23	52%
Prefer not to say or not answered	n = 7	16%

Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.



### Please state the nature of your impairments

Option	Total	Percent
Hearing / Vision (e.g. deaf, partially deaf or hard of hearing; blind or partial sight)	Fewer than 5*	n/a
Physical / Mobility (e.g. wheelchair user, arthritis, multiple sclerosis etc.)	n = 6	14%
Mental health (lasting more than a year. e.g. severe depression, schizophrenia etc.)	n = 6	14%
Learning disability (e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia etc.)	Fewer than 5*	n/a
Long-term illness or health condition (e.g. Cancer, HIV, Diabetes, Chronic Heart disease, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Chronic Asthma)	n = 9	20%
Other	n = 0	0%
Prefer not to say	Fewer than 5*	n/a
Not Answered	n = 27	61%

Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

\*Data has been suppressed to avoid disclosure.

### What is your sex as recorded at birth? (a question about Gender Identity will follow)

Option	Total	Percent
Male	n = 9	20%
Female	n = 31	70%
Other	n = 0	0%
Prefer not to say or not answered	Fewer than 5*	0%

Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

\*Data has been suppressed to avoid disclosure.

### Is the Gender you identify with the same as the sex you were recorded at birth?

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	n = 39	89%
No	n = 0	0%
Prefer not to say	n = 0	0%
Not Answered	n = 5	11%

Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

### Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

Option	Total	Percent
Heterosexual/straight	n = 32	73%
Lesbian, gay, bisexual or other	n = 6	14%
Prefer not to say	Fewer than 5*	n/a
Not Answered	n = 5	11%

Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

\*Data has been suppressed to avoid disclosure.

### What is your religion or belief?

Option	Total	Percent
Christian	n = 18	41%
Sikh	n = 0	0%
Hindu	Fewer than 5*	n/a
Muslim	Fewer than 5*	n/a
Jewish	n = 0	0%
Buddhist	n = 0	0%
No religion	n = 13	30%
Other	n = 6	14%
Not Answered	n = 5	11%

Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

\*Data has been suppressed to avoid disclosure.

# Appendix 4b: Engagement with Community, Statutory and Nonstatutory Organisations.

To help develop the strategy, we also engaged with a range of external and internal stakeholders including key community, statutory and non-statutory organisations. The Southwark Suicide Prevention Stakeholder Group (representation is provided in the main strategy document) met in May and September 2023 to help develop and sign off on the strategy. In addition, a number of meetings with key stakeholder organisations took place between June and September 2023 to help develop the strategy. These are summarised below:

- The strategy was discussed at the Housing and Social Care Partnership Board in April 2023
- A children and young people (CYP) roundtable was organised to develop CYP actions (June 2023) where there was attendance from The Child Death Overview (CDOP), Southwark Children and Adults Services teams such as Alternative Provision and Education Access (0-25) and Southwark Education teams such as Educational Psychology and The Virtual School.
- The strategy was discussed at Southwark Council's Resident Services DMT (June 2023) to develop housing specific actions
- The strategy was discussed at Southwark Children & Young People Mental Health and Wellbeing Steering Group (August 2023)
- A number of one to one meetings were held with key stakeholder organisations during the development of this strategy. Examples of some of these stakeholders are listed below:
  - SLaM
  - Listening Place
  - The Nest
  - British Transport Police
  - Network Rail