

EMPLOYMENT MATTERS COMMITTEE

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SUICIDE PREVENTION IN THE WORKPLACE GUIDANCE

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Summary

In addition to making sure every employee knows about employee-assistance programs designed to connect them with the care they need, colleagues need additional HR support to help managers and/or colleagues look for specific signs of personal struggle. This guidance helps managers and colleagues look out for signs of suicidal ideation and helps sign post to additional resources.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

1.1 Whilst there is no specific decision to be made based on this report, it is important that the Committee is aware of the Council's approach to suicide awareness.

2. Background

2.1 In 2018 there were 6,507 suicides in the UK and deaths by suicide rose by 10.9%. Rates particularly rose in those under 25 and in middle aged men.

2.1.1 One in five adults experience suicidal feelings at some point in their lives. It is, however, important to remember that suicides are not inevitable and can be prevented with the right support at the right.

2.1.2 With a third of our lives spent at work, it is highly likely that there will be people struggling to cope in the workplace and possibly trying to hide it.

2.1.3 The reality is that the reasons for suicide are complicated and hard to define but there are things that we can do to reduce the risk of suicide at work. Ruth Sutherland, CEO Samaritans points out *"Organisations have an opportunity to create open and supportive environments, to raise awareness about suicidal thoughts and feelings, and help reduce the stigma that still surrounds this*

area, reducing the chance that someone we know and maybe see every day at work might take their own life.”

2.2 With the impact of COVID-19, there is even greater concern as we are working more remotely and these unprecedented times add additional strain to already pressured lifestyle.

3. Advice and analysis

3.1 There are lots of resources available and health and wellbeing is a key priority for HR.

3.2 HR is not asking Line Managers to “diagnose” the problem or find solutions for the employee but to offer support and help.

3.3 We acknowledge we also need to build more training into Line Manger induction, however this guidance is a start at ensuring all the relevant material is easily accessible in place.

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3.4 Whilst this guidance alone will not be enough to assist managers or individuals if faced with suicide idealisation it is an easy reference guide to help colleagues.

3.5 It is important to note HR is available to assist and support on these matters should line manager feel uncomfortable to do so.

4. Financial and legal implications

4.1 There are no direct financial or legal implications from this report.

5. Risk Management

5.1 The risk implications arising from this report are detailed below:

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Failure to offer support and guidance to people who are experiencing suicidal idealisation	There is no legal obligation, however a duty of care is required	Further guidance and raising awareness	E4

6. Recommendation

- 6.1 The Committee is asked to note the content of this report and offer comment on the current guidance.

Lead officer contact

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Suicide Prevention in the Workplace – Guidance for Staff and Managers.

Background papers

None