

Health and Wellbeing Board

20 November 2025

Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Strategy (2026-2030)

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Summary

The Suicide Prevention Programme plans to bring the draft new Suicide & Self-Harm Prevention Strategy for Kent & Medway (2026-2030) to the Medway Health & Wellbeing Board.

The new Strategy was drafted in summer 2025 following more than a year of stakeholder engagement. The strategy went out to formal public consultation from 23 July to 6 October 2025.

A report which summarises the key findings from the consultation (the consultation report) is currently being prepared. When complete, this will help to determine what changes need to be made to the draft strategy. As the consultation report has not yet been finalised, a draft Executive Summary is included in the board papers for discussion.

1. Recommendation

- 1.1 The Board is asked to note the report and discuss actions that they and/or their organisations can take forward to support the suicide and self-harm agenda locally,

2. Budget and policy framework

- 2.1 Since 1 April 2013, local authorities have been responsible for improving the health of their local population and for public health services.
- 2.2 The national Suicide prevention strategy for England: 2023 to 2028 delivered a firm commitment to see the number of suicides in England decrease within 2 and a half years at the very latest.
- 2.3 The budget for the Suicide Prevention Programme in Kent and Medway comes wholly from the Integrated Care Board.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Kent and Medway Suicide and Self-harm Prevention Strategy 2026-30 is the continuation of the work undertaken as a result of the 2021-2025 Kent and Medway Suicide Prevention Strategy and combines local data about who is dying by suicide in Kent and Medway with national research and policy direction.
- 3.2 Unlike the existing Strategy (2021-2025), the Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Strategy for 2026-2030 encompasses both Adults, and Children and Young People (CYP) as opposed to creating a separate Strategy for both. The new Strategy sets the same eight priorities for both groups, but across two separate action plans, in recognition of the need for a slightly different approach for each.
- 3.3 The draft Suicide Prevention Strategy 2026-30 was developed by the Kent and Medway Suicide Prevention Programme, which is hosted by KCC's Public Health department and funded by the Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board. The strategy group also includes Medway Council Public Health Team and representatives from the Integrated Care Board and the Kent and Medway Mental Health Trust.
- 3.4 The draft strategy was developed in conjunction with the Suicide Prevention Networks, which are well-established partnerships made up of over 250 agencies, including statutory and voluntary / community sector organisations as well as individuals living with experience of suicidal thoughts, self-harm or being bereaved by suicide. There is a Network focused on supporting adults, and a Network focused on supporting children and young people. These Networks will oversee the action plans set out for each as result of this Strategy.
- 3.5 The vision of the new strategy is that Kent and Medway becomes a place where the number of people dying by suicide is reduced as much as possible. Our aim is for the Kent and Medway suicide rate to be below the national average by 2030 (if not sooner).
- 3.6 The mission of this strategy is to make Kent and Medway a place where hope is always available to anyone, no matter what they are facing. Specifically, we would like to have achieved the following by 2030:
 - Children and young people in Kent and Medway to be resilient enough to cope with life's normal ups and downs, but knowledgeable and confident enough to reach out for more support when they need it.
 - Adults in Kent and Medway to know how to look after their own emotional wellbeing but to feel comfortable and able to seek more help when necessary.
 - All agencies (statutory, voluntary, community) to work collectively to ensure support and help is available to those who need it.
 - All agencies to share knowledge and support each other to learn what works in helping people get the support they need.

4. Risk management

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Funding restrictions	Financial restraints on public services may lead to cuts to services and programmes that are currently in place to reduce self-harm and suicide.	Leaders and people making financial decisions acknowledge the immediate and longer term financial impact of suicide and self-harm on health, care, education and workplaces	BII
Lack of partner support	Cost of living crisis creating a shift in partners priorities around reducing suicide and self-harm and not recognising it as a priority for everyone	Keep partners educated on key connections between suicide and self-harm and cost of living	CII
The draft strategy is not met with approval	The strategy would need to be revised, which would delay its implementation, which is currently planned for early 2026.	<p>Stakeholders have been invited to influence the new strategy through a range of means and methods coordinated through the Suicide Prevention Networks.</p> <p>It has been taken through various governance channels, including the Health Reform and Public Health Cabinet Committee (1 July 2025) and the Children & Young People's Departmental Management Team meeting on 14 May 2025.</p>	CIII

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
		A consultation was open to the public for 10.5 weeks and yielded 149 responses, which will be used to amend and finalise the strategy.	

For risk rating, please refer to the following table

Likelihood	Impact:
A Very likely B Likely C Unlikely D Rare	I Catastrophic II Major III Moderate IV Minor

5. Consultation

5.1 Full details can be found at: [The Kent and Medway Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Strategy 2026-2030 | Let's Talk Kent](#)

5.2. Appendix 2 provides a summary report of the feedback from the public consultation period.

6. Climate change implications

6.2. There are no climate change implications from this report.

7. Financial implications

7.2. There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report. The budget for the Suicide Prevention Programme in Kent and Medway comes wholly from the ICB.

8. Legal implications

8.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Lead officer contact

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Appendices

Appendix 1 (Draft) Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Strategy 2026-2030

Appendix 2 Draft Executive Summary - KM Suicide Prevention Strategy Consultation Report

Background papers

2026-30 Data Evidence Pack v7 <https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/kent-and-medway-suicide-and-self-harm-prevention-strategy-2026-2030>

Equality Impact Assessment for Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Strategy 2026-2030.- <https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/kent-and-medway-suicide-and-self-harm-prevention-strategy-2026-2030>

Suicide prevention strategy for England: 2023 to 2028 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/suicide-prevention-strategy-for-england-2023-to-2028>