

Bromley Suicide Prevention Plan 2025 to 2030

Acknowledgements

With thanks to the following organisations and teams who have helped to develop this plan and the accompanying action plan:

- British Transport Police (BTP)
- Bromley Council - Adults Services, Children's Services, Community Safety Team, Education Team, Public Health, and Youth Justice Service
- Bromley Safeguarding Adults Board (BSAB)
- Bromley Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP)
- Bromley Well
- Bromley Y
- Change, Grow, Live (CGL)
- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
- Empowerment Charity
- GP clinical leads
- Happy to Help Team – SJOG (St Johns of God)
- Metropolitan Police – Bromley Local and Central
- Mytime Active
- Network Rail
- NHS South East London Integrated Care Board (SEL ICB)
- Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust - Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Papyrus
- Proper Blokes Club
- Samaritans
- South East London (SEL) Mind Suicide Bereavement Service
- South East London Integrated Care System (SEL ICS)
- Southeastern Railway
- St James Place
- Thrive LDN

Special thanks to the **individual lived experience experts** who have kindly given their time and insights to the development of this plan, and to SEL Mind who facilitated this.

We are most appreciative of the contributions from all of our partners. Please note that this plan is under continuous development and the above list will grow as further partnerships develop.

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About the plan

Suicide is a significant and potentially preventable public health issue in the UK, with profound emotional, social, and economic impacts on families, friends and communities.

The 2023 cross-government strategy for preventing suicide in England has three main goals:

- 1** To reduce the suicide rate within the next five years, with early signs of decline within two and a half years.
- 2** To enhance support for individuals who have self-harmed.
- 3** To improve support for those who have lost a loved one to suicide

This plan sets out Bromley's local approach to reducing suicide and self-harm, supporting those affected, and building a more compassionate, better-connected community. It outlines key priorities, actions, and partnerships that will guide our work across the borough over the next five years.

Suicide prevention is a key priority in both the Bromley Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Bromley Mental Health Strategy.

This plan has been developed through a collaborative approach that recognises the role everyone can play in suicide prevention. Support and ideas for the plan were generated through engagement and workshops with the Bromley Suicide Prevention Steering Group and other key stakeholders.

A Suicide Audit/Trend Analysis and an Annual Public Health Report were carried out to underpin this plan, with data and research evidence relating to suicide prevention, including data specific to Bromley.

The Bromley public health team have also carried out some engagement work with people with lived experience to gather insights to inform the local plan and action plan.

The plan is supported by the Bromley Health and Wellbeing Board.

Why is it important?

Every life lost to suicide is a tragedy. When a person dies by suicide, the impact is devastating and ripples out to family, healthcare, employment, police, emergency services and more.

Each death by suicide is one too many and has a serious and negative impact on those affected. Those affected and bereaved are at a greater risk of dying by suicide themselves.

Whilst the biggest cost is the intangible one, associated with the pain and grief of an unexpected loss of life, the economic costs are also immense. The Samaritans estimate an average cost of £1.46 million per suicide while the cost of a suicide for someone aged 30-34 is £1.75 million.^[1]

Suicide prevention is not just down to mental health specialists and a significant proportion of people who die by suicide have had no contact with mental health support.

However, we believe that suicide prevention is everyone's business and together we hope to reduce deaths by suicide in Bromley.

Evidence shows that collaboration between organisations, raising awareness, accessible training and more organisations with postvention plans are all actions that can reduce the number of people who die by suicide.

Together, we can 'Make Suicide Everyone's Business'.

[1] Here's why suicide prevention is a worthwhile investment, Samaritans, 7th March 2024.
<https://www.samaritans.org/news/heres-why-suicide-prevention-is-a-worthwhile-investment>

Key statistics in Bromley

Suicide rates

On average, 23 suicides per year occur in Bromley. Since 2001, there has been a downward trend in suicide rates in Bromley.

However, in recent years, suicide rates in Bromley have increased from 5.2 per 100,000 (2020-2022) to 7.3 per 100,000 (2021-2023), consistent with national levels.

23
suicides
per year

Disparities in age and sex



3x

Men are three times more likely to die by suicide than women.

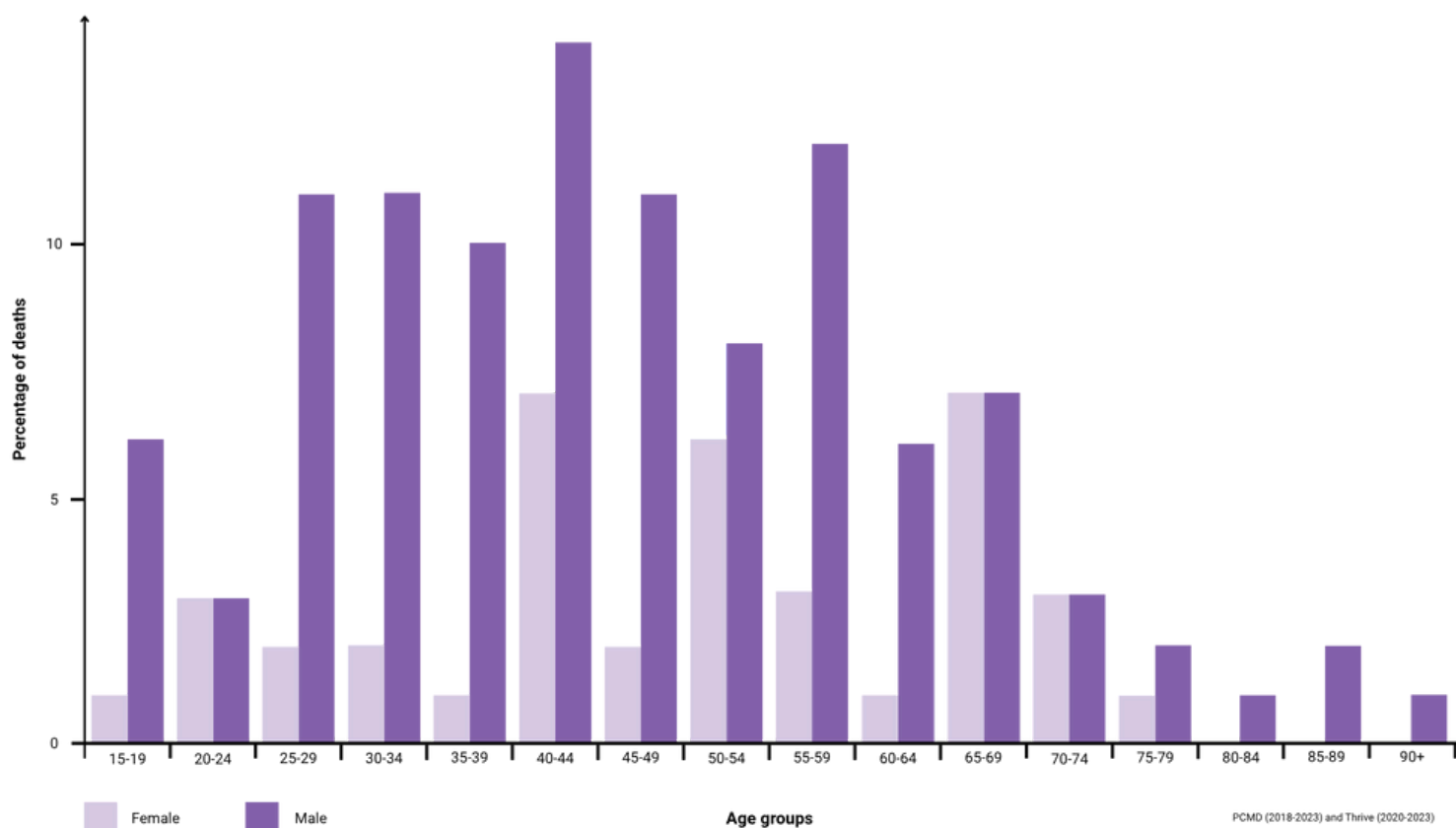


Women and adolescent girls experience higher levels of intentional self-harm than their male counterparts.



Most suicides from 2018 to 2023 were among **men aged 25 to 59 years**, with the highest numbers being in the **40-to-44-year age group**.

Percentage of deaths from suicide by age and gender in Bromley



Mental health and social risk factors

40%

40% of suspected suicides involved individuals with a **known mental health condition or substance misuse**.

38%

38% were linked to **social challenges** - unemployment, homelessness and relationship difficulties.

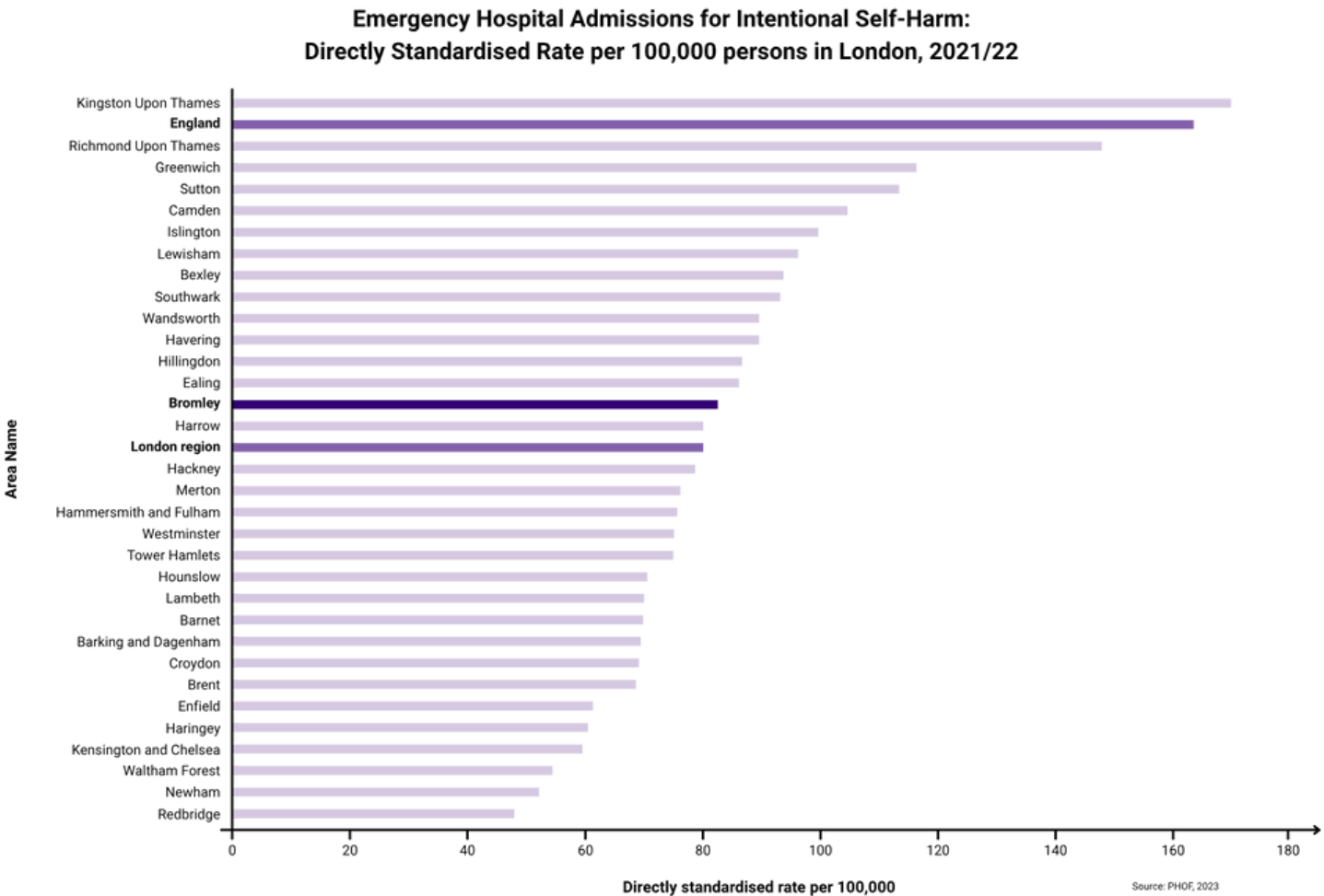


A significant proportion of individuals who died by suicide had previously attempted suicide or left a suicide note.

Self-harm and hospital admissions



Bromley’s **emergency hospital admission rate for self-harm** (SAR 45.6) is **higher than the London average** (SAR 42.7) but Bromley has **fewer admissions** for self-harm **compared to England** (which is 100).



Self-harm and deprivation

There is a **strong link between deprivation and intentional self-harm rates** in Bromley.

Although fewer intentional self-harm admissions occur in older residents (aged 65 and over), research indicates they are at a significantly higher risk of subsequent suicide.

Ambitions and areas for action

Every suicide is a preventable, tragic event leading to a devastating impact on family and friends of the person who died and can be felt across the whole community.

We have three ambitions that this plan will address over the next five years:

1

To reduce the suicide rate in Bromley over the next 5 years.

2

To improve support for people who have self-harmed.

3

To improve support for people bereaved by suicide.

To achieve these ambitions, the following priority areas for action have been identified:

- Improve data and evidence to ensure that effective, evidence-informed and timely interventions continue to be adapted.
- Provide tailored, targeted support to priority groups, including those at higher risk. This includes:
 - Children and young people
 - Men
 - People who have self-harmed
 - People in contact with mental health services
 - People in contact with the justice system
 - Autistic and neurodiverse people
 - Pregnancy women and new mothers

- Address common risk factors linked to suicide at a population level by providing early intervention and tailored support. These can include:
 - Physical illness
 - Financial difficulty and economic adversity
 - Gambling
 - Alcohol and drug misuse
 - Social isolation and loneliness
 - Domestic abuse
- Reduce access to means and methods of suicide where this is appropriate and necessary as an intervention to prevent suicides.
- Provide effective bereavement support to those affected by suicide.
- Make suicide prevention everybody's business so that we can maximise our collective impact and support to prevent suicides.

Proposals from lived experience experts

In developing this plan, we have been privileged to hear from individuals with lived experience of suicide through a series of focus groups facilitated by our partners at SEL Mind Suicide Bereavement Service.

We are enormously grateful to the members who took part and were willing to provide insights from their own experiences.

It is hoped that lived experience experts will continue to provide insights and feedback on the delivery of the action plan over the next 5 years.

Whilst it would be too lengthy to describe all the ideas proposed by the focus groups, here is a summary of 5 main proposals to spotlight.

- There was acknowledgement of stigma and shame talking about suicide and how this can prevent people from finding out more, or reaching out for help for either themselves or a family member/friend they might be concerned about.
- This can be counteracted by more promotion, awareness and training around suicide prevention – for example having a large campaign based upon ‘Hope’ that can utilise London Borough of Bromley’s potential reach to all residents. Making Suicide Prevention Everybody’s Business by drawing in people across Bromley including residents, employers, professionals.
- Training and resources for all colleagues in the wider system who have face-2-face meetings with clients, including training for GPs.
- Greater communication between agencies - having a working forum for this.
- More support for families who may in turn be supporting a family member/friend who is experiencing suicidal thoughts.

How will the plan be delivered

The strategy has a multi-agency Suicide Prevention Steering Group chaired by the London Borough of Bromley Public Health Team.

This steering group will oversee the implementation of the Bromley Suicide Plan and action plan. Additional sub groups will be put in place to take forward some actions to develop them in more detail, these sub groups will report to the Suicide Prevention Steering Group. The action plan will be reviewed at each steering group meeting on a quarterly basis, with an annual workshop after each of the 5 years to develop the action plan further each year.

In order to continue collaboration across the wider system, which has been started with the development of this plan, we will facilitate twice yearly networking and partner update events.

A review of progress will be provided annually to the Bromley Health and Wellbeing Board.

Help in Bromley

There are many organisations and local services who provide support for people in Bromley.

Your mental health is as important as your physical health.
You will not be wasting anyone's time.

If you or someone else is in danger of being harmed, call 999 or go to A&E now



If you are in crisis or need urgent help for your mental health:

NHS 111

Online: <https://111.nhs.uk/triage/check-your-mental-health-symptoms>

Call: 111

Oxleas Mental Health Crisis Line

Call: 0800 330 8590

(available 24 hours a day)

If you need to talk right now

Whatever you're going through, there are people you can talk to any time. You can:

Call Samaritans on 116 123

Free to call, available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Text SHOUT to 85258

A free and confidential messaging service, available 24 hours a day.

Contact the Papyrus HOPELINE247

For young people aged under 35, or anyone concerned that a young person could be thinking about suicide. Available 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

- Call: 0800 068 4141
- Text: 07786 209697
- Email: pat@papyrus-uk.org

Contact the Switchboard LGBTQIA+ helpline

Switchboard is a national LGBTQIA+ support line for anyone, at any point in their journey.

- Call: 0300 330 0630 (10am–10pm every day)
- Email: hello@switchboard.lgbt
- Webchat: <https://switchboard.lgbt>

Further resources and links

Whatever you're going through, there are people you can talk to any time. You can:

Bromley Council preventing suicide

www.bromley.gov.uk/health-wellbeing/preventing-suicide

If you have been affected or bereaved by suicide

If you have been affected or bereaved by suicide or if you know someone who is, you can contact SEL Suicide Bereavement Service

Call: 07933 393397

Email: suicidebereavement@selmind.org.uk

Visit: <https://selmind.org.uk/suicide-bereavement-support>

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