

BROMLEY SUICIDE AUDIT 2024

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

Suicide has a profound impact on a wide range of people, including family, friends, colleagues, and the broader community. The Department of Health estimates that each suicide affects approximately 135 individuals. Various distressing life events and risk factors, such as gender and socio-economic disparities, contribute to suicidal behaviour.

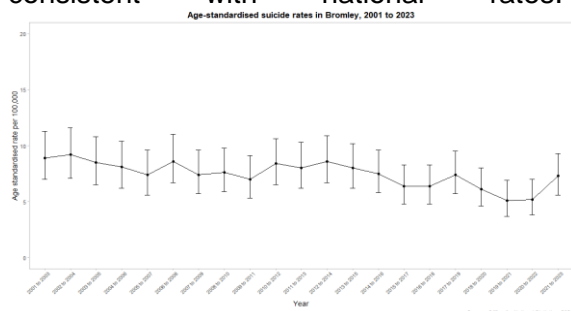
The purpose of this audit is to guide Bromley’s suicide prevention plan by comparing local and national statistics. The goal is to reduce local suicide rates and address existing inequalities. According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), suicide is defined as death from deliberate self-harm or injury with undetermined intent, based on the coroner’s conclusions.

2. Methodology

The audit uses data from the Primary Care Mortality Database (PCMD), Thrive LDN and the Hospital Episode Statistics database, focusing on Bromley residents from January 2018 to December 2023. Other sources of data used as comparators come from the Office of National Statistics, NHS Digital, the Public Health Outcomes Framework, Suicide Prevention Profile and the Office of Health Improvement and Disparities.

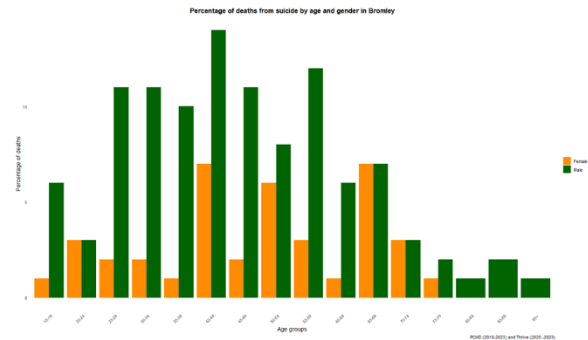
3. Key Findings

Suicide rates in Bromley have increased in the most recent years (2021 – 2023), consistent with national rates.

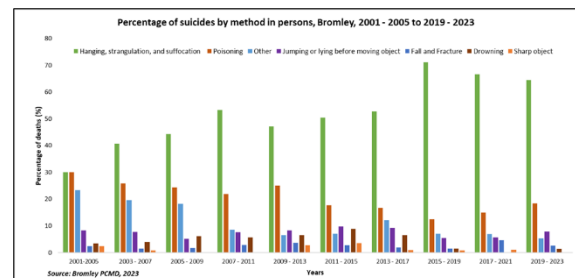


Male individuals are disproportionately affected by suicide, with rates up to three times higher than females, while intentional self-harm rates are more prevalent among women and young people.

From 2018 to 2023, most suicides locally were in men aged 25 to 59 years, with the highest numbers being in the 40–44-year-old age group.

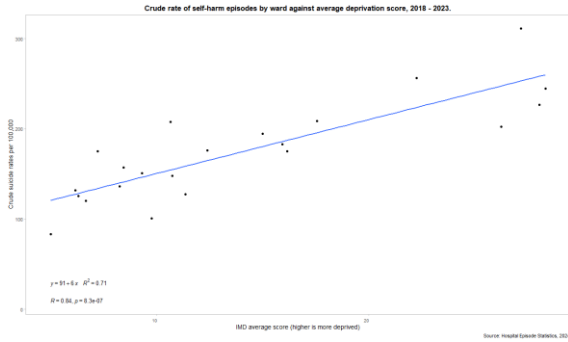


Hanging, strangulation, or suffocation are the most common methods of suicide in Bromley, consistent with national trends, followed by poisoning.

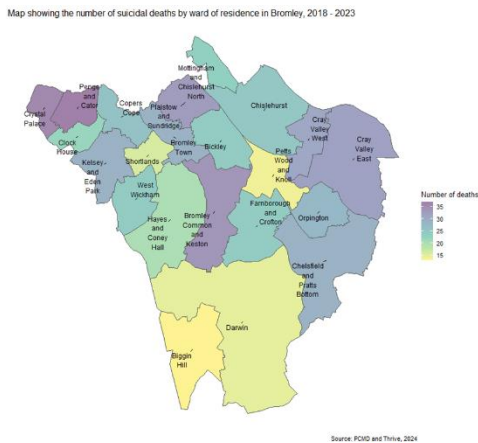


Nearly 40% of suspected suicides involved individuals with a known mental health condition or a history of drug or alcohol misuse. Approximately 38% of suspected suicides were linked to social problems such as unemployment, homelessness, or relationship difficulties. A significant proportion of individuals who died by suicide had previously attempted suicide or left a suicide note. 67% of suspected suicides occurred at home.

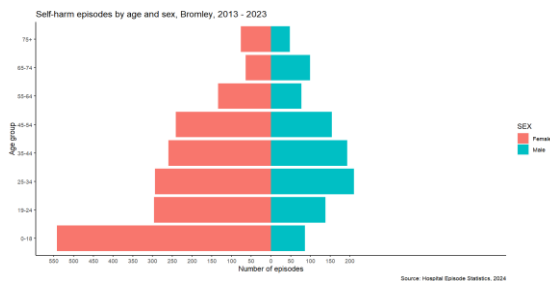
There is a strong positive association between higher deprivation and higher self-harm rates in Bromley, supported by significant statistical evidence and a well-fitting regression model.



Penge and Cator and Crystal Palace show the highest concentrations of suicides. Other notable areas include Bromley Common and Keston, Mottingham and Chislehurst North, and Cray Valley East.



The proportion of hospital admissions for intentional self-harm is highest in girls aged 0 to 18 years.



Bromley’s Standardised Admission Ratio (SAR) for emergency admissions due to self-harm is 45.6. This means Bromley has fewer emergency admissions for self-harm compared to England (which is 100).

Compared to the London average SAR of 42.7, Bromley’s SAR is slightly higher. This means Bromley has a slightly higher rate of hospital stays for self-harm than the average across London.

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.

4. Analysis

The analysis reveals that suicide rates in Bromley have fluctuated, with a notable increase in recent years. Men, particularly those aged 25 to 59, are at a higher risk, with the highest numbers in the 40-44 age group. The most common methods of suicide are hanging, strangulation, or suffocation, followed by poisoning. Mental health conditions, substance misuse, and social problems are significant contributing factors. There is a strong association between deprivation and self-harm rates, particularly in specific wards.

5. Conclusion

The audit highlights the fluctuating suicide rates in Bromley, with a recent increase and a higher risk among men aged 25 to 59, particularly those aged 40-44. The most common methods are hanging, strangulation, or suffocation, and there is a strong link between deprivation and self-harm rates. These findings underscore the need for targeted interventions and enhanced support systems to reduce suicide rates and address inequalities in Bromley.