

## **Choose Life: Prevention of Suicide and Self Harm in Argyll and Bute**

**The Area Community Planning Group is asked to:**

- **Note this paper.**
- **Provide support for the ongoing stakeholder consultation regarding the Choose Life Project Service Level Agreement .**
- **Consider their role in relation to prevention of suicide and self harm in Argyll and Bute.**

### **1 Background and Summary**

Two people die by suicide each day in Scotland. Identified as a Community issue, there were 762 deaths by suicide in Scotland in 2012. Suicide rates generally increase with increasing deprivation, with rates in the most deprived areas of Scotland significantly higher than the Scottish average. Suicide rates in the most deprived decile were double the Scottish average. Taking into account the current economic climate it is expected that there will be a negative effect reflected in the numbers of people negatively affected by suicide each year increasing. Based on three-year rolling averages there was an 18% fall in suicide rates between 2000-2002 and 2010-2012 in Scotland

Choose Life in Argyll and Bute began in 2003 with posts being established to take forward the Government's 10-year Strategy and Action Plan to prevent suicide in Scotland. Initially the funding for this work in Scotland was ring-fenced with this protection being subsequently removed. Argyll and Bute Council recognised the value and importance the project and continued funding the project for a further 6 years, (taking the funding up to March 2014). The staff have been employed and supported by NHS Highland as part of the partnership approach since the project's inception.

The National Aim of Choose Life was to reduce death by suicide by 20% in Scotland to be achieved by 2013. A training HEAT target accompanied this aim. This target saw completion in 2010 with NHS Highland successfully attaining the goal of 50% of key frontline staff educated & trained in using suicide assessment tools/prevention training programmes by 2010. Argyll and Bute CHP are still to achieve this 50% target currently sitting at around 36%.

In addition to undertaking work in the National Objectives, the project continues training Argyll & Bute CHP staff in order to achieve 50% of frontline staff trained in suicide awareness and intervention skills. The launch of the new Suicide and Self Harm Strategy was expected late summer 2013 but has been delayed and is now expected in Dec 2013.

### **2 Community Development Approach to Suicide Prevention**

Choose Life supports community development through a broad range of activities. For example, the Smoothie Bike is utilised monthly by community groups; the 'Walkin in my Shoes' Tour visited 6 locations in Argyll and Bute including 3 islands in 2012. A quiz undertaken by around 380 young people around suicide and self harm and awareness raising undertaken at the annual Helensburghs Got Talent show over the past 6 years are all examples of the variety of different activities Choose Life has been instrumental in delivering. The project has supported capacity building in communities by providing or supporting a wide

range of training such a Living Life to the Full (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy) and Supporting People Bereaved by Suicide courses.  
Further Information in available in the Choose Life annual report for 2012/2013.

### **3 Contribution to the SOA and local strategy**

Suicide and Self-harm prevention are informed and relevant to the following:

- Joint Health Improvement Plan 2013 – 2016
- Strategic Framework for Mental Health and Wellbeing 2012 – 2014
- SOA outcomes on people living active, healthier and independent lives and inequalities are reduced.

### **4 Next Steps**

The Choose Life project is currently subject to a stakeholder consultation as part of the review of the Service Level Agreement. The delay by the Scottish Government in launching the new National Strategy has implications for the current Service Level Agreement negotiations given that the current Government aim of reducing deaths by suicide by 20% is to be completed by Dec 2013. Furthermore, the current SLA continues until 31<sup>st</sup> March and the New Strategy is not available making it difficult to plan service delivery beyond March 2013. Contract review and stakeholder consultation are currently underway to guide the decision around the future of the Choose Life project and we encourage partners to take part in this process by submitting your comments to the Commissioning Team at Argyll and Bute Council for the attention of Jackie Connelly in Adult Care: [jackie.connelly@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:jackie.connelly@argyll-bute.gov.uk)

**Health Improvement Team  
Argyll and Bute CHP**

**October 2013**