

Agenda Item 5

Suicide and Drug Death Prevention



Falkirk IJB Clinical and Care Governance Committee

20 May 2022

Suicide and Drug Death Prevention

For Consideration and Comment

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Clinical and Care Governance Committee as to the work currently being progressed in relation to suicide and drug death prevention.
- 1.2 The most recent published data will be provided along with an update on the key tasks being progressed at this time.

2. Recommendations

The Clinical and Care Governance Committee is asked to:

- 2.1 Consider and comment on the contents of the report.

3. Background

- 3.1 In August 2021, the Strategic Prevention Coordinator for Suicide and Drug Deaths came into post. This post has a direct remit for suicide and drug death prevention and is aligned to Public Health. At the same time, the Alcohol and Drug Partnerships were also awarded funding to support the recruitment of the Substance Use Death Reviewer post. This post brings additional capacity to support the multi-agency review of drug deaths. Both of these posts have a Forth Valley remit.
- 3.2 As well as overseeing the expansion of the Drug Related Death (DRD) review process, key tasks being progressed include the development of the Forth Valley Suicide and DRD Prevention Plan as well as the establishment of the Senior Leadership Group / Prevention Partnership (name to be confirmed).

4. Forth Valley Progress Update

- 4.1 Published data from the National Records of Scotland confirms that the number of drug related deaths in 2020 was 77 across Forth Valley. The data is reported by calendar year. The Local Authority Breakdown is shown in the table:

Area	2020
Falkirk	37
Clackmannanshire	9
Stirling	31
Forth Valley Total	77

4.2 From 1 January to 20 April 2022, there have been 20 suspected drug related deaths reported to the team. This relates to the whole of the Forth Valley area.

4.3 Through the dedicated staff resource noted at point 3.1, this data is regularly reviewed in order to identify potential areas of concern. To date, there is no evidence of a direct causal link between any of the deaths.

4.4 With regard to the twenty suspected deaths to date, 60% of cases have been male. The average age range of individuals is 40.8 years.

4.5 **Suspected Suicide Deaths**

Published data by Public Health Scotland reports that, in 2020, there were 43 probable suicides across Forth Valley. The Local Authority breakdown is shown below:

Area	2020
Falkirk	22
Clackmannanshire	12
Stirling	9
Forth Valley	43

4.6 **Review Processes**

4.7 **DRDs**

Significant work has been undertaken to streamline the DRD Review process so that all cases are now reviewed through a single multi-agency process. A range of partners are involved in each review including NHS Forth Valley (various service areas including Primary Care), Social Work, Housing, Scottish Prison Service, Scottish Ambulance Service, Substance Use services and Forth Valley Recovery Community.

4.8 Since December 2021, there have been five DRD review meetings which are split into geographical areas (one meeting covering Falkirk and the other covering Clackmannanshire and Stirling). Over this six month period, a total of 49 cases have been reviewed with a further 9 Falkirk cases scheduled for review at the end of April 2022.

- 4.9 A positive development has been the quicker return of postmortem reports including some for 2022 cases. The cause of death is required to determine if the case will be taken forward for DRD review.
- 4.10 The challenge now being addressed is that, over the course of the five meetings, a significant number of actions and learning points have been identified. Many of these relate to similar and related themes therefore time is now being dedicated to collating, theming and prioritising the agreed actions.
- 4.11 From the current actions, some of the themes identified to date are:
- The potential impact of sedative medications.
 - Service / Referral Pathways – including streamlining / raising awareness of processes such as SCI Gateway (a GP referral system) and how to encourage wider services to directly refer to substance use services.
 - Escalating Concern Processes – there are a number of sub themes under this issue which includes the processes around the escalation of vulnerability that is perhaps wider than an individual's substance use as well as how to ensure that information around risk follows individuals who are transient and may regularly move between the three Forth Valley areas.
 - Harm Reduction – including work within the hospital setting as well as expanding the Forth Valley Take Home Naloxone Programme.
 - The process for discharging people from services and how to minimise risk at that point.
 - The impact of bereavement – includes bereavement through drug related death as well as loss in a wider sense. The reviews have also identified that some individuals present at a drug related death have then sadly gone on to die in similar circumstances.
 - GBV / Domestic Abuse – in some cases, domestic abuse was identified as an issue and, for some individuals, has increased their risk of significant harm.
- 4.12 The soon to be developed Leadership Group / Prevention Partnership will be an important forum, along with the Partnerships, Alcohol and Drug Partnership's (ADP) and Community Planning Partnership's (CPPs) to highlight the outputs and findings from reviews to facilitate learning and aid strategic planning.
- 4.13 Going forward, the plan is for alcohol related deaths to be reviewed using the same model.

4.14 **Suicide Reviews**

The team supporting the DRD review process will also support the expansion of the suicide review process.

4.15 At the moment, suicide reviews take place where the individual was known to statutory mental health services / substance use services in the twelve months before their death. Moving forward, all deaths by suicide will be reviewed to maximise opportunities for learning and to take a public health approach to prevention.

4.16 At this time, the process has been stepped with the first step being that Police Scotland now shares notifications of all probable suicides with the review team. This allows us to potentially identify themes and trends that may require a response such as the method and location of incidents.

4.17 It is hoped that there will be an agreed model for the review of all probable suicide deaths by the end of 2022.

4.18 **Consultation Process – Forth Valley Prevention Plan**

A comprehensive consultation process will support the development of the Forth Valley Suicide and Drug Death Prevention Plan.

4.19 In line with a direction from the local ADPs, Scottish Drugs Forum are going to facilitate two workshops with ADP members to consider current local approaches to DRD prevention as well as required improvement activity moving forward. These workshops will be complemented by dedicated sessions for people with lived and living experience as well as a separate one for family members.

4.20 In addition to this, a survey will shortly be widely distributed to gather views around suicide prevention. This will be available to staff across all agencies, service providers, local communities and people with lived experience of either living with suicidal thoughts or being bereaved by suicide. In addition, facilitated workshops will be organised which will be carefully structured to ensure that people are supported to share their experience in a safe way.

4.21 The output from all of the highlighted activity will be combined along with the learning from the local reviews to develop the Forth Valley plan. The anticipated date for a draft document to be completed is the end of October 2022. A further update will be presented to Committee when this is available.

4.22 Committee has previously received updates from the ADP with regard to services that are available in the local area to support individuals and families affected by drug use and drug death. Future updates will be provided in line with the Committee Planner of activity.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 As highlighted, significant work continues to support the progression of the multi-agency DRD reviews. Plans will be developed to expand the model to include alcohol deaths as well as reviewing all probable suicide deaths.
- 5.2 A programme of activity is currently being established to support the development of the Forth Valley Suicide and DRD Prevention Plan. Partners are invited to fully participate in this process.
- 5.3 It is acknowledged that it will be important to ensure that any actions are appropriately recorded and progressed with clear governance process for review and escalation where required. There must be a strong quality assurance focus to monitor progress and a direct correlation to the performance framework that will accompany the Prevention Plan.

Resource Implications

Through Public Health and Alcohol and Drug Partnership resource (the latter awarded from the National Drug Death Taskforce), two additional posts (as noted at 3.1) have been appointed to support the reviews of drug related deaths and suicide as well as the development of a Forth Valley Prevention Plan. These additional posts will enhance the capacity of the current NHS resource allocated to Adverse Event Review and Clinical Governance.

As learning develops and improvement activity is identified, there may be a need for further resource allocation.

Impact on IJB Outcomes and Priorities

The tasks outlined in this report will support the IJB to meet the following strategic priority:

Early intervention, prevention and harm reduction:

- Improve people's mental health and well being
- Improve support for people with substance use issues, their families and communities
- Reduce the impact of health and social inequalities on individuals and communities.

In addition, the highlighted activity also directly relates to the strategic priorities of the ADP as well as the Community Planning Partnership.

Directions

No amended or new direction required.

Legal & Risk Implications

No legal or risk issues based on the contents of the report.

Consultation

As noted, consultation will be undertaken as part of the work to develop the Forth Valley Suicide and Drug Death Prevention Plan.

The work highlighted in this report has also been presented to the Falkirk Community Planning Board, the Falkirk ADP and a session with Elected Members.

Equalities Assessment

An EQIA is not required for the contents of the report but will be completed as part of the development of the Prevention Plan.

6. Report Author

- 6.1 Elaine Brown – Strategic Prevention Coordinator for Suicide and Drug Death

7. List of Background Papers

- 7.1 National Records of Scotland Drug-related deaths in Scotland in 2020 report published on 30 July 2021

[Drug-related deaths in Scotland in 2020, Report \(nrscotland.gov.uk\)](https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/publications/drug-related-deaths-in-scotland-in-2020-report)

Suicide statistics for Scotland Update of trends for the year 2020 report published on 17 August 2021

[Suicide statistics for Scotland - Update of trends for the year 2020 - Suicide statistics for Scotland - Publications - Public Health Scotland](https://www.publichealthscotland.scot/publications/suicide-statistics-for-scotland-2020/)

8. Appendices

No appendices included.