

PRACTISE HOPE PROJECT

Inspiration Guide for Primary Care Practices

Practise Hope is a pilot project working with 30 primary care practices across Kent, Surrey, and Brighton & Hove to strengthen their support to children and young people (CYP) experiencing thoughts of suicide and self-harm. Through training and support, it promotes culture change so that all practice staff – from receptionists to GPs – feel competent and confident when engaging with CYP experiencing these difficulties.

By participating in Practise Hope, practices will be eligible for a PACE Setter Award for Self-Harm and Suicide Prevention in Children and Young People. PACE Setter refers to the acronym PACE, consisting of four elements that provide a clear, standardised structure around which primary care practices are encouraged to review and refresh their services: **P**atient and staff engagement; **A**ccessing services; **C**linical best practice and care, and **E**ducating and equipping.

Overview of activities to be undertaken by practices

All practices must complete five key activities. This includes firstly two core activities:

1. A self-assessment audit of their safeguarding procedures (all ages)
2. An engagement exercise comprising of two parts:
 - a) with at least 1% of their (target) population (CYP in the age range 10-25 & parents/carers)
 - b) with at least half of their staff team, around the wellbeing of staff.

Following these, practice teams must decide on three additional activities to implement. These should be based on the four PACE Setter elements, and one activity must be around staff well-being.

Ideas to get you started

This guide lists some ideas to inspire your practice team in deciding what actions you want to take to improve your care and services for 10-25 year olds who are struggling with suicidal thoughts and self-harm. These are suggestions only and you can use your own ideas instead.

Your Practice Hope Coordinator will help you develop your ideas and finalise your practice's action plan.

“To summon up the courage to go to see a doctor is hard enough, especially when you haven't told anyone that you are thinking of killing yourself. So the way the surgery staff and the GP treats you should be a matter of life or death.”

Harees (22)

Patient and Staff Engagement

Listening to the experiences and views of patients and staff, so that services can be designed and adjusted to best meet local needs

- Focus groups for different age groups (e.g. 10–14, 15–18 and 18–25 year olds)
- Focus groups for families and carers of children and young people, as well as for staff
- Patient/staff surveys, including online options such as using SurveyMonkey and social media platforms

- Involve children and young people throughout the setting up, design and implementing of ideas for your 'Practise Hope' Action Plan, e.g. through a Patients' Participation Panel
- Set up a 'lived experience' panel of children and young people for your practice
- Coffee mornings, patient forums and 1:1 interviews

Accessing Services

Ensuring that information is clear and easily available for patients and staff on what support is available and how they can access services

"I wouldn't even think about going to the GP if I had a mental health issue because they only deal with physical health."

Millie (20)

- Include information and resources around self-harm and suicide prevention on practice website, including links to relevant organisations, helplines and safety apps (see suggestions later in this document)
- Set up a practice noticeboard around wellbeing and mental health, with specific information around suicide prevention and self-harm, and information aimed particularly at children and young people
- Produce and share clear summaries of processes and policies around confidentiality, information-sharing with other agencies, booking appointments, first contact and triage
- Offer greater flexibility around booking appointments particularly for children and young people, e.g. drop-ins, lunchtime appointments, online booking
- Offer double appointment slots, and/or named GPs for specific patients with needs around suicide/self-harm
- Consider additional services and support that practices could offer staff, CYP and families, such as wellbeing activities, work with Social Prescribers for CYP and families

Clinical Best Practice and Care

Making sure that the services provided to children and young people around suicide and self-harm are of the highest standard

- Encourage better conversations around suicide and self-harm
- Produce and promote clear guidelines on confidentiality and safeguarding for staff and patients, which outline which information about 10-25 year olds can/cannot be shared with parents/carers and with the wider system, and how and when
- Develop clear process / standards around clinical prompts and alerts to better support early warning signs and risk factors related to suicide and self-harm
- Establish a private space in the patients' waiting area; and/or a chill out area for staff
 - Put in place a surgery champion for CYP who specialises in mental health and wellbeing issues
 - Improve collection and use of data on suicide/ self-harm for CYP
 - Update practice processes / policy to ensure best practice for prescribing and managing medication for under 25s, e.g. face to face for first time prescriptions
 - More involvement by children and young people in the decision-making about their care and safety planning
 - Set up better postvention systems and support for those bereaved through suicide, e.g. policy to write to bereaved family to express condolences and offer support as needed
 - Build in regular time for staff debriefing within the practice routine

"What's most important is not what you leave with – a prescription for anti-depressants or a referral – it's what happens in the room."

Courtney (24)

Educating and Equipping

Ensuring that staff have the skills and resilience to effectively support patients and to manage their own mental health and wellbeing at work

- Provide Learning/Open Days for children and young people, and their families and carers, about how the surgery works
- Staff attend suicide prevention training such as:
 - Local NHS trust Suicide Prevention Training
 - ASK Assessing Suicide for Kids (4-14 years)
 - ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) 2 day course
 - SAFETalk - 3 hour suicide prevention training
- Access on-line suicide prevention training by Zero Suicide Alliance (20 mins)
- Undergo training on early intervention for self-harm
- Develop 'soft skills' for all staff for improved communication with CYP in crisis
- Job shadowing and resilience training for staff
- Attend postvention / suicide bereavement training for staff

"It would have been so helpful to have received help and support from my GP surgery following the loss of my son Oliver. I was unaware that my family were now at high risk of suicide ourselves because of our tragic bereavement."

Ann Feloy, founder of Olly's Future

Useful links

Grassroots – suicide prevention training and resources including Stay Alive app: <https://prevent-suicide.org.uk/>

Papyrus – suicide prevention training and resources including Hope Boxes: <https://papyrus-uk.org/>

Mind – information and support around mental health and wellbeing <https://www.mind.org.uk/>

Young Minds – mental health support and advocacy for young people <https://youngminds.org.uk/>

National Suicide Prevention Alliance – an alliance of public, private and voluntary organisations working on suicide prevention <https://www.nspa.org.uk/>

Me First – helping healthcare professionals communicate better with CYP <http://www.mefirst.org.uk>

YMCA Right Here – health & wellbeing project for 11-25 year olds in Brighton & Hove <https://ymcarighthere.com/>

Doc Ready app – helping children and young people prepare to speak to a doctor about their mental health for the first time: <http://www.docready.org/#/home>

Zero Suicide Alliance - <https://www.zerosuicidealliance.com/>

Calm Harm app – helping young people manage urges to self-harm: <https://calmharm.co.uk/>

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