
Mental Health Friendly Places and Men's Mental Health

Health and Wellbeing Board

Date of meeting: 04 06 2026

Lead Director/Officer:
Rob Howard

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
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- Report version number: 1

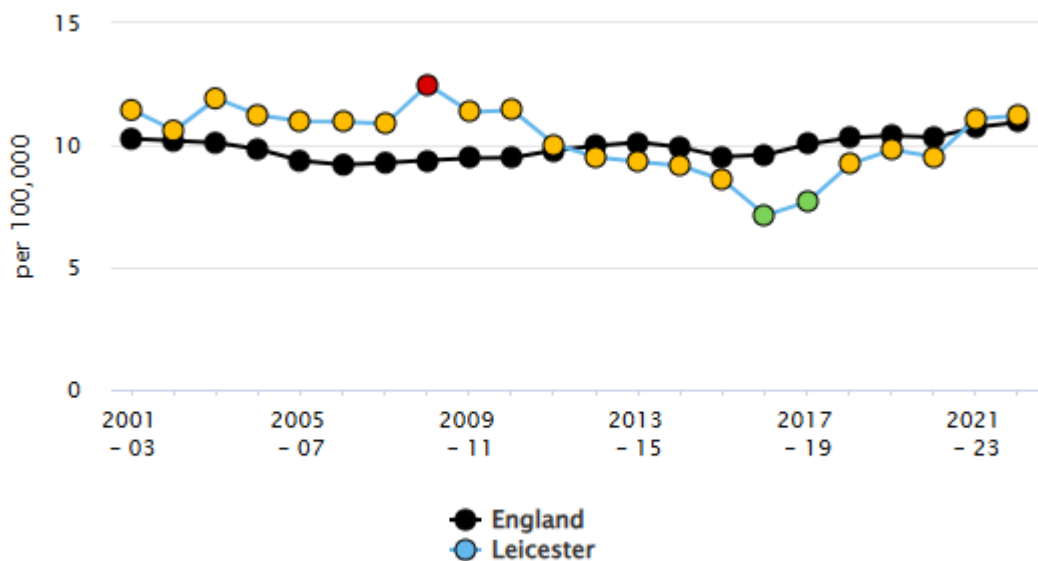
1. Summary

1.1 Mental health conditions can have a substantial impact on all areas of life. They are linked to quality of life, discrimination, physical health outcomes, and reduced life expectancy. There are a range of risk factors such as loneliness and social isolation and socio-economic deprivation that could increase chances of poor mental health.

1.2 Risk of death by suicide reflects these wider inequalities. There are differences in suicide rates according to people's social and economic circumstances with those in poorer communities more likely to be affected.

1.3 Figure 1, below, shows that while the rate of death by suicide in Leicester has fluctuated, it is not significantly higher than the national average.¹

Figure 1: Rate of death by suicide in Leicester 2001-3 to 2021-23



1.4 To collect, and act on, local data on suicide, Leicester City Council Public Health works with Leicestershire Police and other partners. Police first responders collect important information about incidents of suspected suicide called Real Time Suspected Suicide Surveillance Data (RTSSS). The data refer to suspected suicide, because the determination that a death happened by suicide is subject to coronial inquiry.

¹ [Fingertips | Department of Health and Social Care](#)

1.5 Early access to data on deaths by suspected suicide shapes our local response in ways which cannot be gathered from national data. Through RTSSS the suicide prevention partnership can learn about at-risk local populations, areas of concerns, the impact of factors such as deprivation. It can help the partnership to provide immediate bereavement support and work with people at risk to prevent suicide.

1.6 According to RTSSS in 2025 26 people from Leicester were reported to have died by suicide. They were mainly men and who lived in poorer areas of Leicester.

1.7 The response to and attempts to prevent deaths by suicide is shaped by the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) Suicide Prevention Strategy.² The strategy focuses on the following priorities:

- High-Risk Target Groups: Providing targeted, evidence-based support for demographics at high risk (including for example, men, people with a history of self-harm, severe mental illness, or previous bereavement).
- Mental Health Friendly Places (MHFP): Expanding community-based training in local settings (such as shops, libraries, and clubs) to help staff and volunteers comfortably recognize the signs of crisis and refer people to appropriate care.
- Data-Driven Intervention: Utilizing RTSSS and other data to identify local suicide hotspots and implement targeted environmental interventions and localized support.
- Start a Conversation Campaign: Continuing to reduce stigma through a centralized digital platform that promotes open conversations and provides educational resources.

1.8 This paper touches on these priorities with a particular focus on MHFPs.

2. Mental Health Friendly places

2.1 One response to deaths by suicide has been to develop a network of MHFPs and Mental Health Friendly Clubs. These are organisations which promote better mental wellbeing and which support people in adversity, who may be experiencing suicidal thoughts. To help lay people in MHFPs to have safe and supportive conversations with people in need, the Division of Public Health commissions and provides training and evaluates impact.

2.2 There are 97 organisations signed up as MHFPs and clubs. These are situated in areas where the need is greatest, such as Beaumont Leys, Braunstone, Evington, Eyres Monsell, New Parks and St Matthews. 516 people have accessed the MHFPs training offer.

2.3 Together MHFPs are a network of organisation which share information and good practice. More about these initiatives can be found on Start a Conversation, the LLR Suicide Prevention website.³

² [Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland \(LLR\) Suicide Prevention Strategy 2024-2029](#)

³ [Home | Start a Conversation](#)

2.4 The Leicester City Council Public Health team is looking to expand MHFPs to small businesses, especially those which may have contact with people in need, such as barbers, hairdressers, tattoo parlours and local cafés. The training offer will be changed to an e-learning format so businesses can access the training on demand when they have the capacity. The training offered through the e-learning format is likely to cover mental health awareness and fitness, looking after mental wellbeing and elements which have a focus specifically on encouraging men to access support.

2.5 Once businesses have completed the e-learning they will become part of the wider MHFP network with access to health promotion resources. The objective of the training is to help business employees to have confidence in difficult conversations which may touch upon adversity in people's lives. They will also be able to encourage people in need to access supportive organisations.

3. Supporting men in Leicester

3.1 An important aspect of suicide prevention is to support men. This is because men are disproportionately affected by suicide, accounting for roughly three-quarters of all suicide deaths in Leicester. Supporting men reflects this risk and is in line with the new national government strategy on men's health.⁴

3.2 Helping men to access mental health support involves overcoming stigma, encouraging action through direct conversation, working with community groups which focus on supporting men, male role models, and reducing barriers to support by highlighting the strengths to be drawn from seeking help.

3.3 As part of this endeavour, MHFPs is expanding to include an initiative called Mental Health Friendly Clubs. There are six football clubs across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland which offer either weekly or bi-weekly sessions for men called 'My Space My Game'. These are opportunities for men to engage in physical exercise and to socialize in the club house afterwards. Club coaches have received mental health awareness training to support difficult conversations and to signpost men in need to appropriate mental health support. Participating clubs are part of the MHFP network and have support from the Leicestershire and Rutland County Football Association. Two of the 6 clubs are in Leicester; these are Friar Lane and Epworth FC located in the Saffron Lane area and GNG FC based between Aylestone and Braunstone.

3.4 In November 2025 the Together for Men Conference was held at the Leicestershire County Cricket Ground on Grace Road. This was an opportunity to showcase, connect and strengthen the range of support, services and community initiatives available for men across LLR. It focused on the importance of mental and physical wellbeing and social connection. Members of the public with an interest in men's mental health were able to network with key partners and share information on their efforts to support men. More than 100 people attended on the night.

⁴ [Men's health: a strategic vision for England | CP 1432](#)

- 3.5 Since the conference the Division of Public Health, as part of the MHFP programme, has worked with Vita Health (the local NHS Talking Therapies provider) to co-produce a local programme specifically on men's mental health training for interested professionals and community organisations. The initiative was piloted in January 2026 with positive feedback. Since the pilot, the team have augmented the programme with a film of a local male with lived experience of poor mental health and suicidal thoughts.
- 3.6 MHFPs worked with Leicestershire Partnership Trust (LPT) to develop a men's support booklet.⁵ This describes local services supportive of men's health and wellbeing. The booklet was co-produced with men's groups such as Modern Men Movement based at Team Hub, New Parks and Circulus for Men based at the community room in Morrisons, Glenfield. It was launched as part of Mental Health Awareness week on May 14th, 2026, at the Blaby Spartans FC My Space My Game Session. The aim of the booklet is to showcase the support available to local men, encouraging them to reach out earlier for support to prevent crisis.
- 3.7 As there has been positive feedback, it is envisaged that the booklet will be accessed in primary and secondary care, pharmacies, local community organisations, universities, community centres, libraries, gyms, sports clubs, East Midlands Ambulance Services, Leicestershire Police, family hubs, and beyond. The partners which devised the booklet are looking at other ways of disseminating information through drink mats, stickers and posters available with links to an online version. Network Rail have requested stickers for toilet doors and posters to be displayed at stations across LLR. The booklet will be monitored to ensure it remains up to date.
- 3.8 As a further way of promoting men's wellbeing, MHFPs has hosted 3 webinars with Ryan Parke, a coach with an interest in lifestyle and goal setting as ways of promoting men's mental health. Session content was sense checked by a senior clinician. The webinars looked at the importance of sleep, nutrition, lifestyle factors and goal setting techniques. One session looked at ways of supporting men with poor mental health and the importance of language used when supporting men. Each webinar was well attended with over 100 people joining including people from the NHS, VCSE organisations and sports clubs.

4. Other actions to support people in adversity

- 4.1 The work to prevent suicide is ongoing. There is a weekly partnership meeting to provide support to the bereaved, affected local communities, and to raise awareness about issues such as cost of living, loneliness, relationship breakdown, and untreated poor mental health. In addition to MHFPs, supportive organisations include the Tomorrow Project, Samaritans, as well as improved awareness in many other organisations across Leicester. There are likely to be opportunities to raise awareness about men's mental health in the forthcoming men's football World Cup.
- 4.2 Going forwards, one important area of work is likely to be reaching out to car parks to reduce access to lethal means, provide vital help-seeking resources, and train staff to intervene during a crisis. Multi-storey car parks are often highly accessible

⁵ [Mens-MH-Booklet-FINAL-DIGITAL-V1-MAY-2026.pdf](#)

and present opportunities for impulsive acts, making them critical focal points for community safety.

4.3 Public Health is also looking to work with ICB colleagues to promote suicide prevention in Primary Care. Although death by suicide of a registered patient is relatively rare for individual general practices, up to half of individuals who die by suicide visit their GP in the month prior to their death. Primary care is often the first point of contact for people in distress. In this way GPs are vital for early intervention.

4.4 The Public Health Mental Health team is working with Community Wellbeing Coordinators to develop a small grants programme, of up to £3,000, to encourage initiatives supportive of mental wellbeing in local community organisations. The objective will be to enable organisations to create opportunities for people to connect, build supportive relationships, and access safe, informal spaces where they feel comfortable discussing their wellbeing. The first round of funding will support 13 separate projects.

5. Recommended actions/decision

The Health and Wellbeing Board is invited to note:

5.1 Death by suicide reflects wider inequalities, with those living in the most deprived areas likely to be worst affected.

5.2 Men are disproportionately affected by suicide, a range of projects and initiatives led by Public Health aim to work with communities and support men's mental health.

5.3 Initiatives linked to Mental Health Friendly Places are being developed across Leicester communities, especially in areas of greatest need, to promote safe, sensitive communication for people experiencing adversity in their everyday lives.

6. Stakeholder engagement

6.1 In delivering Mental Health Friendly Places and Clubs Leicester City Council Division of Public Health works jointly with Leicestershire County Council Public Health. The local suicide prevention website is Start A Conversation (see above).

6.2 The Division of Public Health also works closely with Vita Health to co-produce and deliver free training through the MHFPs.

6.3 The Division of Public Health works with LPT Leicester Neighbourhood Mental Health Leads, supporting each other to reach services, deliver key messages and link services up in areas.

7. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

7.1 Financial implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Signed: Mohamed Irfan

Dated: 22-05-2026

7.2 Legal implications

The Authority has statutory responsibilities for public health services are set out in the Health and Social Care Act 2012 which includes improving the health of their local population and for public health services. Any initiative or commissioning identified to support this project should be in line with procurement rules and internal contract procedure rules. Use or collation of any data should also be compliant with data protection legislation. Appropriate advice and support should be sought as needed.

Signed: Mannah Begum, Principal Solicitor, Commercial Legal Team

Dated: 22 May 2026

7.3 Equalities implications

Our Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requires us to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010 (sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability, race, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, age) and those who do not. The proposals set out in this report are intended to support improved mental health outcomes across Leicester, with a particular focus on reducing inequalities experienced by groups at higher risk of poor mental health and suicide. The report highlights that suicide risk is not evenly distributed across the population. People living in more deprived areas are disproportionately affected, and men account for the majority of suicide deaths locally. The targeted approach described, including the development of Mental Health Friendly Places and initiatives focused on men's mental health should lead to positive impacts. The expansion of Mental Health Friendly Places and related community-based support should help improve access to information, early support and signposting for people who may face barriers to using mainstream services. It will be important to ensure that initiatives remain inclusive and accessible to people with protected characteristics, including through consideration of language, cultural appropriateness, and accessibility of materials and training formats. Ongoing monitoring and engagement with diverse communities and partners will support understanding of how different groups are impacted and help to ensure that services continue to meet local needs.

Signed: Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148

Dated: 27 May 2026

7.4 Climate Emergency implications

There are no direct climate emergency implications associated with this report but it is worth noting that service delivery generally contributes to the council's carbon emissions. Impacts of delivery can be managed through measures such as encouraging partners to use sustainable travel and transport options and use buildings and materials efficiently.

Signed: Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer, Ext 372246

Dated: 21st May 2026

7.5 Other implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

8. Background information and other papers:

9. Summary of appendices:

10. Is this a private report (If so, please indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?

11. Is this a “key decision”? If so, why?