

News story: £2 million investment to help NHS achieve zero inpatient suicide ambition

The Prime Minister has announced £2 million in funding for the Zero Suicide Alliance (ZSA) over the next 2 years. The funding will help to reduce suicides across the NHS, with the aim of achieving zero inpatient suicides.

It will be used to develop tools for the NHS and public and private partners. The tools will focus on:

- training to prevent suicides
- improving safety
- ensuring lessons are learnt when suicides occur

The ZSA will also develop their digital suicide prevention resource, capturing best practice and learning from across the UK and abroad, and explore the use of analytics to predict suicide risk.

This funding is in addition to the £25 million in suicide prevention funding first announced in 2016. As part of that investment, NHS England is working with mental health trusts to implement zero suicide policies for inpatients and improve safety on wards.

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Matt Hancock said:

Every suicide is a preventable death and there's so much more we can do to reduce the number of people lost to it. The Zero Suicide Alliance's new training and awareness tools will help health and care staff recognise the signs and step in before it's too late, as well ensuring openness and transparency when suicides do occur.

On World Mental Health Day, this funding is a vital step forward to help further reduce inpatient suicide and underlines our commitment to bring down the number of suicides everywhere.

Joe Rafferty, Chief Executive of Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust and one of the founder members of the Zero Suicide Alliance, said:

Today's announcement of government backing for the ZSA is fantastic news for every person who has ever struggled with suicidal thoughts and everyone left behind by someone who has taken their own life. The ZSA believe just one life lost is one too many.

The ZSA is already acting as a catalyst and focal point for a broad range of suicide prevention activity across the widest possible

group of mutually supportive NHS and partner organisations in this country. As part of this work, the Alliance training, which we developed here at Mersey Care, has now been taken by thousands of people with each one of them now becoming equipped to engage with those at risk.

Moving forward, this funding will enable us to broaden our reach to include a range of options to ensure that NHS response to suicide is the very best it can be wherever you are when the need arises.