

Recipients of £5.4 million suicide prevent fund revealed in Mental Health Awareness Week

- 113 charities have benefitted from £5.4 million to prevent suicide in high-risk groups, including people from Black communities and men
- Demand for services has increased during the pandemic and funds have bolstered services including therapy, stigma-busting workshops and helplines
- Government will publish a Suicide Prevention Plan later this year to outline further support for those in need

The government has announced the charities that have received a share of £5.4million, to support people experiencing suicidal thoughts or approaching a crisis. This follows increased demand for services, met by the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector during the pandemic.

Marking the beginning of Mental Health Awareness Week the government has announced that, following an open and competitive application process, 113 charities were awarded a share of the VCSE suicide prevention grant fund.

This funding, which was distributed and used earlier this year, enabled recipients to either set up new projects, or expand or sustain current services to ensure people are supported – including funding projects retrospectively. Funded projects included providing additional capacity in crisis helplines, both for those struggling with suicidal thoughts and for those who are concerned about a loved one, providing signposting to local services, support and information, refreshing campaigns to provide targeted support to specific at-risk groups, therapy sessions and supporting families who have tragically been bereaved by suicide.

These voluntary and community services are vital for supporting individuals in the community, ensuring they receive the help they need, whilst also allowing health services to continue tackling the Covid backlog.

In 2021, there were over 5,000 suicides registered in England. In both men and women, around 40% of suicides are by people in their 40s and 50s, whilst men aged 45 to 49 have the highest rate.

Whilst this additional funding is already helping communities, the government is committed to doing all it can to prevent deaths by suicide. Later this year, it will publish a new Suicide Prevention Plan that will set out actions and commitments to do so.

To support the development of this plan, the department has opened a 12-week call for evidence which is running until 7 July, to help inform both the new 10-year Mental Health Plan and the new National Suicide Prevention Plan. It is seeking views from the public, as well as the sector, on what can be

improved within the current service, and what more can be done to prevent suicides – particularly in light of the pandemic which has led to record levels of people seeking treatment and accessing support.

Health and Social Care Secretary, Sajid Javid, said:

I know how devastating suicide can be and I am committed to making sure the NHS and voluntary sector services have the support they need.

We know many more people have been asking for help with their mental health over the last two years and we're publishing a Suicide Prevention Plan later this year to outline further support for those in need.

If you're struggling, please reach out for support – we're here to help.

Minister for Mental Health, Gillian Keegan, said:

The suicide prevention voluntary sector has played a crucial role in providing people with the help and support they need throughout the pandemic and I thank them for all they do.

Suicides are preventable tragedies when the right support and help is in place. I'm committed to continuing to support the sector and to do all we can to ensure people have the help they need.

This Mental Health Awareness Week, I want to be clear that there is support for those struggling – and if you need help, I encourage you to reach out.

The £5.4million of funding has been awarded to a wide range of organisations, including small community groups which play a vital role in responding to local needs, ensuring communities up and down the country can access suicide prevention support.

The support has predominantly been targeted at high-risk groups who may have struggled the most during the pandemic, such as people with a pre-existing mental illness, children and young people, and those from groups considered to be at higher risk of self-harm and suicide, such as people from Black communities, men, and people who are economically vulnerable.

The charities who've been awarded funding include:

- James' Place Charity, who've been awarded £283,968 and provide innovative, free, suicide prevention therapy to men over the age of 18 in Merseyside who are in suicidal crisis.
- Caribbean & African Health Network (CAHN), who've been awarded £41,599

and address the wider social determinants to reduce health inequalities for people from Caribbean & African communities, tackle taboos around suicide in black communities, raising awareness through workshops and campaigns as well as running virtual chat and support sessions for young people.

- Chasing the Stigma, who've been awarded £51,918 and provide the Hub of Hope, a mental health signposting tool accessed by over 22,000 people per month
- Papyrus, who've been awarded £151,815 and provide confidential support and advice specifically to young people struggling with thoughts of suicide, and anyone worried about a young person. This support is provided through their HOPELINEUK.

Ellen O'Donoghue, Chief Executive Officer at James' Place said:

At James' Place, our professional therapists work with men in suicidal crisis who have an active plan to end their lives or who have recently made an attempt. The DHSC's Suicide Prevention Fund has made a huge difference to the men we supported at our Liverpool centre in 2021 and 2022. We are now focussing on expanding our provision further, opening our second centre in London and three more beyond that, so that we can reach more men and help them to find hope for the future.

Charles Kwaku-Odoi, Chief Officer of the Caribbean & African Health Network (CAHN) said:

Suicides occurs in all communities although it is not a topic openly spoken about in ethnic communities often due to stigma, shame, cultural and religious issues. It is important that we combat the threat of increasing suicide in the Black community while encouraging people to seek help at the earliest opportunity.

The funding will enable us increase understanding and knowledge of practical suicide prevention techniques via different platforms helping people to spot the early signs and act appropriately. CAHN is committed to helping the Caribbean & African community tackle suicide. Our helpline (07710 022382) is open 9am to 9pm every day for those who need someone to talk to, feeling down or struggling.

Jake Mills, Chief Executive at Chasing the Stigma said:

The grant of £51,918 received from the DHSC's VCSE Suicide Prevention Grant Fund felt like a real lifeline for us at Chasing the Stigma in what was a year of unprecedented demand for our services. As a result of the pandemic, our Hub of Hope, the UK's biggest and most comprehensive mental health signposting tool, witnessed an exceptional increase in demand from people looking for

help and support across the UK. Although encouraging that more people were seeking and finding support, the significant pressure on our services came with its own challenges, including rising costs for maintaining and sustaining the platform. A challenge which has been made easier as a result of this grant.

Chasing the Stigma is a national mental health charity with lived experience at the very core of all we do, which is why we are pleased to see the announcement of a new suicide prevention strategy in England. We are eager to engage in any plans as a voice of those who have lived through the pain of suicide and suicidal ideation. We fundamentally believe that the experiences of people should play a vital role in any new initiatives to reduce suicide and we are committed to represent those voices wherever we can.

Ged Flynn, Chief Executive at Papyrus said:

PAPYRUS Prevention of Young Suicide was pleased to receive a grant of £151,815 from DHSC's VCSE Suicide Prevention Grant Fund. The grant has helped to offset some of the rising costs of our vital HOPELINEUK service which offers professional advice to young people experiencing thoughts of suicide, and to those who are concerned about them. The service met hugely increased demand during the first two years of the Coronavirus pandemic.

As a national charity, we welcome the announcement that there is to be a new suicide prevention strategy in England. We are keen to see the voice of young people at the heart of that initiative. After all, suicide remains the leading cause of death in those aged under 35. That's why strategic cross-Government and cross-society effort is so important. PAPYRUS continues to do all it can to work with others, and especially with young people themselves, to help save young lives.

This fund is on top of £10.2 million already given to mental health charities over the course of the pandemic, and will support suicide prevention organisations to continue to provide support to all those who need it.

More widely, the Mental Health Recovery Action Plan, backed by £500 million, has ensured the right support is being offered to people with a variety of mental health conditions who have been impacted most by the pandemic.

Mental Health Awareness Week is an annual event which provides an opportunity for the whole of the UK to focus on achieving good mental health. This year, the aim is to raise awareness of the impact of loneliness on people's mental wellbeing and the practical steps which can be taken to address it.

Notes to editors

- The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has made available £5.4

million for a grant fund to support suicide prevention voluntary community and social enterprise organisations across 2021/22. A portion of the grant fund was ring-fenced specifically to help support small community-led and user-led groups and organisations.

- Following an open tender process, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) were selected to administer the grant fund on DHSC's behalf.
- Applications were open from 2 December 2021 to 16 January 2022 for grants from the £5.4 million fund.
- Applications which passed eligibility and due diligence checks were reviewed by an independent expert panel which included people with lived experience.
- Following the panel, 113 organisations have been awarded funding. A full list is available [here](#)
- Last year, the government published the latest progress report against the National Suicide Prevention Strategy, which included a refreshed cross-government suicide prevention workplan to reduce suicides as far as possible