

## **APPG Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention**

**Annual Report: 22/01/2023 - 21/01/2024**

**May 2024**

This is not an official publication of the House of Commons or the House of Lords. It has not been approved by either House or its committees. All-Party Parliamentary Groups are informal groups of Members of both Houses with a common interest in particular issues. The views expressed in this report are those of the group.

### **Statement from Officers**

We confirm that the group has complied fully with the rules, conducted affairs with due diligence and complied with the regulations governing foreign governments.

### **Summary**

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention (APPG SSHP) is a cross-party group of Members of Parliament and Peers, working together to raise awareness within Parliament and encourage discussion and debate of all issues surrounding suicide and self-harm prevention.

Over the past year there has been some positive progress on suicide prevention, with the Government's publication of a new National Suicide Prevention Strategy, and the passage of the Online Safety Act. There is political consensus on the importance of suicide prevention, with frequent attention given to the issue in Parliament.

From January 2023 to January 2024, the APPG has held five events in Parliament, including private roundtables, well attended panel events and a meeting with the Minister for Mental Health ahead of the Suicide Prevention Strategy.

We have had strong engagement from external stakeholders including people with lived experience, bereaved families, charities, academics and service providers. We are particularly grateful to those with lived experience who continue to campaign tirelessly to for specific changes to prevent suicides.

In September 2023 we launched an inquiry into young people and suicide, focusing on the experiences of those ages 18 to 25, given the rising rates of suicide among this group. This followed the work of campaigners including 3 Dads Walking to bring attention to the issue of young suicides, as well as the stark statistics.

The purpose of this inquiry is to:

1. Develop Parliamentarians' understanding of young suicides and the support available to young people by hearing directly from people with lived experience
2. Publish recommendations and advocate for these policy changes in Parliament
3. Provide recommendations that support the implementation of the new National Suicide Prevention Strategy

As part of the inquiry, we launched a survey for two months where we heard from 274 respondents based in England, including 150 young people with lived experience of suicidal thoughts, feelings and attempts, and people of all ages who had been bereaved by the suicide of a young person. The APPG is also holding several evidence sessions with academics, practitioners, people with lived experience and Government representatives.

Following the changes to the APPG rules which came into force this year, as Chair I have worked with the Secretariat to ensure compliance. This includes reducing the number of Officers to four and increasing membership to 20. The Officers are now Liz Twist MP, Jason McCartney MP, Ian Levy MP and Kerry McCarthy MP.

Looking at the year ahead, we will be concluding the inquiry on young people and suicide, launching a report with a series of policy recommendations, based on the evidence sessions and survey results, which the group will then advocate for in Parliament. We also plan to hold an event to mark one year on from the National Suicide Prevention Strategy and review its progress and implementation.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Liz Twist.'.

Liz Twist MP

Chair of the APPG on Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention

## **Meetings Held**

### **7<sup>th</sup> March 2023: Addressing Male Suicide**

Suicide is the leading cause of death among men under 50 in the United Kingdom, and men account for three-quarters of all suicides. This roundtable brought together experts and politicians to discuss the reasons why men might be at higher risk of suicide, best practice initiatives and what can be done to better support men who may be at risk. The APPG agreed to continuing to push for funding for suicide prevention work in Parliament, write to the Speaker of the House to offer support for the Baton of Hope and contact the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care about work together on the upcoming suicide prevention strategy.

Speakers:

- Mubeen Bhutta, Head of Policy, Public Affairs and Campaigns, Samaritans
- Ellen O'Donoghue, CEO, James' Place
- Mike McCarthy, Co-founder, Baton of Hope
- Fiona Feeney, Support Manager, Mates in Mind
- Mark Brookes, office of Nick Fletcher MP, Chair of the APPG on Men and Boys

Parliamentarians: Liz Twist MP, Rachel Hopkins MP, Ian Paisley MP, Richard Burgon MP, Jason McCartney MP, Louise Haigh MP

### **10<sup>th</sup> May 2023: Annual General Meeting**

The APPG held the AGM with the election of Officers, and was then joined by Maria Caulfield MP, Minister for Mental Health, to discuss the upcoming National Suicide Prevention Strategy. Members put forward suggested areas of priority and raised issues including online safety, neurodivergent groups and barriers to support, gambling related harms, the call to create statutory legal duty of care for students in higher education and suicide prevention funding for local areas. Members discussed a workplan for the coming year, including a new inquiry focusing on young suicides with evidence from stakeholders.

Officers elected:

1. Liz Twist MP (Chair)
2. Jason McCartney MP (Vice-Chair)
3. Ian Levy MP (Vice-Chair)
4. Karin Smyth MP (Treasurer)
5. Kerry McCarthy MP
6. Sarah Olney MP
7. Richard Burgon MP
8. Sarah Green MP
9. Rachael Maskell MP

Parliamentarians: Liz Twist MP, Ian Levy MP, Kerry McCarthy MP, Minister Maria Caulfield MP, Richard Burgon MP, Jason McCartney MP, Sarah Green MP, Alex Cunningham MP

### **12th July 2023: Young People and Suicide Prevention**

According to the ONS (2018), suicide is the biggest killer of young people aged 16-24. In 2021, 611 deaths by suicide were registered for people aged 15-24 in England and Wales. This panel event focused on supporting young people and the campaign to put suicide prevention on the curriculum.

Speakers:

- Mike Palmer, Andy Airey, Tim Owen, 3 Dads Walking
- Lisa Roxby, Head of Marketing and Communications, Papyrus Prevention of Young Suicide
- Mark Foster, Co-founder and Managing Director, and Tom Marsh, Youth Mental Health Ambassador, Ellie's Angels
- Stephen Morgan MP, then Shadow Minister for Schools

Parliamentarians: Liz Twist MP, Dr Neil Hudson MP, Jason McCartney MP, Darren Henry MP, Stephen Morgan MP, Theresa Villiers MP, Baroness Finlay

### **12th September: Suicide Inequalities in Gypsy and Traveller Communities**

This joint event, together with the APPG for Gypsies, Travellers and Roma, focused the prevalence of suicide within Gypsy and Traveller communities and the underlying factors contributing to high suicide rates. Speakers highlighted the lack of inclusion of Gypsies and Travellers in suicide prevention work, and touched on models of good practice for engagement and service delivery.

Speakers:

- Josie O'Driscoll, Chief Officer at GATE Herts, and long-standing campaigner on suicide inequalities in Traveller communities
- Tyler Hatwell, Founder and Executive Director of Travellers Pride
- Rosie Hollinshead, Health Policy Officer at Friends, Families, Travellers
- Susannah Fenton, Volunteer at Samaritans Ware branch

Parliamentarians: Liz Twist MP, Mary Foy MP, Baroness Whitaker

### **13<sup>th</sup> December 2023: Inquiry on young people and suicide – 1<sup>st</sup> evidence session**

This scene setting session provided background to the issue, factors and themes linked to young people and suicide. The panel discussed key policy areas that the inquiry should focus on when it comes to prevention. This included the transition into adulthood, housing and employment, risk assessments, waiting times and service provision.

#### **Speakers:**

- Professor Ann John, Swansea University
- Dr Guy Northover, consultant child and adolescent psychiatrist and Finance Officer for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Faculty at the Royal College of Psychiatrists
- Dr Mark Ungless, Director of Data Insights, Mental Health Innovations/ Shout
- Kelly Thorpe, Head of Helpline Services, Papyrus

Parliamentarians: Liz Twist MP, Christina Rees MP, Andy McDonald MP, Barry Sheerman MP

### **Contact Details**

The secretariat of the APPG for Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention is provided by Samaritans.

Website: <https://www.samaritans.org/about-samaritans/research-policy/appg/>

If you have any questions about the APPG, please email [campaigning@samaritans.org](mailto:campaigning@samaritans.org). The Chair of the APPG, Liz Twist MP, can be contacted via [liz.twist.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:liz.twist.mp@parliament.uk).