

# Preventing suicide in community and custodial settings

Information for the public

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[www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

## Preventing suicide

In 2016, almost 6,000 people in the UK were recorded as taking their own lives. Anyone can become suicidal, but people in certain groups are known to be more at risk. These include men aged 35 to 49, people in prison or police custody, people who misuse drugs or alcohol, and family and friends of those who have died.

Many people who take their own lives are not in contact with mental health services. But some of them may have visited their GP or local A&E, or used helplines or support groups in the year before.

We want this guideline to make sure every chance is taken to help people at risk of suicide by:

- Helping the NHS, social care, local authorities, emergency services, criminal justice and other services to work together on ways to spot who is most at risk.
- Making sure people know when and how to get help, including if they are thinking of taking their own life or because they have been affected by suicide.
- Ensuring that staff most likely to come into contact with people at risk of suicide are trained to spot the signs and provide help.
- Encouraging staff and the public to talk to someone who they think is having suicidal thoughts.
- Improving the methods used to discourage people from suicide, for example by putting barriers on bridges or cliffs, and placing staff at potential danger sites.

## Making decisions together

Those who are responsible for people's mental wellbeing in your area should listen to the views and needs of people who have felt suicidal, attempted suicide or been affected by a suicide. They should take their needs into account when designing and improving the support available and any other measures needed to discourage people from taking their own lives.

## Where can I find out more?

[NHS Choices](#) has more information about what to do if you feel suicidal.

The organisations below can give you more advice and support.

- [Campaign Against Living Miserably](#) (CALM, focused on male suicide), 0800 58 58 58
- [PAPYRUS](#), Prevention of Young Suicide, 0800 068 4141
- [Samaritans](#), 116 123
- [Suicide Bereaved Network](#), 0300 999 0003
- [Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide](#), 0300 111 5065

NICE is not responsible for the content of these websites.

To share an experience of care you have received, contact your local [Healthwatch](#).

We wrote this guideline with people who have been affected by suicide, as well as a range of other experts. The latter includes people who specialise in suicide prevention and work in public health and residential custodial and detention settings. All the decisions are based on the best research available.

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