

# **chooselife**

A national strategy and action plan  
to prevent suicide in Scotland

## **Background to Local Action Plan**

### **North Ayrshire**

**July 2005**

## Local Information

### Local Context

1. North Ayrshire covers an area of 340 square miles and has a population of approx. 139,000. It covers both urban and rural areas and encompasses 2 islands – Cumbrae and the Isle of Arran. In line with national trends the population figures are moving towards an ageing population with 16% of the population over 65 at present.

2. Key geographical areas within North Ayrshire are the town of Irvine with surrounding development of Kilwinning. Ardrossan, Saltcoats and Stevenston make up the “3 Towns” area along the coast. There are further north along the coast the popular resorts of Largs and Fairlie and the area reaches as far as Skelmorlie. More centrally away from the coast are Kilbirnie, Dalry and Beith making up the area known as the Garnock Valley. The islands of Cumbrae and Arran make up the full geographical picture.

3. There is a range of services, projects and initiatives that exist in North Ayrshire which will have an impact on the prevention of suicide. Mainstream services include Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Community Mental Health Teams, Psychiatric Liaison Service and Social Services such as those working with Looked After and Accommodated children. Similarly core health services (G.P’s, Health Visitors, School and Public Health nurses, Hospital staff etc.) will come into contact with those at risk even if suicidal behaviour is not the first reason for health service contact.

4. A number of local initiatives play a direct role in promoting good mental health and supporting suicide prevention. These reflect the development of good partnership working and multi-agency support, which exists in North Ayrshire. The LEAP project provides a health service directly to Looked After and Accommodated young people and has been recently mainlined following its initial pilot funded through Health Improvement Funding. This also applies to Primary Care development posts in Mental Health across North, South and East Ayrshire. Other significant projects include the Stress Management Initiative (voluntary) which was developed out of work with carers and those with severe and enduring mental health problems and attracts a medley of funding and resources. There is also a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Forum which is taking forward actions related to domestic abuse issues. These are not exhaustive but give a flavour of the diversity of initiatives which exist.

5. There are a range of voluntary and community sector organisations which provide support and resources through their core work and highlight the need for holistic and community approaches to health and well-being. Many provide much needed listening and counselling support such as The Samaritans, Copeline, S.A.M.H., Richmond Fellowship and Counselling Ayrshire. Also there are organisations that work with specific target groups such as the North Ayrshire Carers Centre and Women’s Aid as well as local support and advice groups such as ADHD support. There is also recognition of the role that pastoral services, such as the Churches, play in supporting individuals and families. There are 2 Healthy Living

Centres (Three Towns Healthy Living Community and Radio City in Kilbirnie) in North Ayrshire which both contribute a range of locally based activity on health issues and the Fullarton Health House in Irvine which has a long history of neighbourhood based health work.

6. It is also recognised that many strategic initiatives, which foster joined up and partnership working may also focus on empowering local communities to make more informed choices. Particularly work with young people such as developing advocacy and children’s rights, which has taken place in North Ayrshire. The rolling out of the Integrated Community School Programme has also enabled innovative projects and activities to be developed.

7. In North Ayrshire, as across Scotland, cognisance has been made of the emerging statutory changes particularly in Mental health with the implementation of the new Mental Health Act. Its far-reaching changes will impact on the access to services for those who may be at risk of suicide.

### Statistics and Trends

8. In North Ayrshire in 2004 there were a total of 22 deaths by intentional self-harm and undetermined origin. (17 men and 5 women)  
(16 were intentional and 6 were of undetermined origin)  
These figures are up on 2003 when there were 19 deaths in total.  
The rate in North Ayrshire is 16.2 per 100,000 population, which compares to 12.5 in East Ayrshire and 11.6 in South Ayrshire.

9. Most recent figures we have locally which indicate the level of deliberate self-harm (not ending in fatality) are that between Sept. 2003 and Sept. 2004 there were 1235 referrals to the Psychiatric Liaison Service for self-harming incidents.

10. Also the Psychiatric Liaison Service reported “significant” attempts at suicide as follows between Sept. 2002 and Sept. 2003.

|                     |             |
|---------------------|-------------|
| Crosshouse Hospital | 74 from 307 |
| Ayr Hospital        | 38 from 176 |

11. It is worth noting that many services collect data in different ways and many were not able to extricate significant data at all, so there is an element of inconsistency around data collection and recording both locally and nationally.

### Community Planning in North Ayrshire

12. North Ayrshire has a Community Plan 2000-2010, which has at its heart the vision to have a “ socially inclusive community where individuals have the opportunity to achieve their full potential”

13. The Choose Life Steering Group link directly to the Health and Well-being Group and its sister group the Joint Health improvement Plan Voluntary Sector group. These both sit as 1 of the 5 thematic groups of the Community Planning structure.

**14.** The Joint Health Improvement Plan of North Ayrshire has a strategic aim to “improve mental health and well-being” and makes specific mention of developing community based initiatives as well as highlighting young people who self-harm and looked after and accommodated young people as specific target groups. Joint action within workplaces is also highlighted as a target area for action. The JHIP is about to undergo a significant review following the recent agreement for North Ayrshire’s Regeneration Outcome Agreement.

## Action Plan Team Profile

**Full Name (of Planning Group):** Choose Life Steering Group

**Remit:** To take forward the North Ayrshire Choose Life Action Plan  
To support and advise the Choose Life Implementation manager

**Chair Social Services**

**Name:** David MacRitchie  
**Designation:** Manager-Children and Families  
**Organisation:** NAC Social Services

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Number and dates of Meetings held 2003-2004:</b> | 5/9/03, 9/10/03, 10/11/03<br>10/2/04, 8/3/04, 19/4/04, 5/5/04, 25/5/04, 29/6/04, 17/8/04, 6/9/04,<br>4/10/04,3/11/04,1/12/04,17/1/05,23/2/05,11/4/05,9/5/05,13/5/05,<br>3/8/05<br><br>20 meetings to date |
|---|---|

### Members

| Name                   | Designation  | Organisation                     |
|------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| Angela Ingram          | Project Co-ordinator   | 3TownsHealthyLiving Community    |
| Bill Simpson           | TeamLeader, Youth Services                                   | NAC Education Services           |
| Nancy Docherty         | Assistant Principal Officer Community Care Adults Addictions | NAC Social Services              |
| Marianne Kilgour       | Service Manager Mental Health                                | NAC Social Services              |
| Jane Churchill         | Development Officer  | Volunteer Centre                 |
| June Cotton            | Member   | NA Community Care Forum          |
| Morag MacDonald        | Mental Health Services-Development Co-ordinator              | NHS Ayrshire and Arran           |
| Bobby Sturgeon         | Project Manager  | Fullarton Community Health House |
| Marella O'Neill        | Lead Public Health Practitioner (Acting)                     | NHS Ayrshire and Arran           |
| Scott Irvine           | Police Liaison Officer                                       | NAC                              |
| Father Matthew McManus | Parish Priest  | St.PeterinChainsChurch Ardrossan |
| Margaret Bowers        | Team Leader, CMHT  | NHS Ayrshire and Arran           |
| David MacRitchie       | Manager-Children and Families                                | NAC Social Services              |
| Anne Beck              | Chairperson  | Ayrshire Samaritans              |

| <b>Name</b>  | <b>Designation</b>            | <b>Organisation</b>    |
|--|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| May Simpson  | Service Manager(Training)     | NAC, Social Services   |
| Mick Quirk   | Nurse Therapist CAMHS         | NHS Ayrshire and Arran |
| Nicky Campbell   | Assistant Service Manager     | NAC, Social Services   |
| Morag McBride  | HomelessPrevention<br>Manager | NAC, Property Services |
| Sarah Watts  | ChooseLife Implementation     | NAC Social Services    |
| Eleanor Kerr<br>(left Nov 2004)                            | Doctor (CAMHS)                | NHS Ayrshire and Arran |
| Nan Newall<br>(left Sept. 2004)<br>(returned June<br>2005) | Health Improvement<br>Officer | NHS Ayrshire and Arran |

**Original Members-not returned**

|                 |                                   |   |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Charles McBreen | Senior Safety Advisor             | North Ayrshire Council                    |
| Terry Kane      | Team Leader – Criminal<br>Justice | North Ayrshire Council Social<br>Services |
|                 |                                   |   |

## **Linking with National Policy at local level**

**“Improving Health-The Challenge” Document**”- North Ayrshire recognises that there are clear links to the promotion of resilience in young people and the recognition that mental health is seldom free-standing.

**Doing well by People with Depression** (Co-ordinator attends Pan-Ayrshire Group). There are now strong overlaps and links with the work of this project particularly through a Pan Ayrshire Training Forum which seeks to co-ordinate and avoid duplication in training around mental health including ASIST and Mental Health First Aid. As a result in North Ayrshire ,Social Services are considering changing their Mental Health Awareness training to Mental Health First Aid.

**Integrated Community Schools.** Links are strong with the local team and roll out of this approach especially through the development of a schools pack. There are also connections with the **Health Promoting Schools** agenda.

**“See me”** campaign-resources and material are frequently distributed via partners and at Choose Life events.

**“Breathing Space”**-resources and material distributed via partners and at Choose Life events.

**Mental Health Act**-much consultation and activity is closely linked to the implementation of this act e.g. support to Independent Advocacy,