



Suicide Policy

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Regulations and Standards:

Suicide Act 1961.

Preventing suicide in England; A cross-government outcomes strategy to save lives. The Children's Homes Regulations 2015:

- Regulation 12 – the protection of children standard.
- Regulation 40 – notification of a serious event.

Definition:

'The action of killing oneself intentionally' (Oxford Dictionaries)

The Office for National Statistics definition of suicide includes, all deaths from intentional self-harm for persons aged 10 and over, and deaths where the intent was undetermined for those aged 15 and over'. Furthermore, The Office for National Statistics says 'deaths from an event of undetermined intent in 10 to 14-year-olds are not included because although for older teenagers and adults we assume that in these deaths the harm was self-inflicted, for younger children it is not clear whether this assumption is appropriate. Deaths from an event of undetermined intent cannot be applied to children due to the possibility that these deaths were caused by unverifiable accidents, neglect, or abuse'.

For this reason, exact statistics for deaths of children via suicide are difficult to determine.

Context:

Suicide is a concern nationally, within and outside of our sector and the effects can be long-lasting and serious.

The Office for National Statistics highlights the following:

In 2021 for example:



- 5219 suicides were registered in 2021*. This is 307 more than in 2020.
- The overall suicide rate was 10.5 per 100,000**, compared to 10.0 per 100,000** in 2020, and 10.8 per 100,000** in 2019.
- The male suicide rate was 15.8 per 100,000**, compared to a female suicide rate of 5.5 per 100,000**.
- Males aged 50-54 were found to have the highest suicide rate (22.5 per 100,000).
- There is regional variation in the suicide rates. The Northeast of England once again had the highest suicide rate (14.1. per 100,000**), with the Northwest of England seeing a significant increase in suicide rate in 2021 (12.9 per 100,000**), compared to 2020 (10.1 per 100,000**).

It is important to note that suicide rates are based on date of registration of death, which happens after an inquest and can sometimes take more than a year.

Rates are age-standardised

Why Does Suicide Happen:

Mental illness and suicidal thoughts can affect anyone, of any age, of any background, at any time. Like with physical illnesses, people do not choose to have a mental health problem. And they need the appropriate care to get better.

Mental illness and suicidal thoughts are common issues for young people.

It can be difficult to know if a child is suffering as they often keep it to themselves, but we can spot some of the signs and symptoms.

Depression and Anxiety:

Everyone feels down sometimes, but depression is more than this. People with depression feel sad for long stretches at a time – and this can be experienced by young people as well as adults.

This is similar with anxiety. Everyone feels nervous from time to time. But some people find it harder to control anxiety.

Children can find it especially difficult to express their feelings and open up to others. If they are suffering from depression, they may feel like there is no hope and find it difficult to imagine ever being happy again. Or, if they are highly anxious, they may be even more worried about talking to someone about how they feel.

Suicidal Thoughts:

Some children may feel like there is no hope or might think about ending their life.

Whilst thinking about suicide is relatively common, very few young people will actually attempt to take their own lives. However, even having suicidal thoughts clearly shows someone is unhappy and needs help and support.

It can be difficult to understand what causes suicidal feelings, but they are often triggered



by upsetting experiences such as:

- living with mental illness
- experiencing abuse
- being bullied
- bereavement after losing a loved one.
- being forced to marry
- having very low self-worth

Signs and symptoms of mental health issues:

All children are different but some of the common signs of mental health problems in children include:

- becoming withdrawn from friends and family.
- persistent low mood and unhappiness.
- tearfulness and irritability.
- worries that stop them from carrying out day to day tasks.
- sudden outbursts of anger directed at themselves or others.
- loss of interest in activities that they used to enjoy.
- problems eating or sleeping.

The effect on others:

If a child is struggling with their mental health or having suicidal thoughts, it is bound to have a big effect on them, and others who are close to that person, including family members, friends, and staff members.

Preventative Steps:

As professionals it is important that HND Children's Care Ltd Staff are confident and skilled in identifying underlying concerns / problems and seek appropriate help.

Help could be in the form of simply talking to the child through the domain of key worker sessions, for example.

Help could also be sourced from the child's GP, Childline and the NSPCC possibly. All staff at the HND Children's Care Ltd are well trained to identify potential signs and symptoms that may lead to suicide; staff are expected to be conscientious in their approach to training.

This training includes:

- Bullying.
- Self-Harm.
- Safeguarding.
- CSE.
- First Aid.
- Harmful Sexualised Behaviours.



In instances where children within our care are exhibiting worrying traits or are admitted with suicidal tendencies then additional staff training will be provided as mandatory.

HND Children's Care Ltd staff are regularly supervised, and team meetings are also undertaken regularly; these forums provide an opportunity to reflect and identify any potentially worrying signs and from this, thorough assessments can be introduced to identify how we will keep children and young people safe, often in collaboration with other external agencies / professionals.

It is important for HND Children's Care Ltd staff as professionals to ensure that we are transparent in our practices and where appropriate share information with other relevant professionals to ensure the safety of the child (both physical and emotional) is paramount.

In the situation where we suspect that a child is suffering, whether from being bullied, having a mental illness, or having experienced abuse, it is important that we provide risk assessments to ensure the safety of both the child and others; this could include removing any harmful objects from the area or providing increased levels of support and supervision.

It is essential that all information regarding signs, symptoms, accidents, near issues and incidents, for example, are accurately and thoroughly recorded and shared with the appropriate persons (colleagues and external professionals for example)

How to Respond in the Event of Suicide:

For the HND Children's Care Ltd services that are residential in nature and are registered with Ofsted; it is important that we follow the guidance in the Children's Home's Regulations 2015 and inform the following person/s:

Notification of a serious event 40. -(1) If a child dies, the registered person must without delay notify -

- (a) HMCI.
- (b) the placing authority.
- (c) the Secretary of State (if the Secretary of State is not the placing authority).
- (d) the local authority in whose area the children's home is located (if that local authority is not the placing authority).
- (e) the clinical commissioning group (as defined in section 14D of the National Health Service Act 2006) for the area in which the home is located.

All services should ensure the following are contacted promptly:

- Police
- Social services (if appropriate)
- The business regulator (Ofsted or CQC for example)
- Family of the child



- The business owner and, Responsible Individual (if appropriate)
- All staff members.

It is likely that in the event of suicide, the after affects will be hard felt and significant.

Where possible the HND Children's Care Ltd will make every effort to support family and friends as best as possible; the staff will likely also need support and in this situation the HND Children's Care Ltd may provide counselling for staff members whom require this.

The business may suffer as a result of any death in both the short and long term for a variety of reasons (many of which will be difficult to foretell); any affects will be managed by the HND Children's Care Ltd Director (or another person of whom the HND Children's Care Ltd Director nominates) and the Business Continuity Management Plan may be required to be initiated if reasonable and appropriate.

There may be scrutiny of the business at this time, and it is likely that the business will be under a spotlight (from the media for example) – at this time no information should be passed outside of the business without the express permission of the HND Children's Care Ltd Director (Confidentiality and Data Protection will still apply); furthermore, only the HND Children's Care Ltd Director will be permitted (unless delegated otherwise) to speak with any external media agencies.

It is important to ensure that all actions and events taken post incident are accurately and thoroughly recorded, this includes incident reports, telephone logs, daily logs, safeguarding concerns etc. These records will likely be required post event.

END.