# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Supporting people bereaved or affected by suicide in Wales**  |
| **DATE**  | **10 September 2024** |
| **BY** | **Sarah Murphy MS, Minister for Mental Health and Early Years** |

Preventing suicide and ensuring appropriate, timely and compassionate support is available for anyone affected by suicide is a priority for me, and for the Welsh Government.

Bereavement after suicide can be devastating and it is vital everyone affected can access support – many people bereaved by suicide may need specific, targeted support. I am therefore proud to officially launch the [National Advisory and Liaison Service](https://nals.cymru/), which is designed to respond to the specific needs of people who are exposed, affected or bereaved by suicide.

We have commissioned the Jac Lewis Foundation to deliver this new service, which will ensure a consistent, timely and proactive offer of support to people who are affected by the tragic loss of someone from suicide; to those whose death may be unexplained or a suspected suicide.

This service forms part of a wider response to ensure people can access the support they need at any time or at any point following a bereavement.

I am also publishing [new guidance](https://www.gov.wales/responding-people-bereaved-or-affected-suicide) for organisations to help them better understand their role in supporting people bereaved or affected by suicide so those who are affected receive timely, compassionate and effective support where and when they need it.

The guidance also aligns with our aspirations to prevent future deaths by suicide. Suicide is preventable and never inevitable, and we all have a role to play. To find out more about what you can do to have a potentially life-saving conversation with someone please visit: [Suicide Awareness e-module - NHS SSHP](https://www.sshp.wales/en/suicide-awareness-module/).

I would like to thank everyone who has drawn on their own personal experiences to inform our approach. Your contributions in shaping the guidance and the new service will help ensure that others who find themselves in similarly tragic circumstances get the support they need and deserve.

I would also like to express my thanks to the Jac Lewis Foundation, the NHS Executive and the suicide and self-harm prevention programme who have contributed to the development of the guidance and the service.

The National Advisory and Liaison Service and the new guidance represent the next steps in offering support to all those impacted by suicide. Our wider programme of work to prevent suicide and self-harm in Wales includes the suicide and self-harm prevention programme in the NHS Executive and the Real Time Suspected Suicide Surveillance programme.

We are aiming to publish a summary of the consultation responses to the draft *Suicide and Self-harm Prevention Strategy* in the autumn.

The launch of the new service and the bereavement guidance follows the publication of the latest [ONS data](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/suicidesintheunitedkingdom/2023#suicides-by-country-and-region) about suicide deaths in England and Wales. The figures show there were 386 suicide deaths in Wales (14 deaths per 100,000 people) in 2023, which was an increase from 2022 and the highest number reported since 2013.

This statement is being issued during recess in order to keep members informed. Should members wish me to make a further statement or to answer questions on this when the Senedd returns I would be happy to do so.