



# **Multi-Agency Protocol for Suicide Prevention Assessment Tool (SPAT) Protocol**

**THE MID AND WEST WALES  
SAFEGUARDING BOARD**

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## **Introduction/ Overview**

Public Health Wales (2018), documentation refers to suicide as a leading cause of death, particularly among young people and amounts to about twice the number killed in road accidents. A statistical report produced by the Samaritans (2018), details that over all age groups, there were 360 deaths by suicide in Wales in 2017, showing an increase on the previous year's statistics. Amongst 15-19 year olds the report details an increase in the rate of suicides for 15-19 year olds in 2017 compared with the data for the previous 2 years.

Across the region there have been a number of tragic incidents whereby children and young people have died by Suicide. A common theme emerging from Child Practice Reviews both within the region and at a National level has been the need for a consistent approach when children and young people are presenting with suicidal ideation. The SPAT protocol seeks to establish a parity of response across the Mid and West Wales Regional Safeguarding Board for Children (CYSUR) region when a child or young person under the age of 18 presents to a professional: having attempted suicide or displaying suicidal ideation.

In a partnership between Hywel Dda Primary Mental Health Team and Pembrokeshire Local Authority, a Suicide Prevention Assessment Tool and a Suicide Prevention Action Team have been established since 2009. At the time of writing this protocol (January 2019) over 600 practitioners have received training in the use of the SPAT. There is however an appetite across the region to replicate the work that has been undertaken in Pembrokeshire and this protocol seeks to establish a framework which will enable this to occur.

## **Strategic Context**

In 2017 "A desk based review of probable suicides amongst children and young adults for Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Board" written by Dr Tom Slater, Cardiff University was published, having been commissioned by CYSUR. The first recommendation of the report relates to Training and Support and suggests that there is a need to train professionals in the statutory and third sector to support people with suicidal ideation. The recommendation also states that:

*"Where CAMHS and AMHS are supporting an individual, other services should ensure that there are working in therapeutic alignment with the support being provided"*

(Slater, 2017, p.7)

The development of the SPAT tool and associated training is consistent with a number of key policy documents:

- Together for Mental Health Delivery Plan: 2016 – 19 (Welsh Government)
- Responding to Issues of Self Harm and Thoughts of Suicide in Young People – Guidance for Teachers, Professionals, Volunteers and Youth Services. (Welsh Government September 2019).

- Talk to me 2 (Suicide and Self Harm Prevention Strategy for Wales 2015-2020, Welsh Government)
- Mind over Matter – A report on the step change needed in emotional and mental health support for children and young people in Wales (National Assembly for Wales, April 2018).
- ‘Everybody’s Business – a report on suicide prevention in Wales’ (National Assembly for Wales, December 2018)
- Successful Futures (Donaldson, February 2015).

Ceredigion have been piloting the CAMHS in-reach project, focussing on early identification and intervention, providing support to teachers to assist them to understand emotional and mental health issues and forging more productive working relationships between school and CAMHS in the county. The SPAT complements this approach, providing clarity and direction to children and young people in crisis.

### **Aims and Objectives**

The aim of this protocol is to establish a safe framework to support professionals working with children and young people who are suicidal or have or are intending to self-harm. The SPAT tool and the accompanying training seeks to upskill staff and provides a clear step by step pathway of support for professionals working with such children/young people. The pathway is presented as a flow chart which is visual and easy to follow. The key contact information on the SPAT tool is specific to each local authority area.

The overall aim is therefore to ensure that children and young people at risk of suicide and self-harm are supported appropriately to reduce risk and support their wellbeing.

### **Scope of the Protocol**

The protocol is relevant to all agencies in the CYSUR area, including the third sector, where staff work directly with Children and Young People aged 0-18. The protocol therefore covers four local authority areas: Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and Powys, along with two Health Board areas, namely Hywel Dda University Health Board and Powys Teaching Health Board.

### **Training**

The provision of training is a key component of the SPAT process and the SPAT tool/flowchart along with SPAT guidance card (Appendix 2) will only be made available to those who have undertaken the relevant training. The training has been formulated by the CAMHS Primary Mental Health Team. At present there are a small number of experienced trainers. It is envisaged that suitable additional staff from

within the Primary Mental Health Team alongside other suitably experienced staff can receive training to enable wider delivery.

Training will be delivered up to three times per year and the duration is half a day. The training is consistent with the recommendations of the afore-mentioned key policy documents and covers learning around suicide and self-harm. Participants receive a certificate at the end of training and training can form part of a Level 3 Safeguarding module. The relatively short duration of the training recognises that many key staff working with children cannot be released from post to undertake more lengthy training.

Key groups of frontline staff who require this training will be identified at a strategic level.

Participants on the training course will be required to complete an evaluation form. Evaluations will be analysed by the training providers.

### **Governance/ Accountability**

Each Local Authority will replicate the structure established within Pembrokeshire, where a Suicide Prevention Action Team comprised of multi-agency key staff meet on a quarterly basis to plan and evaluate. This group reports to the Mid and West Wales Regional Safeguarding Board Policy and Procedures Sub-Group.

### **Information Sharing Protocol**

Professionals should be mindful of, and work in accordance with, The Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Boards' Information Sharing Protocol for the Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults within the West Wales region. This does not in any way remove or replace the statutory obligation to refer to the Local Authority whenever a concern is identified.

### **Review**

This protocol will be reviewed by the CYSUR Policies and Procedures Sub-Group on an annual basis.

## Appendix 1

### **Bibliography:**

Donaldson, G, (2015) Successful Futures – Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales. Welsh Government.

Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Board (2019), Information Sharing Protocol for the Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults.

National Assembly for Wales (2018), Mind over Matter – A report on the step change needed in emotional and mental health support for children and young people in Wales.

National Assembly for Wales (2018), Everybody's Business – a report on suicide prevention in Wales.

National Public Health Service for Wales (2008), Suicide in Wales: data to support implementation of the national action plan to reduce suicide and self-harm in Wales.

Samaritans (Dec 2018), Suicide Statistics Report – latest statistics for the UK and Republic of Ireland.

Slater, T (2017), A desk based review of probable suicides amongst children and young adults for Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Board, Cardiff University.

Welsh Government (2016), Together for Mental Health Delivery Plan: 2016 – 19

Welsh Government (2015), Talk to me 2 Suicide and Self Harm Prevention Strategy for Wales 2015-2020.

Responding to Issues of Self Harm and Thoughts of Suicide in Young People – Guidance for Teachers, Professionals, Volunteers and Youth Services. Guidance document no: 249/2019, issued September 2019.

# SUICIDE PREVENTION REFERRAL PATHWAY TOOL FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE UNDER 18

**EXPERIENCING  
SUICIDAL IDEATION**

**HAS ACTED ON  
SUICIDAL THOUGHTS**

**KEEP YOUNG PERSON SAFE  
REASSURE - DO NOT LEAVE ALONE**

**999  
A & E**  
(ACCIDENT & EMERGENCY)

Contact  
Parents/carers  
unless to do so  
would cause  
increased harm

**CONTACT**  
↙ ↘

Contact  
Parents/carers  
unless to do so  
would cause  
increased harm

During Office Hours  
9am – 5pm  
Contact CAMHS  
01267674450  
SOCIAL SERVICES  
Pembs 01437776444  
Ceredigion 01545574000  
Powys 01597 827666  
Carms 01554742322

If a young person refuses help  
and you fear for their safety  
phone the police

Do not leave the young  
person alone

If a young person runs away  
phone the police

If there are other safeguarding concerns contact –  
CAMHS – 01267 674450. Pembrokeshire -01437776444,  
Ceredigion – 01545574000 Powys –01597826246,  
Carmarthenshire - 01554742322



**DO's**

- Gather facts e.g means of attempt.
- In case of overdose establish what has been taken and how much and arrange Accident and Emergency admission.
- Remove any means of self-harm if possible.
- Record incident – date and time chronologically – report FACTS only!
- After the incident seek support from your line manager.



## Appendix 3

### Wallet Guidelines card

#### **Suicide Prevention Assessment Tools - Guidelines**

- Ask question. "Do you want to die/kill yourself?"
- Ask about Plan - Assess risk of plan
- Intent – How serious is the thought, is there a time scale, have they acted on their thoughts
- Keep child/young person safe. Never leave child alone
- Follow your safeguarding procedures
- Contact Parent/Guardian if safe to do so
- For advice contact Single Point of Contact CAMHS 01267 674450  
9 to 5 Monday to Friday.
- After 5pm (out of hours) contact GP on 111 or A&E if concern is high