



South West
Academic Health
Science Network



Zero Suicide Collaborative



Over the preceding five years the South West has had high and increasing rates of suicide with no regional group looking at suicide prevention.

Following the success of The Detroit Project, a US-based Zero Suicide Initiative using improvement methodology, the South West (SW) Zero Suicide Collaborative was born, bringing together service providers, emergency responders and charitable organisations. The collaborative was initially funded in 2014 by the Strategic Clinical Network, with the SW AHSN providing further funding in 2015 to allow it to continue its excellent work.

Challenge identified and actions taken:

In October 2014 a launch event was held which brought together South West service users, providers and emergency responders with Public Health England and charities for the first time ever.

The SW Zero Suicide Collaborative brought the rigour of process driven improvement methodology to the task, which had previously not been utilised.

Five two-day learning events were held across the region with the purpose of:

- Networking – proving valuable for some groups previously working in isolation.
- Sharing knowledge - people working in suicide prevention were able to train local groups e.g. rangers working in known suicide hotspots how to identify suicidal behaviour.
- Training – people were offered training in Institute of Healthcare Improvement (IHI) quality improvement.

Service users were involved throughout to check projects and methodology being used had relevance to them.

Impacts/Outcomes

- Letters of Hope – written by service users, carers and service providers aimed at those who are at suicide point, signposting to statutory services and offering a way forward and hope.
- Local Hotspots – RNLI, Police, Ambulance Trusts, Fire Services, Public Health England, National Trust, Samaritans and local authorities came together and successfully lobbied for information on how to seek help to be made available at key access points to known suicide destinations e.g. natural barriers were planted rather than fencing off the key areas.
- St Austell Brewery – The “Don’t flush your feelings away” campaign targeted middle-aged men who don’t talk about their feelings and are a high suicide group. The campaign was rolled out at 130 pubs and received lots of positive media widening the reach of the campaign.
- Cornwall Radio – after the publicity around the St Austell Brewery campaign, a regular monthly slot which included a phone-in was initiated. It covered

mental health topics and looked at raised issues as well as signposting people to help. Radio Devon have now also got two psychiatrists who are planning to cover topics such as violence in mental health as special on-air programmes.

“The Collaborative has shown that no life should be written off, and with the right support and intervention no life needs to be.” - Dr Adrian James, local forensic psychiatrist and chair of SW Mental Health Collaborative.

Tips for adoption

Engage early and often with the whole microcosm of support providers, statutory services, charities and service users and start to learn from each other.

Adopt the rigour of quality improvement so you can track change and measure what is working. Never forget that every life is precious.

Plans for the future

The SW Zero Suicide Collaborative is exploring the possibility of a permanent home within the Devon Partnership NHS Trust. The SW AHSN is helping the Initiative to look at future sustainability options.

Patients and the Public

The project enabled the development of collaborative behaviours cutting across all organisational barriers and included service users in every stage of project design and delivery.

Which national clinical or policy priorities does this example address?

- Promote health equality & best practice, speed up adoption of innovation into practice to improve clinical outcomes, build a culture of partnership & collaboration
- Mental Health & Mental Health Crisis Care

For more information call 01392 247903 or email info@swahsn.com