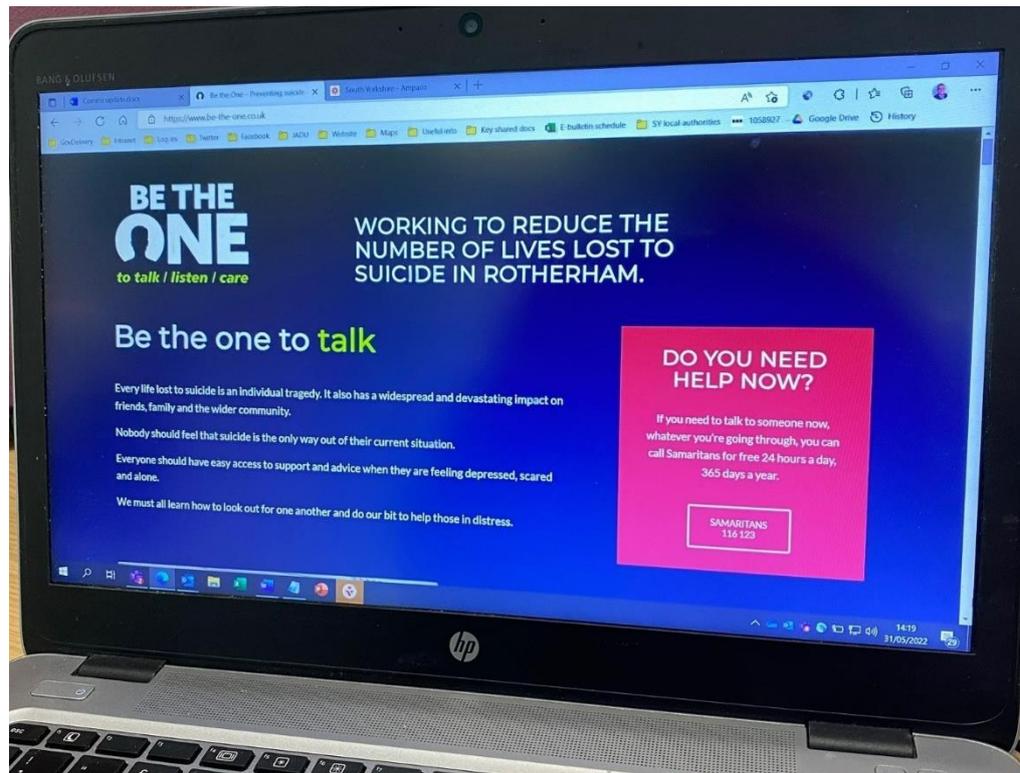


## Case study: Training staff across the partnership on self-harm and suicide prevention awareness



Taking action to prevent suicide and self-harm is one of the board's priority areas and part of the work ongoing to enable all Rotherham people enjoy the best possible mental health and wellbeing and have a good quality of life. This includes awareness raising campaigns across the borough, such as the Be the One campaign, as well as the delivery of training to partner staff. This work was delivered under the Suicide Prevention and Self-Harm Action Plan 2020-22.

The latest suicide data shows that Rotherham has seen a small decrease in suicides for the period 2018-2020 from 2017- 2019, but the Rotherham's rate is still significantly higher than the rate for England at 10.4 per 100,000. Males still account for most deaths in Rotherham.

Between April 2021 and March 2022, council staff delivered training to over 100 people across the partnership to increase awareness on self-harm and suicide prevention. While the pandemic has disrupted the face-to-face programme of suicide prevention and self-harm training which was planned, a solution was sought to deliver these courses in a way which achieves the same learning outcomes whilst keeping participants safe. Virtual courses for suicide prevention and mental health first aid have been offered to all partner organisations with an emphasis on the voluntary sector, police and primary care. A second group of staff were trained as part of the Self Harm Train the Trainer project. After being signed off they deliver this awareness training to either staff or parents/carers.

- Over 80 people from across the partnership (targeting Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), police and primary care as priority groups) attended virtual suicide prevention training courses
- Self-Harm Awareness sessions have been run by Early Help staff for parents and carers.
- In November and December, the PHS lead for suicide prevention and Mental Health Clinical Specialist (Safer Neighbourhood Team) delivered 4 suicide prevention sessions for RMBC Revs and Benefits Teams and a VCS community organisation.
- 2 suicide awareness sessions were delivered during Safeguarding awareness week in November by the PHS Lead for suicide and RMBC Adult Safeguarding Lead. These were attended by staff from across the partnership.
- Virtual Youth and Adult Mental Health First Aid courses attended by partner organisations.

Feedback from the suicide prevention training highlighted the impact of the training on attendees in raising their confidence and ability to support vulnerable people and those at risk of self-harm and suicide:

*I feel more confident in the knowledge of being able to signpost any potential person who may have suicidal ideations and have a better understanding of how to deal with any given situation.*

*This session has given me more confidence to [talk to someone in crisis] and do it effectively until I can get the person in contact with the appropriate professional help. I've got a much better understanding of what to say to try and establish a connection with them and try and bring them back from the risk of acting on their thoughts at that time.*

*Having the time to listen to someone who is experiencing these suicidal thoughts and the importance of actively listening to them showing empathy and useful ways to connect to that person to a point of safety planning to reduce the risks.*

*I can confidently say that the training helped my team enormously to better understand the pathways to support for vulnerable customers. My team are responsible for the recovery of Council Tax debt and actions that are often at an advanced stage. As debt can be a common trigger for customers suffering with their mental health it is critical that my team is equipped with the knowledge of where to go to help such customers and the training provided that reassurance. (Revenues, Benefits & Payments, RMBC)*

*Safeguarding and Wellbeing is an item on every Team Meeting we have. Before this training the majority of meetings saw staff articulate their worries about calls where a customer may be severely distressed or expressing suicidal thoughts.*

*Now, it is thankfully an item where more often than not, staff have no worries to raise and on the occasion where a staff member has had a call like this, they have dealt with it much better and utilised the additional tools/guides that were made available. (Revenues, Benefits & Payments, RMBC)*