



Department of
Health

An Roinn Sláinte

Mánnystrie O Poustie

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REVIEW OF PROTECT LIFE 2

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Date: 5 Dec 2023

Version: 4.0

Signed off: 19 Dec 2023

Introduction

Protect Life 2 is Northern Ireland's strategy for the prevention of suicide and self harm, launched in 2019.

The Department of Health Permanent Secretary, Peter May, extended the Protect Life 2 Strategy (2019) for a further three years to the end of 2027 at this stage. This will be reviewed by an incoming Minister with the potential for an additional extension to 2029. This decision was taken given challenges in implementing Protect Life 2 against a difficult financial situation and delays due to the necessary response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As part of the Strategy extension, the Department agreed to undertake a Review of the Protect Life 2 Action Plan to inform the future Action Plan and implementation. This document sets out the Terms of Reference for the Review.

Scope of the Review

The Permanent Secretary has advised this should be a proportionate Review with a focus on the Action Plan. The aims and objectives of the Strategy are not within the scope of this Review. However, the Review of the Action Plan may elicit feedback relevant to the Objectives of the Protect Life 2 Strategy and this will be included in the Review report for information only at this stage.

The relevant literature and evidence underpinning the Strategy will also be reviewed and updated if necessary to ensure it reflects latest data.

The Review requires the development of a project plan/framework to meet the objectives of the Review. (See pages 3 -5)

Stakeholder engagement is imperative to inform the Review and development of a succinct final report providing a clear overview of the outputs contained within this Terms of Reference.

Consultants

To ensure independence in the Review and separation from the oversight role of the Department, this Review will be led by two consultants appointed through the HSC Leadership Centre who have relevant experience of suicide prevention, emotional health and wellbeing, mental health and of working with the community and voluntary sector.

Review process

The Consultants will lead extensive stakeholder engagement with relevant groups, organisations and individuals who contribute to and have an interest in shaping suicide and self-harm prevention in Northern Ireland. They will also conduct a survey and will be responsible for writing up the final review report.

A series of workshops will be held over the month of February to ensure maximum accessibility from all who wish to input to this Review. The workshops will provide scope for deeper analysis of the feedback from the survey. The Public Health Agency will assist with co-ordination, workshop design, venues and invitations using local Protect Life networks. The consultants will also run an online survey to garner

feedback on the Action Plan. The workshops will provide an opportunity for consultants to highlight early findings from the survey.

In parallel the Department will undertake a literature Review comparing differences between the Protect Life 2 Action Plan and action plans contained within suicide prevention strategies in other parts of the UK and Ireland. The Department will also take forward a revision of the baseline for monitoring progress against the 10% suicide rate reduction target. These pieces of work will be shared with the consultants for incorporation into their final review report.

An academic Review of evidence will be led by the Mental Health Champion, who chairs the Research and Evidence sub-group of the Protect Life 2 Strategy. They will convene meetings of this group to look specifically at this issue and share with the consultants an up-to-date summary of suicide prevention evidence and best practice. The outcome of this work will be shared with the consultants to reflect in their final review report.

The final review report will include discussion and recommendations answering the key questions:

- Do the current actions support the progress of the objectives of the Strategy?
- Do the current actions fulfil the principles contained within the Strategy?

Reporting

Consultants will provide regular assurance updates on progress against the project plan at regular intervals and alert Department of Health and Public Health Agency immediately to any impediments to this progress.

Regular progress updates will be provided by Department of Health and Public Health Agency to the Protect Life 2 Steering Group and to Protect Life Implementation Groups.

If the Executive is reformed, a presentation to the Executive Working Group on Mental Wellbeing, Resilience and Suicide Prevention after the Review is complete is recommended.

Outputs and timelines

The project should commence before the end of 2023 and be completed by end of March 2024. Project Framework below:

Tasks	Description	Time frame – by when	By Whom	Progress
Background & Preparation	<p>Agree specific TORs for Review</p> <p>Agree Project Plan</p> <p>Agree Resources required</p> <p>Agree Framework and timetable for Stakeholder engagement</p>	End of Nov – early Dec 2023	Department of Health /Public Health Agency/ Consultants	
Survey Developed	Agree questions and 'build' Survey/Audit	Mid-Dec 2023	Consultants leading – to be agreed by DoH/PHA for issue	
On-line Survey launched	Beginning January 2024	3 weeks	PHA will issue	
Survey Analysis	Analysis and synopsis of themes and findings and presentation developed for series of workshops in February 2024	End of Jan/ beg Feb 2024	Consultants	
Stakeholder engagement	8 Face to face engagement / workshops for more exploratory feedback based on survey analysis	Feb 2024	Consultants with support from Department of Health and Public Health Agency	
Context and Background				
Review of Key documents	Relevant strategies with cross cutting actions – IHCJS, MHS, SUS Other relevant literature/ strategies	January 2024	Department of Health	
Review of evidence-base	Review of most recent research findings and	January 2024	MH Champion	

	current evidence re suicide and self-harm			
Report				
PL2 Action Plan Review	Evaluation drawing on and informed by the information gathered above; Identifying good practice, gaps challenges and recommendations	Early March 2024	Consultants	
Draft review report	Drawing on framework above Approval from Department of Health and Public Health Agency	Mid-March 2024	Consultants drafting report. To be shared with PHA and DoH for comment.	
Final Review Report		End of March 2024	Submitted by consultants to DoH/PHA.	

Review Report

The final report will include the following:

- Up to date literature review of action plans of other UK and Ireland Suicide Prevention Strategies
- Up to date evidence base for best practice and successful interventions in suicide prevention
- Outline of stakeholder engagement undertaken
- Survey results
- Reporting of feedback from further face to face engagement (Workshops and meeting with Family Voices Forum)
- Discussion and recommendations answering the key questions:
 - Do the current actions support the progress of the objectives of the Strategy?
 - Do the current actions fulfil the principles contained within the Strategy?
 - What is working well?
 - What are the gaps/ issues?