

## Report of the Head of Public Protection

**MANAGING CUSTOMERS' SUICIDE AND SELF-HARM DECLARATIONS – A FRAMEWORK FOR MANAGERS**1. Purpose of report

To advise the Mental Health Working Group of a proposed guidance document to prepare staff who may hear a customer make a statement of intent to harm or kill themselves. The guidance is circulated separately with this agenda.

2. Detail

In 2017 there were 5,821 suicides registered in the UK. Males accounted for three-quarters of these (4,382 deaths). The highest age-specific suicide rate was 24.8 deaths per 100,000 among males aged 45 to 49 years; for females, the age group with the highest rate was 50 to 54 years, at 6.8 deaths per 100,000. (Office for National Statistics).

From time to time it is possible that a member of staff will hear a customer (or indeed a colleague) make a statement of intent to harm or kill themselves. Declarations of this nature can cause distress for those concerned, but there are some important points a member of staff should know that can help resolution. Both the distress and the chance of an outcome where everyone is safe are best managed by being prepared and knowing in advance how to respond.

Some customers may say they intend to self-harm or kill themselves as a threat or a tactic to persuade. Others will mean it. It is very hard to distinguish between the two and especially on the telephone. For this reason, all declarations must be taken seriously with an assumption that a customer may well follow through with their threat. Our procedures and actions have to be organised around that assumption.

The "Framework for Managers", circulated separately with this agenda, is based on one produced by the Department for Work and Pensions, introduces guidance for all departments within Broxtowe Borough Council to help them manage suicide and self-harm declarations from customers. The framework summarises the plans and procedures that must be in place. Comments throughout the drafting process have been invited from colleagues in Human Resources, Communities, Housing, Revenues and Benefits, and Customer Services.

**Recommendation**

**The Mental Health Working Group is asked to APPROVE that the 'Managing Customers' Suicide and Self-Harm Declarations – A Framework for Managers' be rolled out to managers via SMT then to all appropriate staff.**