

Wales 2026: Prioritising Suicide Prevention

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- **In Wales, nearly four times more people die by suicide than in road traffic accidents (a):** The next Welsh Government must prioritise suicide prevention, seek to proactively lower the annual suicide rate in Wales and increase funding available comparable to other nations' expenditure levels per population. Wales has amongst the highest suicide rates in the UK which has a huge emotional and economic cost to the nation (estimated to be £460 million per year (b)). This is unacceptable, suicide is preventable.
- **Data from Wales clearly points to three key risk groups, suicide prevention services, interventions, and campaigns across Wales must target these groups:** men under 35, people who are unemployed or economically in-active, and those living in areas of the highest deprivation, which often overlap (c). Suicide is the leading cause of death for young mothers and people under 25. Other high-risk groups include people working in the construction and building industry, farming/agriculture and process plant occupations.
- **Telling people to “Reach Out” and not “Suffer in Silence” is of limited use, people need to be heard and listened to.** The next Welsh Government should promote a Listening Wales where active listening skills are mainstreamed through school curriculum, professional development and through public engagement campaigns, so that people have the skills to have difficult conversations and really listen. Our vision of a Listening Wales is wholly achievable and would bring wider mental health, social and economic benefits.
- **Build on firm foundations:** The next Welsh Government should maintain the overall direction of the new Suicide Prevention and Self-harm Strategy. If ambitiously resourced, public and third sector bodies can ensure that delivery of this strategy achieves a reduction in the annual suicide rates. We acknowledge the positive developments and improvements achieved since the last Senedd election, including: a Suicide Prevention and Self-harm Strategy that aligns to our values and approach, and the creation of a Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing with responsibility for suicide prevention.

Samaritans Cymru fully endorses [the Wales Alliance for Mental Health Manifesto 2026](#).



(a). Welsh Government Reported Road Casualties: 2023 and Office for National Statistics Suicides in England and Wales: 2023 registrations

(b). David McDaid, Associate Professorial Research Fellow, Care Policy and Evaluation Centre, Department of Health Policy, London, School of Economics and Political Science 2024

(c). Office for National Statistics Suicides in England and Wales: 2023 registrations and Public Health Wales Real Time Suspected Suicide Surveillance Report 23-24