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Convenor – Health, Social Care & Sport
Committee

29 September 2022

Dear Convenor

I am writing following previous engagement on the development of Scotland's new Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan. I am pleased to say that the Scottish Government and COSLA are publishing the ambitious strategy and action plan today.

Our vision is to reduce the number of suicide deaths in Scotland, whilst tackling the inequalities which contribute to suicide. Whilst statistics show that over the past two years the number of deaths by suicide have decreased, we know that there is still much more to do.

We believe all sectors must come together in partnership, and we must support our communities so they become safe, compassionate, inclusive, and free of stigma. That is why we are taking a whole of Government and society approach to ensure the social determinants of suicide are tackled and all opportunities are taken to support someone who is suicidal.

Our aim is for any child, young person or adult who has thoughts of taking their own life, or are affected by suicide in any way, to get the help they need - and feel a sense of hope. With that in mind, there is a focus on ensuring more people can access support, not just those who are suicidal. Alongside that, the strategy will bring a renewed focus on reaching and supporting groups at heightened risk of suicide, as well as children and young people, and people in settings where suicide risk is higher, such as prisons, secure accommodation and residential care.

The development of the strategy has been informed by extensive engagement across the country over the past year – including many people with lived experience of suicide. I am very pleased by the significant level of participation we have received throughout. I am also pleased to have been able to work positively with colleagues across the political spectrum on this important work.

We are, of course, eager to ensure the vision in this strategy is achieved. We have adopted an evidence-based outcomes approach which describes the set of long term changes needed to reduce suicide, as well as the actions to deliver those changes. This outcomes approach also allows the strategy's impact to be meaningfully measured and reported.

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Finally, the strategy sets out our plans to enhance our suicide prevention delivery and governance structures to ensure even stronger connections between national and local work.

Our new Strategy and Action plan are both available here: [‘Creating Hope Together: Scotland’s Suicide Prevention Strategy 2022-2032’](#) and [‘Creating Hope Together: Scotland’s Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2022-2025’](#). I have also attached copies to this letter for your convenience.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate in contacting me.

Yours sincerley,



Kevin Stewart MSP
Minister for Mental Wellbeing and Social Care

Copied to:

Convenor - Criminal Justice Committee
Convenor - Social Justice & Social Security Committee
Convenor - Education Children and Young People Committee
Convenor - Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee
Convenor, Local Government - Housing and Planning Committee
Convenor - Rural Affairs, Islands and NaturalEnvironment Committee
Convenor - Social Justice and Social Security Committee

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