

# Talking About Suicide

Training medical professionals and healthcare students to talk about suicide to patients and peers



**Ann Feloy**

Founder and CEO, Olly's Future

[www.ollysfuture.org.uk](http://www.ollysfuture.org.uk)



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## **A legacy of hope for my son Oliver**

Our vision is a world where no young person dies by suicide.

# Some Facts About Suicide


- **7,147 people** took their own lives in the UK in 2024 – 19 people each day, or one person every 75 minutes **(ONS)**
- Suicide is the leading cause of death of people aged 20-34 **(ONS)**
- Approximately 75% of people who die by suicide are male. **(ONS)**
- Around 1 in 20 people are thinking of suicide at any time. **(Samaritans)**
- Only a third of people who die by suicide had contact with mental health services in the year before their death. **(Mental Health Foundation)**
- People bereaved by suicide are 65% more likely to think of suicide themselves than if their loved one died by natural causes. **(SASP 2019)**




# University Suicide and Mental Health

## Iceberg Model

Collective responsibility, collective action to prevent student suicide

Guidance for the higher education sector to reduce risk and restrict access to means of suicide



Supported by  AMOSSHE The Student Services Organisation  SYMPPLICITY\*  UNITE STUDENTS

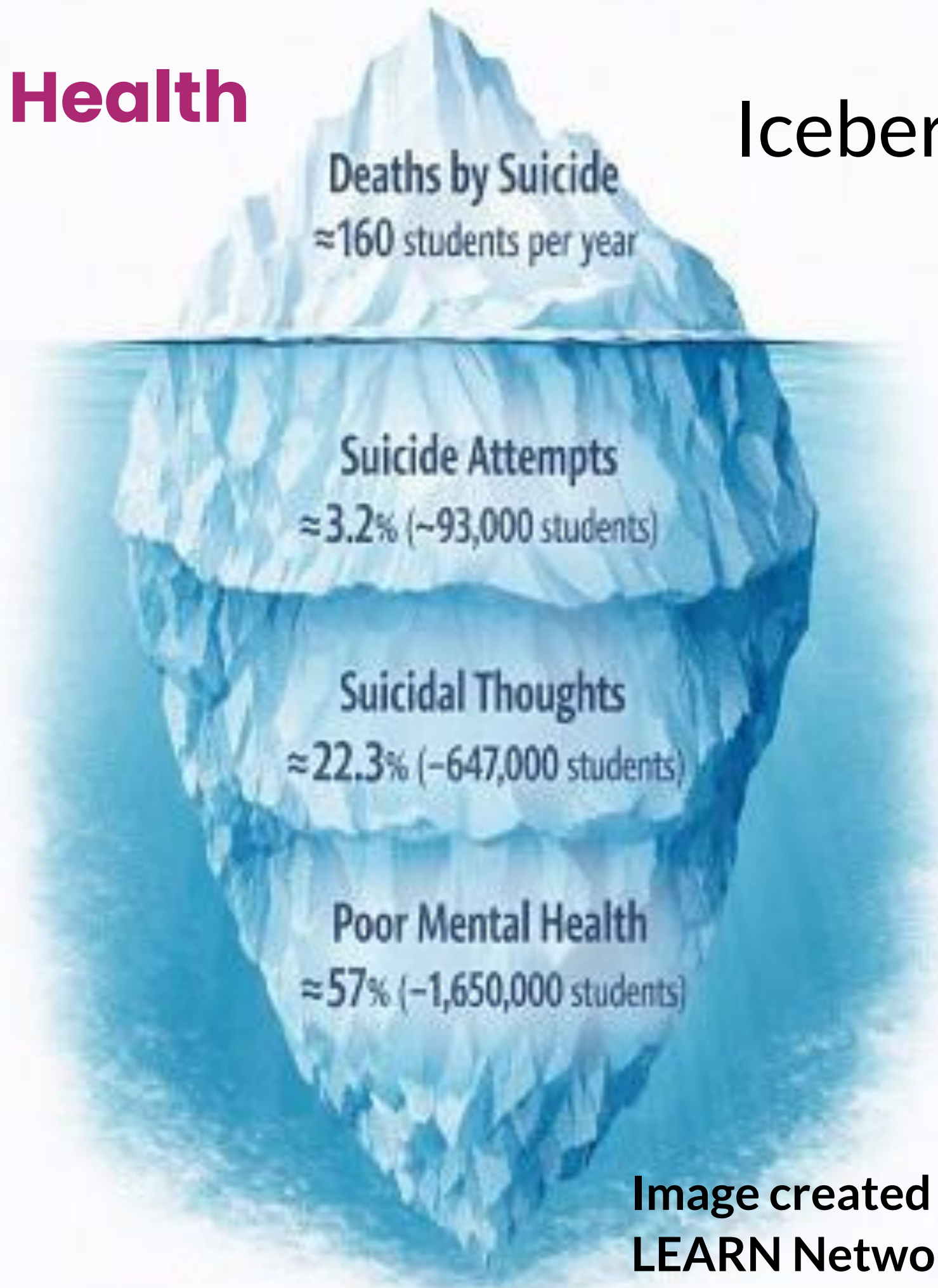


Image created by the LEARN Network  
[www.thelearnnetwork.org.uk](http://www.thelearnnetwork.org.uk)

# Young People are at the heart of our charity *OLMy's Future*

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# Olly's Future - Our Timeline



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## May 2018

Launched annual awards at UCL and Christ's Hospital, recognising student-led mental health support

## March 2022

Won National Lottery funding for leadership programme

## June 2023

Churchill Fellowship awarded to trustee for international suicide prevention research

## March 2024

Fishmongers' Company agrees 3-year sponsorship of healthcare student training

## November 2020

Secured BMA funding for Dr SAMS - renewed annually

## July 2022

Helped change NICE guidelines on antidepressants for under-25s

## October 2023

CEO Ann Feloy receives Prime Minister's Points of Light award

## 2025 →

Lobbying, scaling globally, and training more people with our partners

Over 10,000 people have completed our suicide prevention and wellbeing training, including healthcare professionals and medical students



# DrSAMS

Suicide  
Awareness in  
Medical & Health Care  
Students



suicide prevention and wellbeing training  
for future medical and health care professionals



Kingston  
University  
London

“Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet,  
consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do  
eiusmod tempor incididunt

Freda Bloggs: Head of Department

Part One

90 mins



Part Two

90 mins



# Our Training



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Dr SAMS training is comprised of two sections:

**PART ONE: Talking about Suicide:10 Tools (TAS:10) - 90 mins**  
(CPD certified). Participants learn ten tools and the confidence and competence to have a potentially life-saving conversation with a peer or a future patient who may be thinking of suicide and keep them 'safe for now'.

**PART TWO: CareSpace: 10 Techniques for Wellbeing - 90 mins**  
A guided, psychologically safe space grounded in the Compassion Circles model, widely used throughout the NHS, where participants learn self-care, self-resilience and self-reflective techniques to look after their own mental health needs.

**CPD:UK certification. Aligns with BS 30480. Confidence levels rise from 23% pre-training to 91% post-training.**

# Talking About Suicide: 10 Tools



***I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did... but people will never forget how you made them feel.***

**Maya Angelou**

**Writer and Civil Rights Activist**

- 1 USE HEALTHY LANGUAGE**  
Avoid 'commit' suicide / 'failed' or 'successful' attempt
- 2 SPOT THE (POSSIBLE) SIGNS**  
Be alert to unusual or worrying behaviour or phrases
- 3 TRUST YOUR GUT FEELING**  
Our bodies often tell us when someone is struggling
- 4 STICK YOUR NOSE IN**  
Show you care by starting the conversation
- 5 WHERE & WHEN**  
Get consent and increase comfort to continue talking
- 6 EVENT = LOSS?**  
Have events left them feeling they have lost something?
- 7 ASK ABOUT SUICIDE** (you won't put the idea in their head!)  
Ask clearly and directly, with respect and compassion
- 8 REALLY LISTEN**  
Active listening without judgement, advice or solutions
- 9 KNOW YOUR LIMITS**  
Be clear and confident about what you can/can't do
- 10 TELL OTHERS TOGETHER**  
Work together to build a network of people you trust



# Learning Outcomes

- 1 Recognise how the prevalence of suicide in our society means more open conversation is needed
- 2 Discuss common fears & myths about suicide which can prevent life-saving conversations taking place
- 3 Compare outdated, judgmental language about suicide with safer, more helpful alternatives
- 4 Identify the signs that someone is struggling, possibly with thoughts of suicide
- 5 Understand how to ask someone directly if they are thinking of suicide
- 6 Reflect on and improve listening skills
- 7 Examine their personal limits when talking to someone thinking of suicide & connect them with further support
- 8 Know 10 practical tools for talking about suicide, to be used with confidence and competence should the need arise

# Our Training Team



chris  
brown



cristina  
la cara



christina  
watson



craig  
bryant



izzy  
russell



jan  
pritchard



jo  
woodhams



mark  
slatter



nick  
brown



dan  
simpson



rachel  
van hoven



rusty  
livock



travis  
cook

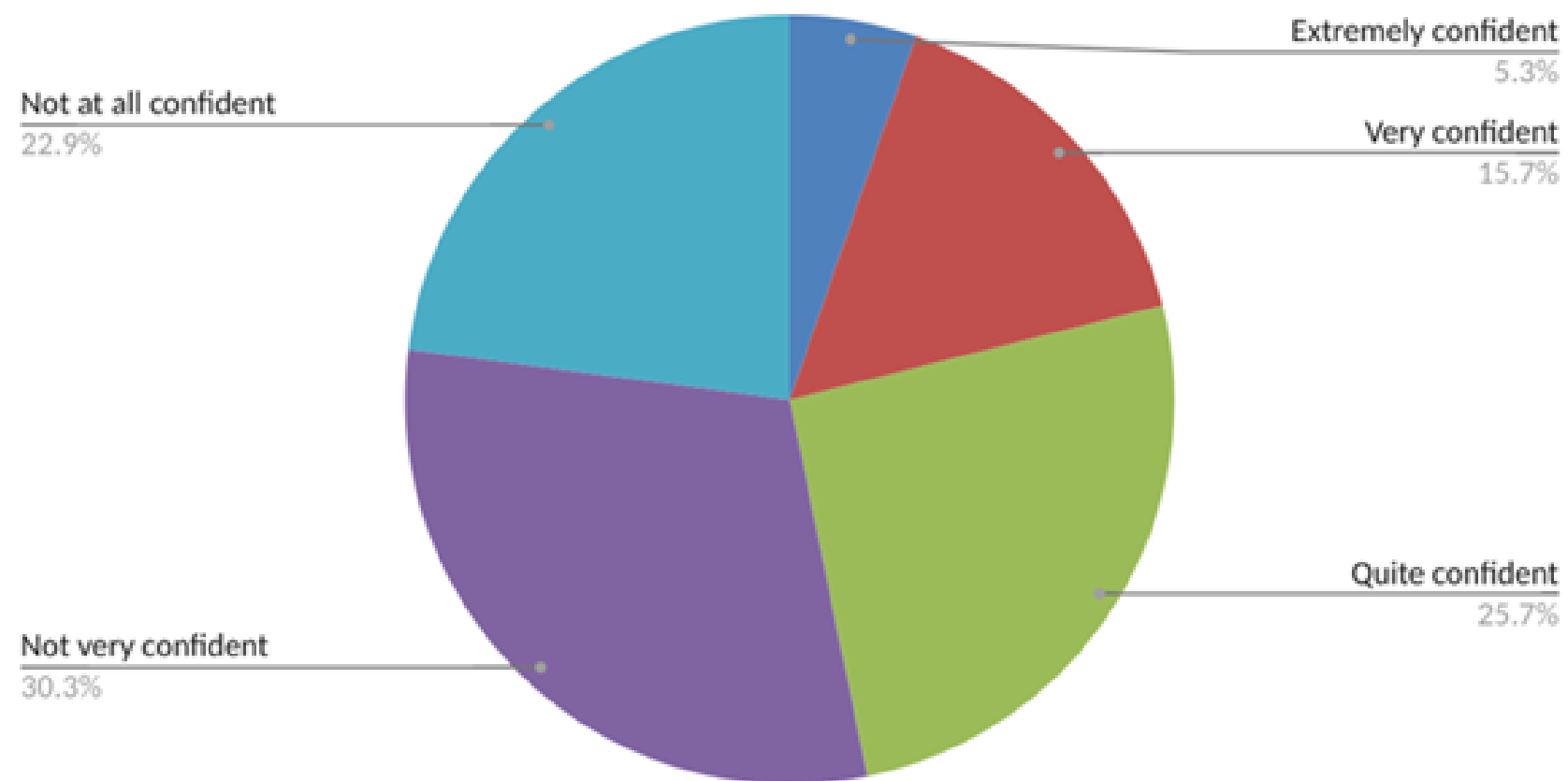
# Our Training - Building Confidence



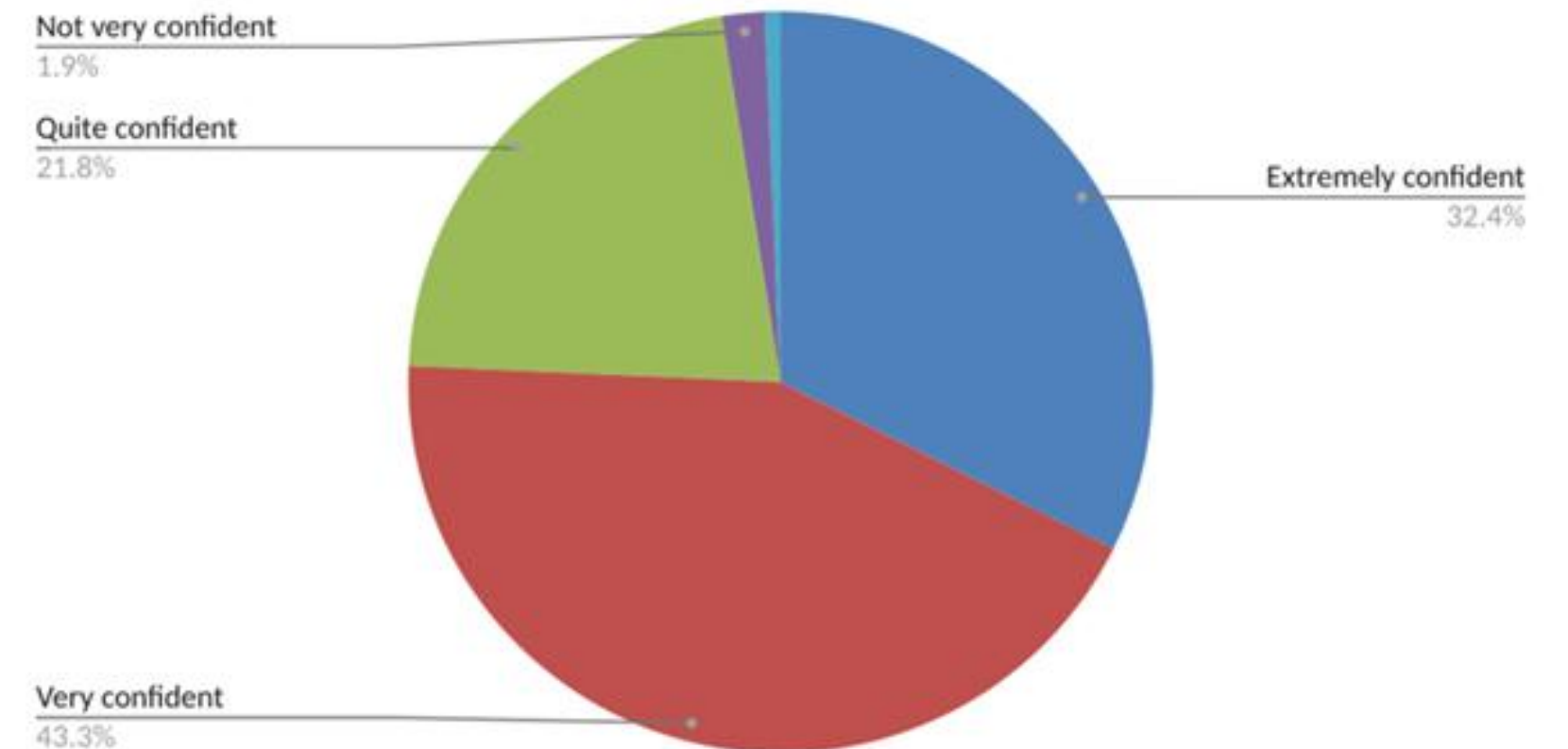
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“ How confident were you asking someone if they were thinking of suicide? ”

Before: Talking About Suicide: Ten Tools (TAS10)



After: Talking About Suicide: Ten Tools (TAS10)



# Kent and Medway Medical School



First year students at Kent and Medway Medical School have received the Dr SAMS (Suicide Awareness in Medical Students) two part programme for the past five years



# Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust

Resident doctors at Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust in Truro took part in 'exquisite listening practice' as part of the CareSpace.



# London Borough of Bromley

In partnership with SEL  
Workforce Development Hub

L-R: Cristina La Cara (emotional support) and Christina Watson (trainer) delivered our Olly's Future training to GPs in their early careers

**Princess Royal University  
Hospital, Orpington**



# Royal College of Nursing Education Conference 2026

Ann Feloy and Assoc. Prof Louise Howard at Kingston University spoke at the Royal College of Nursing education conference last week about the need for all student nurses to have suicide prevention training as part of the core curriculum.



# Training for Medical & Healthcare Students



We have trained almost 10,000 participants in our suicide prevention and self-care training sessions.

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British Medical Association has provided funding for Dr SAMS (Suicide Awareness in Medical Students)



We have delivered Dr SAMS to medical schools, NHS Trusts and universities at:

Bangor, Brighton and Sussex, Cardiff, Christ Church Canterbury, Kent and Medway, Kingston University, Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust, University College London, University of Exeter Medical School.



# Wider Work

- Primary Care
- Schools and colleges
- Local Authorities
- Government Departments
- Police Forces
- NHS Trusts
- Charities
- Sports



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ADUR & WORTHING COUNCILS





# Lobbying



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## Lobbying For Core Curriculum Suicide Prevention Training

- Central Government for Funding for all 47 medical schools in the UK approx. 9,000 graduates a year.
- Meetings with senior Health Policy Leads at No 10. Talks with Liz Twist, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary
- Group on Suicide and Self-Harm. £300K to make a core curriculum training, based on our programme.
- T4T model for Dr SAMS (Suicide Awareness in Medical Students)

# Lobbying for Duty of Care in Higher Education – a systemic gap

Higher Education remains an anomaly within the safeguarding landscape. Young people are protected by a Duty of Care while at school and later when they enter employment, yet there is no equivalent statutory protection while they are studying at university.



On average there are **160 student suicides per year in the UK.**

Currently charters, voluntary guidance, frameworks and outputs from the Higher Education Mental Health Implementation Taskforce (HEMHIT) exist, but there is no requirement to implement, evidence or achieve these standards.

According to Student Minds, of the 165 universities required to commit to the University Mental Health Charter by September 2024, 113 have registered to date and only 25 have achieved the award, which is non-mandatory. **It was launched five years ago.**

In a study of over 100 student deaths, by the University of Manchester, it was found that families and GPs were not routinely included in reviews, thus limiting learning and accountability.

If you need **support for yourself or someone you're worried about**  
**FREE and CONFIDENTIAL help** is available whenever you need it

**SAMARITANS**

**Call: 116 123**

24 hours a day  
365 days a year

**SWITCHBOARD**

LGBTQIA+ helpline

**Call: 0300 330 0630**

Daily  
10am to 10pm

**shout**

**85258**

Text 24 hours a day  
365 days a year

**download the Hub of Hope app  
from your app store**

**HUB  
OF HOPE**

BY CHASING THE STIGMA



**Call: 0800 068 4141**

**Text: 88247**

24 hours a day  
365 days a year



The  
Compassionate  
Friends

**Call: 0345 123 2304**

Daily  
10am to 4pm  
and 7pm – 10pm



[www.ollysfuture.org.uk](http://www.ollysfuture.org.uk)

**IN AN EMERGENCY ALWAYS CALL 999**

# Thank you for listening

## Any Questions?



Ann

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