

# Raising awareness about male suicide in the East 2 PCN area of Walsall



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Healthwatch Walsall would like to thank everyone, individuals, businesses and organisations, who have supported Healthwatch Walsall and this project

## About the project

Healthwatch Walsall working with Walsall Together had been asked to carry out a project on male suicide. The proposal for this work had been put forward by the East 2 Primary Care Network who wanted a local campaign to raise awareness about male suicide.

## The project brief provided to Healthwatch Walsall:

Raise the attention of middle aged men (age 35 – 55) from within the East 2 patient portfolio, to the risks and issues of male suicide. There is evidence within the local and national fields of high incidence of this age cohort, as well as strong evidence that COVID and national lockdown events have had a significant effect upon the levels of male suicide. It is hoped that this pilot project can be translated to programmes across the Walsall Borough.

## How we developed the project

We needed to decide how to reach the target audience and ensure that information was accessible to them. We felt that the majority of the men we wanted to reach would be working men, with the Walsall Suicide statistics recently presented by Dr Claire Heath, showing, that where occupation was known, the largest group were skilled workers.

This led us to the conclusion that getting local business and industry workplaces to display information within the communal areas of their premises would give us the most direct reach to the target audience.

# How we developed the plan

We researched local business that were most likely to have male workers, areas of work where the people are skilled workers and places where men are likely to visit.

- Businesses based on the local industrial sites
- Electricians, plumbers, roofers, mechanics, etc.
- Other local industry likely to have a significant male workforce

We also considered whether it may be possible to increase our reach with support from local Public Houses

# Information on local businesses

1	WS9 8DL	T.G.S Limited	Unit 3	unit 3 Redhouse Industrial Estate, P
2	WS9 8DL	North Birmingham Motor Company	Unit 10	Redhouse Industrial Estate, Middle
3	WS9 8DL	Special Paint Products	Unit 10	Redhouse Industrial Estate, Middle
4	WS9 8DL	HFT Commercial	Unit	Redhouse Industrial Estate, Middle
5	WS9 8DL	Chicken Bar	Unit	1 Middlemore Lane, Aldridge
6	WS9 8DL	Mick Ferryhugh Vehicle Repair	Unit	Middlemore Lane, Aldridge
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We compiled lists to work from, those on the left are workplaces on Aldridge Industrial estates, grouped by postcode group for visit planning. We have found that this list was not always accurate, some business may have moved or closed but we have found business in these locations that were not originally on our list.

We made lists of electricians and plumbers which we are hoping to get information to, although many of these trades work from their homes and do not have commercial business premises.

We also made a list of the local public houses to visit.



## Next steps

- Develop a suitable poster
- Write up information about the project explaining what we are asking people to do and why.
- Distribute the poster by various activities
- Visit local businesses on industrial sites in person with copies of the poster.
- Distribute by email / mail where possible to businesses that we cannot physically visit.

## The poster

We developed a poster, giving information about the risks of suicide and felt it very important to have information about support and help that is available to people.

Initially the posters give information about who to contact in emergency and non-emergency situations, which covers the NHS services.

We also wanted to show additional support services, both local and national as research shows that some people are reluctant to contact NHS services, often because the information will be entered on official records.

## Information sheet

We also compiled an information sheet that could be adapted for use, as a forward for mail circulation as well as in face to face engagement.

This was also important for situations where the owner, manager or decision maker may not be present at the workplace premises visited.

# Let's Talk about... Suicide Prevention

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**Suicide is preventable – If you or someone you know is having suicidal thoughts, this information can help you to get the right support.**

Every year over 6,000 people in the UK take their own lives, with men nearly three times as likely to take their own lives than women, one reason for this is that men are less likely to ask for help or express depressive or suicidal feelings. Many other people will also attempt to kill themselves, or experience suicidal thoughts. Each life lost to a suicide is a tragedy and represents a person who is in tremendous emotional pain. Suicide has a devastating impact on family, friends and colleagues. There are multiple risk factors, including financial difficulties, emotional and relationship problems, physical illness or disability, mental health problems such as depression, social isolation and a history of substance misuse. Without suitable support people can become overwhelmed by the issues that they face.

**We can help prevent deaths by suicide in Walsall by supporting people who are in severe distress. Helping them get to appropriate services is their first step towards hope and recovery.**

## **Help and Support is available if you or someone you know are having suicidal thoughts or feel like harming yourself**

**If you need urgent support:** Go to your nearest Accident and Emergency department (A&E) or Call 999 if you are at risk of harming yourself or others.

**For non-emergency situations:** Visit your GP

## **National support and helplines**

**Samaritans:** Tel. 116 123. Offering emotional support 24 hours  
Email: [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org) Web: [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

**SANEline:** 0300 304 7000. Provides mental health information and support between 4 pm – 10 pm daily. [http://www.sane.org.uk/what\\_we\\_do/support/](http://www.sane.org.uk/what_we_do/support/)

**C.A.L.M:** 0800 58 58 58. National helpline for men to talk about any issues they are feeling. Helpline and livechat open 5 pm to midnight, 365 days a year. <https://www.thecalzone.net/help/>

**Rethink Advice and Information Service:** 0300 5000 927. Opening hours are 9:30am to 4pm Monday to Friday <https://www.rethink.org>

**Papyrus UK:** 0800 068 41 41 (under 35s) HOPELINEUK is open 9am – midnight. Text: 07860 039967  
Email: [pat@papyrus-uk.org](mailto:pat@papyrus-uk.org) . Papyrus UK Suicide Prevention | Prevention of Young Suicide ([papyrus-uk.org](http://papyrus-uk.org))



**Stay Alive App** - The Stay Alive app, developed by Grassroots Suicide Prevention, is a suicide prevention resource for the UK, packed full of useful information and tools to help you stay safe in crisis. Download the Stay Alive app from your app store

## **Local support available in the Walsall area**

**Black Country 24/7 urgent mental health line:** 0800 008 6516. This service offers a free 24/7 helpline for people in the Black country who require support on urgent mental health concerns. Text message 07860 025 281

**Rethink Mental illness Walsall Enablement & Recovery Service:** 01922 494479. We have a telephone helpline open to anyone living in Walsall who needs support/signposting. We are mainly a 9am-5pm Monday-Friday service, although we can work in the evening/weekends if there is demand, so please check with staff. If you would like support, please call us.

**The Sanctuary Hub:** 1 Queens Parade, Bloxwich, Walsall WS3 2EX - Open evenings 5 – 10 pm on weekdays including Bank holidays - Saturday and Sunday 12pm-11pm. The Hub is a safe place and friendly place you can go to access support from outside of usual mental health services hours. Feeling unable to cope? Lonely or isolated? If you're feeling overwhelmed and don't know where to turn to get mental health support and your usual source of support is closed, come to The Sanctuary Hub. Enquiries: 0808 802 2288

**Men with Anxiety and Depression Support Group:** A place where men from Walsall suffering from Depression, Anxiety, low mood etc. can meet up for a brew and a chat. The group meets on Wednesdays from 4.30 – 6 pm at Ryecroft Community Hub. For information contact Richard – 07943 011695 or Martin - 07483 333171

**Black Country Support after Suicide Service:** Email: [blackcountrysupportaftersuicide@rethink.org](mailto:blackcountrysupportaftersuicide@rethink.org). Call: 0800 008 6516

**Walsall Bereavement Support Service:** Offers support for those bereaved by suicide'. <http://www.wbss.org.uk> 01922 724841

*It's OK not to be OK – Make that call and get the help that is there for you*



For more information visit <https://healthwatchwalsall.co.uk/useful-links/>



Healthwatch Walsall, working with Walsall Together are heading a local campaign to raise awareness of the risks of suicide and provide information about the support, both national and local, that is available.

Every year over 6,000 people in the UK take their own lives, with men nearly three times as likely to take their own lives than women, one reason for this is that men are less likely to ask for help or express depressive or suicidal feelings. Many other people will also attempt to kill themselves, or experience suicidal thoughts. Each life lost to a suicide is a tragedy and represents a person who is in tremendous emotional pain.

Suicide has a devastating impact on family, friends and colleagues. There are multiple risk factors, including financial difficulties, emotional and relationship problems, physical illness or disability, mental health problems such as depression, social isolation and a history of substance misuse. Without suitable support people can become overwhelmed by the issues that they face.

The statistics for the Walsall area show that men from all backgrounds and occupations feature within these figures, with a large proportion being men in skilled occupations.

It is important to make information available for these working age men, who may be struggling but are reluctant to ask for help.

For this reason, we are asking local businesses and premises to display a poster within their building, somewhere where their workforce or visitors can easily access the information. It may be an idea to have a poster within the toilets, where people could take down telephone numbers with a degree of privacy.

The local GP surgeries in the East 2 Primary Care Network proposed this initiative for the benefit of their patients and the local community with the hope that this can be rolled out across the wider Walsall area. Every life matters, so whether this information is seen by individuals in distress or family, friends or colleagues who may be worried about someone, an increased awareness has to be beneficial.

We thank you for your support.

If you require additional information or copies of the posters that you can print yourself, please let us know

Email: [carol.hewitt@healthwatchwalsall.co.uk](mailto:carol.hewitt@healthwatchwalsall.co.uk) / Email: [info@healthwatchwalsall.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchwalsall.co.uk)

Telephone: 0800 470 1660

[www.healthwatchwalsall.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchwalsall.co.uk)

Healthwatch Walsall

Blakenall Village Centre, 79 Thames Rd, Blakenall, Walsall, WS3 1LZ

## Additional ways to promote the campaign

### Healthwatch Walsall social media and website

We have put information on our social media and created a webpage to provide information about support and help that is available where additional information can be added as it becomes available.

### Organisations who may have contact with local business

One Walsall – My Time Active told us:

We work with SME's in Walsall and we do regular engagement events. We mainly work with men. We will add the poster to our newsletter that goes out to workplaces and key stakeholders, share the posters with current and new workplaces we visit and on our social media platforms.

Additionally, we can forward the poster to WMCA Thrive at work, who can share it with more workplaces.

mytimeactive



Walsall Council



# ONE YOU WALSALL

Good After noon,

Workplace Wellbeing at One You Walsall would like to share our monthly newsletter with you. If there are any events or resources you would like us to share for the newsletter, please contact us.

Please find our Newsletter [here](#)

or view it on our website [www.oneyouwalsall.com/workplaces](http://www.oneyouwalsall.com/workplaces)

#### Quick pre-view:

Page 1 – **Cycle to Work Day**

Page 2 – **Dance to Health**

Page 3 – **Suicide Prevention**

Page 4 – **WMCA Thrive at Work**





# Healthwatch Walsall

5,879 Tweets

Follow



Healthwatch Walsall @HWWalsall · 5m

See our Suicide Prevention Information Leaflet. With lots of support and contact information should you or someone else need help? [#walsall](#) [#nhs](#) [#SuicidePrevention](#)



## Healthwatch Walsall work with Walsall Together



We are undertaking our last piece of work on behalf of Walsall Together, 'Male Suicide Prevention'.

We have put together an informative poster/ flyer with a list of useful organisation people can get in touch with if they need help. This is being shared with a number of employers and outlets in focused areas of Walsall.

Link to the poster: <https://healthwatchwalsall.co.uk/useful-links/>

This concludes our work as set out by Walsall Together. But we will continue to work with them to ensure Walsall residents get the best access to services in Walsall.



Healthwatch Walsall

5 mins · 🌐

See our Suicide Prevention Information Leaflet. With lots of support and contact information should you or someone else need help?



## Let's Talk about... Suicide Prevention

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If you need urgent support: Go to your nearest Accident and Emergency department (A&E) or Call 999 if you are at risk of harming yourself or others.

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**National support and helplines**

Samaritans: Tel: 116 123. Offering emotional support 24 hours  
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Walsall Together



## Engagement with local businesses

We have visited the industrial estates in the Aldridge area:

- Redhouse Industrial Estate
- Westgate Park Industrial Estate
- Empire Industrial Estate
- Anchor Brook Industrial Park
- Northgate Business Park



## Reception and feedback

During our visits to local businesses on the Industrial Estates in the Aldridge area we found that information has been well received with a substantial amount of enthusiasm from the majority. Business owners, managers and workers were happy to talk and many expressed that they thought it a good thing that information was being made available and accessible to the workforce.



Very nearly all businesses were willing to display the poster in communal areas so that their workers could access the information. The only exceptions were two sole traders and one large multi-national who explained that they had a very robust employee welfare programme and this subject was covered within the programme.



Many business managers / owners said that they thought it a good thing to have information in the workplace as some were aware, through national news that male suicide was at a much higher rate than for females and many acknowledged that men may be less likely to reveal how they are feeling or seek help. Others said they appreciated that they and their employees were being provided with information that could benefit local working men.



At one company the person we spoke with said that they thought it very important as they had lost one of their Directors to suicide some years ago.

At another company, one chap we spoke with told us “I’ve been there”. He went on to tell us that he now has good support from mental health services although he was going through a hard time currently as his mother had recently died, but added that he was determined to stay strong for his father.

One company told us that one of their employees had been affected by the suicide of a partner and that anything that could be done in terms of suicide prevention was welcome.



One company said they would put the poster in their canteen, another asked for an additional copy so they could put one in the gents toilet.

At one company the person spoken with said that their manager was not based on site but they would immediately scan the poster and info sheet and send to their manager, adding that they were sure the management would support this and that they operated from several sites in the wider Walsall area and thought it would be likely that they would reproduce the poster for each site.

We found that often when speaking to the senior person on site, that as some premises were fairly small, that members of the workforce were present and joined in the conversation, with many commenting that it was a good idea or giving thumbs up signs.

Love Joes – a large food company told us “We have nearly 200 employees, so we will make several copies to go in various locations throughout the premises”.



Chemique Adhesives has multiple units within the industrial estate – they said that they would put a copy in each unit so that all workers would be able to see the information



A commercial heating and air conditioning company, ABI, who took a poster for their office, asked for a copy of the poster by email, as all their engineers were home based, and they would be able to forward a copy to each engineer

During the conversation they explained that their industry was very tough currently, they had plenty of work but had difficulty in obtaining specialist supplies, the biggest difficulty importing parts, especially from Europe – they explained how this delayed them completing jobs, and sometimes led to their engineers being idle. They told us that some of their competitors were “letting people go” because of these issues, which could make life difficult for some people. They added that they had retained all their workforce but thought it may be another eighteen months to two years before the problems with importing parts settled down.



We spoke with the Health and Safety Officer at an engineering company who told us that he had completed Mental Health First Aid training and commented that when he did the course that several people in his group had said that they had previously attempted suicide or had suicidal thoughts. The conversation ended with him asking if there were any local support groups for people who have had a stroke, explaining that one of their employees had had a stroke and had been off work for a long time and this was impacting on their life and wellbeing. We were able to signpost him to the Healthwatch Walsall freephone telephone number where they should be able to advise about local support that might be available.





Pascon Utility Connections – having explained the purpose of our visits, the boss said “Follow me” and took us to the area where “all the lads get their jobs for the day”. He showed us where he planned to put the information sheet and asked if we thought it was OK, which it was. He then said that he would also put a copy in the toilet where people could take down information in private if required.





One company asked for three copies as they had three sites and wanted to put the information into all of their locations.

Another person said that their colleague had recently lost their stepson to suicide and how difficult it had been to try to understand why this had happened. They said that he had a good job and a lovely wife and children and this had been devastating to the family. This person explained that they were considering volunteering for bereavement support services.

One person said that they felt this was important and timely with the cost of living going the way it was and the financial strains this may put on people.



## Results

We have visited over 80 local business who were happy to place the information poster in a communal area accessible to their employees. Many larger companies made copies to place at various places within their sites to ensure that the information would be seen by all members of staff. The size of the companies varied considerably, from smaller companies with a handful of employees to larger companies nearing 200 employees.

We have sent information by post to companies in the electrical sector and the plumbing sector. The majority of these companies did not have commercial premises that we could visit, being mostly based from private residences. It was not appropriate to visit private residences, although as people with skilled trades feature in the Walsall suicide statistics we felt it important to reach this sector and therefore posted the information with a covering letter explaining the purpose of the project. There were 49 companies in this cohort. We also mailed information to another 13 companies in the area who were not based near to the industrial estates where our face to face engagement was centralised.



We also visited several Public Houses in the area to ask for support in providing information. We understood that they may not wish to have a poster about suicide prevention in the bar area and therefore suggested that they could be placed in the pub's toilets where people could access the information.



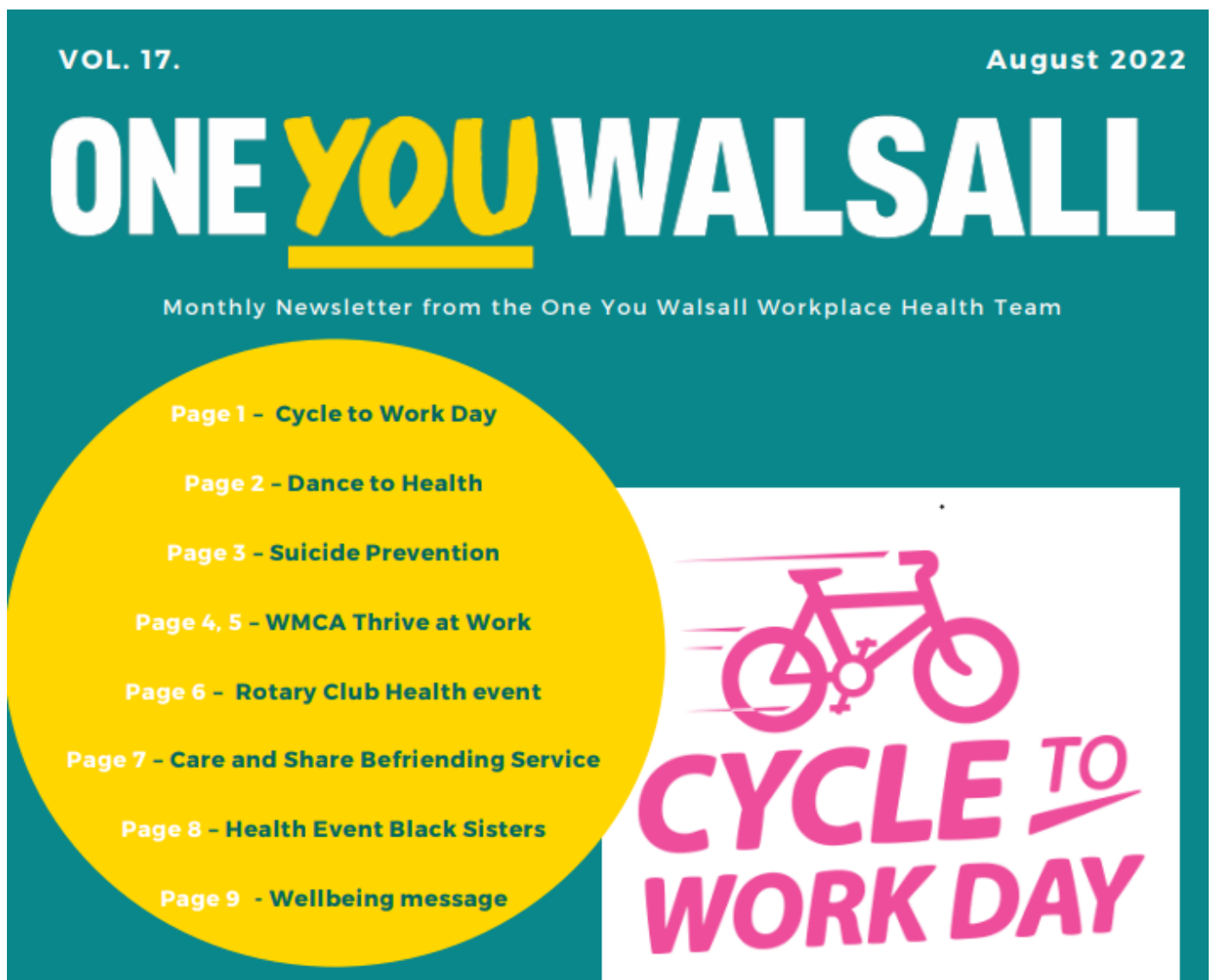
We found that the pubs were willing to support this. At one pub, the manager explained that they were a managed house and would need to seek appropriate permission adding that they thought it a "good idea". All other publicans advised that they were happy to make the information available to their patrons.



The information was promoted on the Healthwatch Walsall website, on facebook and on twitter. Healthwatch Walsall has over 2,600 followers on social media and the website attracts over 20,000 visitors a year. The information was also included in the Healthwatch Walsall Summer newsletter.

## Partnership working

One You Walsall / My time active advised us that they had sent out the information in their workplace newsletter to 84 email addresses and provided a leaflet to 13 people they had seen during a cycle to work event (all men in manual employment) and to 9 workplaces that their team have visited in August. That gives additional reach of 106.



## Conclusion

We have received a very positive reaction to this campaign which suggests that there is a real appetite for practical information which can be available in the workplace and other public areas.

We have not encountered any negativity and have been met with a considerable amount of enthusiasm.

We feel that visiting companies face to face has contributed greatly to this. Having the poster in their hands, all said that they would put it up, many saying 'straight away'.

Many people we spoke with said that they appreciated that someone had taken the time to visit their business with the welfare of the working people to the fore. "It's good to know that someone is thinking about us blokes"

Although we were using various ways to promote this campaign, the value of face to face engagement became clear, being able to talk directly with people meant that we were confident that the businesses would promote this within their workplaces.

We estimate that we have made this information available directly to several hundred people working in the East 2 Primary Care Network of Walsall. Considering all the promotion activity we have completed, we will have reached thousands of people in the area and we are confident that this will have a positive effect on awareness of male suicide and, importantly, people are more aware about the variety of support that is available.

Throughout the time spent working on this project, Healthwatch Walsall have attended the Black Country Suicide Prevention Group where a presentation on the project was given and we were able to contribute to the knowledge and discussion about suicide prevention. In addition, we have been able to give feedback on how the people in Walsall we have engaged with have reacted to this campaign, which had been with positivity and enthusiasm. People have consistently expressed that they feel it is good to have information about help and support that is available. We met a number of people who had either directly or indirectly been affected by a death by suicide who offered information about their experience.

We have also worked with Walsall Public Health who are keen to learn from this project and expand on this work. They are currently developing Walsall Council literature that they can use in future campaigns and the provision and promotion of services and groups that can provide support in this area.

During our discussions we have also agreed that the expansion of this work should consider how to reach younger people and people who have retired or not in work, who also feature in the statistics for the Walsall area.

We have observed that Walsall Public Health are committed to developing and taking this work forward for the benefit of the people of Walsall.



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