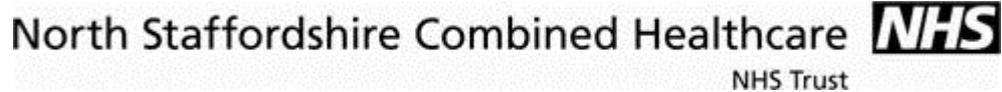


NEWS FROM NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE COMBINED HEALTHCARE NHS TRUST



LOCAL ORGANISATIONS MARK INTERNATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY

Tuesday 10 September marks this year's International Suicide Prevention Day. North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust will be taking the opportunity on this year's international awareness day to publicise support available locally and to urge anybody with suicidal thoughts to seek help as soon as possible.

It is estimated that over 1 million people die each year from suicide across the world and is the most common cause of death for people aged 15-24. Men aged 40-65 are 3-5 times more likely to attempt suicide, with the loss of employment or the breakdown in marriage being cited as common causes. Additionally, the recent economic downturn has also been highlighted as a cause of people taking their own lives.

[North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust](#) is marking International Suicide Prevention Day to raise awareness of the support services available locally and to raise awareness of the signs people may exhibit who may be contemplating taking their own lives.

Dr Buki Adeyemo, Medical Director for the Trust, explains: "Some of the tell-tale signs people may notice about a loved one is that 'something's wrong' but they may not be able to precisely put their finger on what. Look for changes in sleep, eating and mood; their behaviour may become reckless or they might withdraw from friends and family. Another sign is that they lose interest in things they used to enjoy.

"Other signs include a general sense of helplessness and hopelessness with them being unable to see a way out their situation – they may say that they feel their life has no purpose."

Barbara Wain, Director of [Changes Health & Wellbeing](#), a local mental health charity, who also sits on the local Suicide Prevention Group added: "We would encourage friends and family to look out for these behaviours and to encourage people to talk about how they feel and to seek help from their GP or local mental health team.

"We would like to see people talking more openly about their feelings with friends and family. Although difficult, if someone close to you expresses suicidal thoughts, we would advise against reserving harsh judgment and debating the rights or wrongs of suicide; instead we would encourage people to become genuinely involved with the person and support them to seek support from agencies such as Changes or the Access Team at Combined Healthcare."

If you know someone who they think may be suicidal or if you are feeling suicidal yourself, local help can be obtained by contacting your local GP. Alternatively, there are a number of support organisations across Stoke on Trent and North Staffordshire who can provide help and advice, including:

- North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust's Access team - 0300 123 0907
- The Staffordshire Mental Health Helpline - 0808 800 2234
- Changes - 01782 845660

- The Samaritans - 08457 909090,

[Ends]

Notes to Editor:

Myths about suicide from The Samaritans website <http://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help-you/myths-about-suicide>

Myth: You have to be mentally ill to even think about suicide.

Fact: Most people have thought of suicide from time to time and not all people who die by suicide have mental health problems at the time of death. However, many people who kill themselves do suffer with their mental health, typically to a serious degree. Sometimes it's known about before the person's death and sometimes not.

Myth: People who talk about suicide aren't serious and won't go through with it.

Fact: People who kill themselves have often told someone that they do not feel life is worth living or that they have no future. Some may have actually said they want to die. While it's possible that someone might talk about suicide as a way of getting the attention they need, it's vitally important to take anybody who talks about feeling suicidal seriously.

Myth: Once a person has made a serious suicide attempt, that person is unlikely to make another.

Fact: People who have tried to end their lives before are significantly more likely to eventually die by suicide than the rest of the population.

Myth: If a person is serious about killing themselves then there is nothing you can do.

Fact: Often, feeling actively suicidal is temporary, even if someone have been feeling low, anxious or struggling to cope for a long period of time. This is why getting the right kind of support at the right time is so important.

Myth: Talking about suicide is a bad idea as it may give someone the idea to try it.

Fact: Suicide can be a taboo topic in society. Often, people feeling suicidal don't want to worry or burden anyone with how they feel and so they don't discuss it. By asking directly about suicide you give them permission to tell you how they feel. People who have felt suicidal will often say what a huge relief it is to be able to talk about what their experiencing. Once someone starts talking they've got a better chance of discovering other options to suicide.

Myth: Most suicides happen in the winter months.

Fact: Suicide is more common in the spring and summer months.

Myth: People who threaten suicide are just attention seeking and shouldn't be taken seriously.

Fact: People who threaten suicide should always be taken seriously. It may well be that they want attention in the sense of calling out for help, and giving them this attention may save their life.

Myth: People who are suicidal want to die.

Fact: The majority of people who feel suicidal do not actually want to die; they do not want to live the life they have. The distinction may seem small but is in fact very important and is why talking through other options at the right time is so vital.

For further information, please contact:

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**Communications and Membership Team
REACH 2013 FINALIST – Team of the Year HIGHLY COMMENDED**



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