

Information Sheet

? What is the aim of the group?

In 2022 a new young people's advisory group was launched as part of the National Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan. The group was being set up to make sure young people's views are heard directly by decision-makers, to influence government policy.

The group is for young people aged 16-24 who have tried to take their own life, or who have had suicidal thoughts. It is also for people who have had a bereavement by suicide (please note that two years must have passed if you have sadly lost someone through suicide for you to get involved) and those who suffer from poor mental health.

The group is an advisory group for Suicide Prevention Scotland and is supported by Children in Scotland and the University of Stirling. These organisations also work with the National Suicide Prevention Advisory Group to influence policy.

As we go into our third year of the project, we are now looking for new members.

If this sound like something you might want to get involved in, please read on.



? What will it involve?

The group will meet to discuss issues that matter to you.

The purpose of the group is to work together to support the development and delivery of actions set out in the Creating Hope Together action plan and ensure that future policy around suicide prevention is informed by lived experience. The strategy and action plan set out the work being done to reduce suicide rates in Scotland and is overseen by a group of organisations who work together as Suicide Prevention Scotland.

Some of the meetings will be online, others will be in person. We meet roughly once a month. We will agree the sorts of topics we want to focus on as a group and discuss these.

We also spend a lot of time making sure we all feel happy and safe to share. We do different fun activities together and the group decide what these are.

Members of the group will be involved initially for about 12 months, but you can stay involved for longer if you like. People can be involved in this group until they turn 24 years old.



What have we done so far and what is next?

- We have shared our views on topics related to suicide prevention like Time, Space, Compassion (an approach being used to support people in suicidal crisis), the United to Prevent Suicide Social Movement and on some research being done on the needs of children and young people
 - We have spoken at various conferences about what we think needs to change for children and young people
 - We created a case study video about the group to share what we do and our work
 - Going forward we will spend some time working as a group and talk about topics that are important to you.
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Why should I get involved?

The group provides the opportunity to meet new people and share ideas. It creates a space to talk about how young people can get better support and experience better wellbeing.

Importantly it's a really good chance to be involved in making a change in Scotland and making sure young people's views are heard.

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For me this has been a great way to use my lived experience to make a positive change, it's been an amazing opportunity to both learn about the work going on in suicide prevention and also input into this work!

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Youth Advisory Group Member

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I really value the experience as a whole, I've been a part of several groups over the years but not like this one, I like being able to contribute to something at a national level and be able to be apart of the change, particularly as suicide prevention is something I feel very passionate about.

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Youth Advisory Group Member

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It doesn't feel formal, not like a business roundtable meeting. We are just chatting about how we can help people and the informality makes it feel less daunting.

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Youth Advisory Group Member

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The YAG gives hope as we can improve the education and advice for young people and are using experience to make change. Good to help people with similar experience. We have our voices heard and use our lived experience to change things.

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Youth Advisory Group Member

Who else will be involved?

In our first year we have had seven young people involved. In Year 3, we would like to have around 10-15 young people in the group.

Five members of the group are going to be continuing on the project. There will also be a range of adults involved:



Chris has worked at Children in Scotland for seven years and works on different projects with children and young people. He plays cricket and loves coffee.



Lynne works at the University of Stirling doing research into the experiences of children who have been referred to CAMHS for suicidality. Lynne loves mountain biking and walking her dog.



Parisa works with Chris and has worked at Children in Scotland for three years. She loves reading, cooking and all dogs.

What support will I get to take part?

The group will be working directly with Chris and Parisa. Lynne will also support the group meetings. All the adults are here to provide support and make sure everyone's voice is heard.

To make sure you have the support you need for the project, we would like to connect with an organisation you work with who supports you. This will mean we can keep in touch easily and make sure the project works for everyone. You would be welcome to bring your worker with you to any meetings or arrange for them to be around if you would like to catch up with them after the meeting.

If you have any additional support needs, we would be happy to discuss any specific supports we can put in place to enable you to take part. We can also help provide wi-fi or phone top ups to support you to participate.

Young people who are involved also get vouchers following each session as a thank you for your time and participation.

The group is also likely to come into contact with other adults involved in Suicide Prevention Scotland on a regular basis.

How do I get involved?

You just need to let us know you would be interested in taking part by getting in touch with us. Please email Parisa on pshirazi@childreninscotland.org.uk.

When emailing us we need you to tell us the following information:

- Name
- Age
- Where in Scotland you live

We also need you to answer the following questions:

- Why do you want to get involved in this group?
- Why is it important that the views of children and young people with lived experience are considered by decision-makers, including people involved in Suicide Prevention Scotland?
- What do you like doing in your spare time and why?

When sending us an email to say you are interested, please copy in an adult from the organisation who will provide you with support during the project. This will mean we can keep in touch with both of you. You should talk to them before copying them into the email.

You can send us the answer to these questions just in an email. Or you may prefer to send us a short video? Or share your answers in a poem or poster? That's great! Just email those to us.

All of the information you share with us will be stored securely in line with [Children in Scotland's data protection policy](#). Let us know if you want to know more about this.

After you email us, we will then get in touch with you about next steps. If we get more applications than available places, we will then look at geographical and lived experience to ensure that the group is as representative as possible of young people from all over Scotland.

What if I want to stop being involved?

That is absolutely fine! It is totally up to you if you want to stop being involved, you just need to let us know.

It is also fine to take some breaks from the project and to skip meetings if you don't feel up to it. Your participation is based on what works for you.



What if I want to find out a bit more?

As part of inviting new members to join the group, we are going to hold a number of 'Meet and greet' sessions online via Zoom.

This will be a chance to meet members of the youth advisory group and find out if the group is right for you. We will hold some of these for young people and some for adults who are interested in finding out more about the group for young people they work with. These will take place on:

- Wednesday 10th July - 17:00 - 18:00 (for both adults and young people)
- Monday 15th July - 17:00 - 18:00 (for both adults and young people)
- Monday 22nd July - 17:00 - 18:00 (for both adults and young people)

Please get in touch if you would like to come along to one of these sessions.

If you have any questions or would prefer to meet staff at another time, please email Parisa on pshirazi@childreninscotland.org.uk.

