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From:

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27 May 2022 10:21

Sent:

To:

_WEB_Canals Strategy

Cc:

Subject:

Proposed Canals Strategy for Stroud District - Response

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Hello,

The [Gloucestershire Suicide Prevention Partnership](#) (GSPP), which is chaired and led by Gloucestershire County Council Public Health, welcomes Stroud District Council's consultation on its proposed Canals Strategy and would recommend incorporating suicide mitigation measures into the new Strategy.

Around a third of all suicides take place outside the home, in a public location of some kind, and not only can they attract harmful media attention they can also have significant psychological consequences for those who witness them or discover a body.

Whilst not all deaths by suicide can be prevented through mitigation measures in the urban environment, there are opportunities to take steps to keep people safe. In planning, a simple thing that can be done is to make sure that where there is public access to waterways, that these are designed in such a way that restricts access to or the possibility of falling into the water, e.g., physical barriers are installed, therefore reducing access to the means of suicide (in this situation the public location themselves). Retrofitting schemes can be expensive, cumbersome and poorly designed, so it is more effective to deal with this issue from the outset to ensure well-designed structures.

Reducing access to the means of suicide in public locations can interrupt the suicidal process which then enables the opportunity for last-minute interventions e.g., from a bystander or passing stranger. For this reason, it is important to equip people in all walks of life with the skills, confidence, and knowledge to intervene if they see someone in a public space who may be considering suicide.

With this in mind, we would like to highlight the [Preventing suicides in public places \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) resource which provides broad areas of action and evidence-based examples to prevent suicides in public locations. These interventions include installing physical barriers, providing suicide awareness/intervention training for staff working at the location, increasing opportunities for help seeking behaviour, e.g. the installation of Samaritans signs and more.

The GSPP would welcome consideration by Stroud District Council to apply this guidance into the new Strategy and other forms of development where there may be a risk of suicide attempts, where there is sufficient evidence that it may have an impact on preventing deaths. The GSPP are willing to provide support and advice to Stroud District Council in their application of this guidance and can be contacted for further information at suicideprevention@gloucestershire.gov.uk.

With best wishes,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
suicideprevention@gloucestershire.gov.uk

[Gloucestershire Suicide Prevention Partnership](#) (GSPP)

Please email me if you would like to join the GSPP and receive our regular updates