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**“Saving young lives: Preventing Suicide in Young People & Children. Implementing the National Inquiry recommendations”**

*Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2018, De Vere West One Conference Centre, London*

Andrew Clarke (National Implementation Lead – Forensic CAMHS) spoke about how services should change to be more effective in preventing suicide in Young People (YP). For example, improvements should be made around the access to services without long waiting lists, use of social media and online counselling, improve early intervention. A review of all specialised mental health services for young people was carried out in response to the government paper Future in Mind (2015) and the NHS England Five Year Forward View for Mental Health (2016). The findings suggest that there is a cohort of young people identified as being a risk to themselves, but previous services have not been able to treat them appropriately. Community Forensic Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (FCAMHS) is a programme created to young people who are usually involved in dangerous, high-risk behaviours towards others whether they are in contact with the youth justice system or not. This service wants to provide a flexible, accessible and specialist support for YP.

Other speaker in the conference focused on particular aspects of the suicidal phenomenon.

Insp. Philippa Smith (British Transport Police) disclosed that every year 350-400 people took their life via British railway accidents. £60m is the cost to the rail industry for fatalities each year and 12.646 police deployment hours are involved. In the year 2016/2017 the potential lifesaving interventions were 1,811 (this includes 1015 by police and 508 by rail staff).

Robert and Lotte Stringer had lost Hector who committed suicide, who was a son and a brother to them. After this tragedy they created “Hector’s House”, a project to prevent suicide and talk more openly about stigma and guilt associated with the suicide of a family member.

The Samaritans is a national organization that has two types of support: prevention and postvention. Postvention entails a “Step by Step” program specific to those who have been bereaved by suicide in order to cope with what has happened. Suicide prevention and postvention are closely related in fact postvention can also prevent further deaths. “Step by Step” can offer support with communications to parents or member of the community, dealing with press enquiries, managing memorials, organizing parents and staff meetings, providing confidential support for individuals, follow up talks and workshops.

Josh Bradlow (Policy Officer, Stonewall) spoke of research called the School Report (2017), done in collaboration with Centre for Family Research at the University of Cambridge. 3,731

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LGBT young people were involved, aged 11-19. Nine in ten trans young people and seven in ten LGB not-trans have thought about taking their own life. Out of those, 45% of trans YP and 22% of the LGB not trans have actively tried to take their own life. Vulnerability factors are social exclusion, poor mental health, a lack of family and social support, bullying and cyber-bullying.

Finally, Professor Andy Smith presented “Tackling the Blues” which is a sport, a physical activity and an education-based mental health awareness programme targeting young people aged 6-16 who are experiencing, or are at risk of, developing a mental illness. The programme is delivered by The Department of Sport and Physical Activity and The Faculty of Education at Edge Hill University and Everton in the Community. To date it has engaged over 300 young people weekly in primary schools, secondary schools and community groups. These results were found to increase children’s and young people’s self-confidence and self-esteem, reduce anxiety, allow them to better manage their mental health and relationships with others as well as improve their self-evaluation, co-operation and emotional intelligence. Supportive relationships established between mentors and participants were key to maintaining engagement, supporting mental health learning and building trust. Conclusively, providing children and young people with choice and ownership of the activities delivered developed their autonomy and decision-making skills.

These are all points that other services should be aware of in order to develop how they engage with and support children and young people.