

REPORT TO: Community Planning Implementation Group

MEETING DATE: 13 November 2006

BY: Director of Community Services

SUBJECT: 'Choose Life' – A National Strategy and Action Plan to Prevent Suicide in Scotland

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report and the associated papers is to advise CPIG that a 3 year progress report was produced in July 2006 in relation to the first phase of Choose Life in East Lothian (2003-2006). 'Choose Life' is the Scottish Executives National Strategy and Action Plan aimed at addressing the rising rate of suicides in Scotland.
- 1.2 This report and training strategy are attached as Appendices 1 + 2

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To note and endorse the report and its contents.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 East Lothian receives about £80,000 a year in relation to Choose Life and clear guidance was issued from the Scottish Executive as to its use. This money is allocated via Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) and is being distributed through the Local Authority revenue settlement.

East Lothian's allocation:

2003/4	2004/5	2005/6
£76,000	£79,000	83,000

- 3.2 Choose Life Funding was initially for 3 years but has now been extended for 2 more years at current levels – it is not anticipated for funding to continue beyond this time.
- 3.3 The first phase report request asked that by March 2007, CPPs should agree locally plans to secure the sustainability and mainstreaming of those suicide prevention actions, programmes and initiatives (currently

funded through local 'Choose Life' support funding) which require to be continued to ensure effective suicide prevention support in local areas.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Issues in relation to sustainability have been covered in relation to individual projects.
- 4.2 The fact that Choose Life funding was likely to be temporary was acknowledged at the beginning of the funding allocation process and many of the individual projects will be mainstreamed into their agencies or will have a natural end point. We have only agreed 3 year funding at present to all projects and any extensions will be subject to evaluation and exit strategies.
- 4.3 The co-ordination and planning functions can continue, as they are not dependent on Choose Life funding as can much of the training subject to charging for courses.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Financial - There are some services provided by CHANGES and CAB that will raise sustainability issues but some money from the local mental health strategy may support this work.
- 5.2 Personnel – None.
- 5.3 Other – None.

6 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 6.1 Report on First Phase of 'Choose Life' (2003–2006) (Appendix A)
- 6.2 Training strategy (Appendix B)

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DATE	3 Nov 2006

East Lothian

Report on First Phase of 'Choose Life' (2003–2006)

1. Introduction

The Scottish Executive launched 'Choose Life': a National Strategy and Action Plan aimed at addressing the rising rate of suicides in December 2002. It was not until the end of March 2003 that Community Planning Partnerships (CPP) received notification of their allocations and a draft guidance paper as to the required actions.

In the first phase of Choose Life allocation East Lothian received:

2003/4	2004/5	2005/6
£76,000	£79,000	£83,000

2. Overall progress towards meeting Choose Life key aims, objectives and target groups.

Initial priorities were to nominate a contact for local implementation [Our Choose Life Co-ordinator is Paul Noyes from East Lothian Council's Department of Community Services] and to develop a structure to take forward the Choose Life Strategy locally.

Given the relatively small amount of funding allocated to East Lothian the CPP priorities were to maximise the benefit of this funding within East Lothian. The decision was taken to utilise existing planning structures and functions within the CPP structure. A Choose Life implementation group was formed using the existing Public Health Team and the Choose Life Co-ordinator who is in fact the Planning officer for Mental Health Services. This group drives the delivery of the Choose Life Strategy in East Lothian.

The July 2003 'Guidance to Local Authorities' indicated that the Local Authority Choose Life Funding was provided to support three main aims:

- i) Supporting the improved co-ordination of efforts by local agencies to develop and implement local suicide prevention action plans.
- ii) Encouraging and supporting (more) innovative local voluntary services, community-based and self-help initiatives that contribute to the prevention of suicide in local neighbourhoods and communities.

iii) Developing and implementing local training programmes

The CPP endorsed the decision of the Choose Life Implementation Group in September 2003 to distribute resources in line with these aims allocating 20% of the Year 1 Choose Life funding to each of aims 1 and 3 allowing 60% of funding to be distributed to Community based initiatives. This decision allowed for a relatively early release of Choose Life Funding into the community.

Applications to seek funding in line with the Choose Life objectives and priority groups were distributed widely within the CPP in September 2003, to be returned by early November. Applications were required in a standard format that was designed to focus on the objectives and priority groups of the Choose Life Strategy. There was a focus in the application on clear outcomes and monitoring of these along with the requirement for an exit strategy, as funding is time limited.

In allocating the funding we also strove to ensure that funding added value to but did not replace existing services. A seminar was held at an early stage to get professionals views of gaps in service and this was used to support funding decisions.

Applications were judged by their potential to meet the Choose Life objectives and the priority groups being targeted. Also taken into account was 'what works' information, value for money, added value, from existing work, local need and 'fit' with other services.

All projects have a link worker from the Choose Life Implementation Group and are required to provide a yearly outcomes and progress report.

a) Keeping Focused on Objectives and Priority Groups

CHOOSE LIFE OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Early Prevention and Intervention

Objective 2: Responding to Immediate Crisis

Objective 3: Longer Term Work to Provide Hope and Support Recovery

Objective 4: Coping with Suicidal Behaviour and Completed Suicide

Objective 5: Promoting Greater Public Awareness and Encouraging People to Seek Help Early

Objective 6: Supporting the Media

Objective 7: Knowing What Works

CHOOSE LIFE PRIORITY GROUPS

- Children (especially looked after children)
- Young people (especially young men)
- People with mental health problems (in particular those in contact with mental health services and those with a severe mental illness such as people with severe depression or severe anxiety disorders)
- People who attempt suicide

- People affected by the aftermath of suicidal behaviour or a completed suicide
- People who abuse substances
- People in prison
- People who are recently bereaved
- People who have recently lost employment, and people who have been unemployed for a period of time
- People in isolated or rural communities
- People who are homeless

The major factor in the consideration of funding for community-based and self-help initiatives that contribute to the prevention of suicide locally, were the objectives and priority groups for Choose Life. We have tried to achieve a spread of projects across priority groups meeting as many objectives as possible. We have tried to maximise the benefit of a relatively small amount of funding by allocating small amounts of funding across a range of projects.

We are currently providing funding to 9 community projects in East Lothian.

Priority group

- **Children (especially looked after children)**

We are funding 2 projects in this priority group and we are committed to the objective of early prevention and intervention.

East Lothian Community Mental Health Team – ‘Incredible Years Parenting Programme’

Choose Life Funding from March 2003

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
£3807	£2792	£2792

This was a new initiative to provide a (validated) community based parenting programme to families in East Lothian with children (aged 2-8) who are exhibiting behaviour problems.

Choose Life objectives addressed:

- *Early prevention and intervention*

Providing effective accessible training to parents directly addresses the objective of early prevention and intervention for children who are at increased risk of emotional and behavioural problems or who are already exhibiting difficulties.

There is a body of mental health research which identifies resilience factors in children and families which protect against the development of mental health difficulties. Parenting training has shown to be the most effective method for preventing and intervening in behaviour problems in children.

The Incredible Years Parenting Programme is aimed at families where children may be at risk of developing emotional and behavioural problems in later life. The group is likely also be beneficial for parents who are at risk of suicide due to their own mental health difficulties and/or life events by improving parenting skills, coping skills and social isolation.

Each programme runs for 12 weeks (2½ hours per week) with a maximum of 12 parents per group.

The project has run 2 courses each year (years 1 & 2) and has now received its 3rd year of funding. The feedback from those attending has been very positive.

Sustainability

The Choose Life funding was given to purchase and pilot the programme in East Lothian and was only intended to be for 3 years. Having proved to be very successful the post of an Incredible Years Co-ordinator has been developed to take forward this work, with funding from the Changing Children's services fund specifically allocated to early years. So Choose Life funding will cease at the end of year 3 for this project.

School Nurse Health Project

Choose Life Funding from March 2003

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
£17,250	£15,825	£16,625

This project involved utilising 20 hours of dedicated school nurse time to facilitate and co-ordinate a structured approach to the delivery of mental, social and emotional health awareness amongst school children in East Lothian for a three year period.

A major part of the work has been in developing a resource pack called 'Headstrong' aimed mainly at primary 7 pupils which has been well received. It has been piloted in 2 schools but plans are to increase this to 12 schools in East Lothian annually. It is planned that once trained in the programme school health nurses will deliver the programme in their own schools. The programme has been co-facilitated with the CAMHS mental health team

A health 'drop in' has been developed at one High School and the school nurses are investigating how this can be extended to other schools.

An 'Agony Aunt' service is also running in 6 primary schools and is working well.

Choose Life objectives addressed:

- *Early prevention and intervention* - raising awareness about mental health and emotional literacy; increasing self esteem and confidence; a chance to speak in confidence to the school nurse.
- *Responding to immediate crisis* – having a support framework in place increases the effectiveness of responding to any immediate crisis; early recognition of mental health issues.
- *Promoting Greater Public Awareness and Encouraging People to Seek Help Early* – this initiative allows communication with parents to raise awareness about mental health and wellbeing; increase teachers recognition and awareness of mental health issues; disseminate good practice with partner agencies.

This initiative has generally been well received and efforts are being made to increase the number of schools taking part in the ‘Headstrong’ programme.

Sustainability

Funding has only been agreed for 3 years and it is planned funding for this project will cease at the end of year 3. The Headstrong programme has been developed and refined during the funding period; the challenge now is to integrate this in to the work of school nurses and schools in East Lothian.

Priority group

- *Young people (especially young men)*

Tranent Social Inclusion Partnership

Choose Life Funding from March 2003

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
£8,000	£8240	£8487

Funding was provided to this project to employ a 10-hour a week development worker to engage with young people particularly males (14 years to 20 years) in the Tranent SIP area in order to promote positive mental health. A community development approach has been adopted to develop a range of early interventions and supports leading to a greater awareness of mental health issues and reduce risks that might lead to suicidal behaviour.

This post was subject to a joint application with CHANGES community mental health project and in fact the worker is employed by changes but covers both projects. Work in relation to the SIP has involved:

- Work in the local high school
- Running a boys group raising discussion about mental health issues
- ‘Chat to Pat’ - this is an ongoing service in its early stages for young people over 12 years old where they can chat about any worries before they escalate.

- Setting up a young people's website – www.inyourhead.org - to encourage young people to seek help and provide accessible information relating to young peoples mental health.
- Delivering 'suicide talk' to youth workers in the area.
- Running an understanding anger group for boys

Choose Life objectives addressed:

Early prevention and intervention – Work to raise awareness about mental health issues, networking with young people and local youth workers.

Longer-term work to provide hope and support recovery – Linking with the work of CHANGES to access groups and resources that will support increased understanding, awareness and skills that promote self-help and recovery.

Promoting Greater Public Awareness and Encouraging People to Seek Help Early – Involving young people in anti-stigma and awareness raising to promote positive mental health.

This target group of 14-21 year olds (particularly boys) is a difficult group to reach but work is progressing well and progressing the work of the Choose Life agenda.

Sustainability

Funding has only been agreed for 3 years and decisions will need to be made as to the future of this project. It is likely that the most successful aspects of this work will form part of the work of tier 0 and tier 1 of the community mental health services developments relating to the Lothian Mental Health and Well-being strategy for which there is some funding available.

CHANGES

Choose Life Funding from March 2003

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
£8,000	£8240	£8487

[+ £5000 training money in year 3]

The CHANGES application was prepared in partnership with the Tranent SIP application and the two projects complement each other with the same work involved in both projects. The Changes work involves 10 hours per week project development worker time to work specifically with young men who are experiencing depression, anxiety, stress and panic and who are not coping with daily life.

Work of the project has mainly involved:

- Contributing to the promotion of public awareness around areas of stigma and mental health in East Lothian.
- Responding and engaging with appropriate enquiries from men, offering outreach/home visits in order to give information, listen and support people to identify needs and possible responses. About 100 men have

engaged with the project, many of them have gone on to take part in courses with CHANGES. Many of the men contacted the project as recommended by their GP or other health workers. From contact with the men involved it would seem that about a third of them have either attempted suicide or have had serious thoughts of taking their own life.

- In response to identified needs a number of short courses have been provided in - 'Positive Well-being', 'Panic Attack Awareness', 'Developing Positive Thinking' and 'Understanding Anger'.
- Well-being Walks in Haddington.
- Fortnightly support group for men.

Work of the project has been busy and well received and has undoubtedly contributed significantly to the National Choose Life Strategy.

ASIST – The development worker for this project is one of East Lothian's ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) trainers. £5000 has now been allocated to the project for the extra hours associated with this work.

Choose Life objectives addressed:

Early prevention and intervention – Promotion of positive well-being

Responding to immediate crisis – People make direct contact with the project at times of crisis for support.

Longer-term work to provide hope support and recovery – This is the objective that underpins all that CHANGES does. Men contacting the project have access to the whole range of CHANGES groups and resources.

Promoting Greater Public Awareness and Encouraging People to Seek Help Early – Development of publicity awareness aimed at encouraging men that it is OK to seek help and that they are not alone.

Sustainability

This will be an issue – It is anticipated that this project will be continued throughout the 5-year Choose Life period subject to favourable evaluation at the 3-year stage. Funding for this work along with that involved in the SIP will be the subject of proposals to the Lothian Mental Health and Well-being strategy for which there is some funding available.

Priority groups

- **People with mental health problems (in particular those in contact with mental health services and those with a severe mental illness such as people with severe depression or severe anxiety disorders)**
- **People who attempt suicide**

To some extent both Changes and Tranent SIP have been involved with people in these priority groups but we have funded a number of other projects with a more specific remit in these areas.

Haddington Citizens Advice Bureau – ‘Good Advice = Better Health Project’

Choose Life Funding from March 2003

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
£8,000	£8240	£8487

This project offers dedicated advice and information outreach clinics to people with mental ill health (10 hours per week advice worker post).

The post provides a (3 hour) advice clinic one day per week within the local psychiatric hospital (acute unit) and a 3 hour advice clinic one day per month within the local Mental Health resource unit (Tynepark). These advice clinics are now well established. Good working partnerships are in evidence with staff at both sites and there is a high level of awareness of the service amongst staff and service users.

Work of the project has mainly involved:

- Benefit claims on behalf of service users – Income support, Incapacity benefit, Disability Living Allowance, Tax Credits, Community Care Grants, Council Tax and Housing Benefit.
- Help with bankruptcy petitions.
- Help with Housing issues
- Representation at tribunals (Disability Living Allowance) – one user secured a weekly gain of £55 and a backdated payment of £2,250.
- In the first year the project secured £20,793 financial gains for service users and in the second year this rose to £36,191.

The project has provided very full annual reports with many case examples of users who have benefited from the service and comments from service users.

Choose Life objectives addressed:

Early prevention and intervention – The project is well placed to reach people who are at known risk of self-harm or suicidal behaviour. Reducing the stress factors associated with concerns such as debt and housing issues improves well-being.

Responding to immediate crisis – Many service users in hospital are at a time of crisis, difficulties in environmental issues can affect their mental health. [One service user with schizophrenia identified a demand for repayment of an £800 tax credit as a significant factor in hospital admission].

Longer-term work to provide hope support and recovery – The project offers a person centred approach and will often maintain contact for several months in relation to ongoing advice/benefit issues once a person has left hospital.

Promoting Greater Public Awareness and Encouraging People to Seek Help Early – CAB has raised awareness in relation to the issues of the poverty and stress on well-being, and how people can get help.

Sustainability

There is no obvious source of additional funding at the present time for this project – the ‘exit strategy’ involved using years 1+2 to build evidence to secure further funding – it is likely that choose Life funding will continue at

least into year 4. The future of this project may also be influenced by the change in location of local acute psychiatric hospital beds.

Stepping Out – Supper Club

Choose Life Funding from March 2003

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
£5537	£5815	£6106

This project was funded to extend a successful 'supper club' initiative to another area in East Lothian. The objective is a fairly simple but very valuable one, to provide a group of eight people with mental health problems (with particular emphasis on those at risk of suicide) to meet fortnightly to prepare, share and enjoy a good and nourishing supper. They work with a tutor in pleasant surroundings where they can socialise, relax and enjoy themselves. The group generally changes every 3 months with the aim of providing places for 32 people each year.

Work of the project has mainly involved:

- Running the supper club sessions.
- Introduction to healthy eating
- Shopping, budgeting and cooking skills
- Introduction to new foods
- Promoting discussion
- Production of a recipe booklet

Choose Life objectives addressed:

Early Prevention and Intervention – group members are able to share worries and concerns with others members and staff, enabling support to be offered at an early stage if difficulties are occurring.

Longer-term work to provide hope support and recovery – the group gets members out of the house, helps them socialise and share common problems, it also improves living skills.

Sustainability

This project runs in blocks of 3 months so the group can stop at the end of any block. It is not anticipated that Choose Life in East Lothian will continue funding this project beyond the 3rd year of funding. The project is likely to attract a range of other charitable funding based on the evidence of their success.

Tynepark multi-media project

Choose Life Funding from March 2003

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
£4000	£5000	£5000

Funding has been made available to Tynepark Mental Health Resource Centre to develop a multimedia exhibition with live drama and forum workshops to stimulate discussion and raise awareness of suicide and mental health issues within the community. The project is open to all users of mental health services and has particularly focused on issues relating to suicide and suicidal behaviour. Some of the funding is for sessional worker costs but money has also been provided for equipment to establish the project. About 35 individuals have been involved in the work of the project. Some have contributed short scripts and poetry, others have taken part in photo and film shoots on a drop-in-drop out basis, as they felt able.

Work of the project has mainly involved:

- Development of a 'road show' drama presentation.
- One member has composed and professionally recorded a Choose life song.
- School performances and discussions.
- Production of Interactive displays, photography, video, posters and art.
- Drama productions.
- Production of a promotional DVD.

Choose Life objectives addressed:

Early Prevention and Intervention – Involvement in the group allows members to share worries and concerns with others members and staff, enabling support to be offered at an early stage if difficulties are occurring.

Longer-term work to provide hope support and recovery – the group provides focused and therapeutic activity.

Promoting Greater Public Awareness and Encouraging People to Seek Help Early – Using a multimedia approach is an excellent and accessible medium to raise awareness in relation to the issues of mental health and well being to a wide audience.

The work of this project in particular spans all 3 Choose Life aims for Local Authorities, Such a project is a helpful tool in supporting the improved co-ordination of efforts by local agencies, it supports a community-based self-help initiative and is a helpful resource in training.

Sustainability

This project's funding is not planned to continue beyond the 3-year stage, much of the funding was to establish the project and provide equipment. The group will be mainstreamed within the resource centre services. There may be one off payments to the group in relation to incurred expenses in relation to training or events.

All of the above projects received funding at the beginning of the Choose Life process in East Lothian.

The final 2 projects did not receive funding until March 2004 when it was agreed by the implementation group that there was a small amount of money still available that could be committed to community initiatives.

Headway – East Lothian

Choose Life Funding from March 2004

Year 2	Year 3
£5000	£5000

Headway East Lothian was trying to secure money toward the cost of a development worker for people with acquired brain injury. They were able to present research evidence in relation to a significantly higher risk of suicide in this group and a lack of specialist services.

This part time development worker post has now been established with money coming from a number of charitable sources.

The development worker has:

- Increased group membership from 26 to 40.
- Improved publicity for the group.
- Run support group meetings (4hrs every Monday + 2 hrs every Wednesday evening).
- Involvement in awareness raising about acquired brain injury.

Choose Life objectives addressed:

The Headway group work mainly falls into objectives:

Early Prevention and Intervention

Responding to Immediate Crisis

Longer Term Work to Provide Hope and Support Recovery

The group provides early intervention and support to avoid problems and reduce the risks that might lead to suicidal behaviour. It provides support and services to people at risk and people in crisis and longer-term work to provide hope and recovery.

Sustainability

The project are aware that only time limited funding was agreed and are actively seeking alternative sources of funding. The Choose Life money has helped establish this service and demonstrate the need for provision in this area. It is not anticipated that funding for this project will continue beyond year three.

Befriending Scheme

Choose Life Funding from March 2004

Year 2	Year 3
£5000	£5000

This project was struggling with viability in relation to its volunteer budget. The service provides structured companionship to adults within East Lothian who are socially isolated due to health, disability or personal circumstances. Many of the project users have mental health problems. The project closed for a number of months due to funding difficulties and was much missed.

Work of the project has mainly involved:

- Recruitment and training of volunteers
- Matching of volunteers and befriendees
- Monitoring and support of matches
- Establishment of a telephone befriending service
- Facilitating volunteer support group

Choose Life objectives addressed:

This projects work also mainly falls into objectives:

Early Prevention and Intervention

Responding to Immediate Crisis

Longer Term Work to Provide Hope and Support Recovery

The group provides early intervention and support to avoid problems of social isolation and seeks to establish respectful relationships and opportunities for befriendees.

Sustainability

Choose Life agreed 2 years support funding to this project in order to provide an extended time scale for them to apply for additional resources. It is not planned for funding to continue beyond year three.

Other Priority Groups

- **People affected by the aftermath of suicidal behaviour or a completed suicide**

We are in contact with CRUISE in relation to work in this area and are likely to use the videos they have produced in East Lothian. We need to establish the best agency to deliver such support locally.

- **People who abuse substances**

This is an area, which will be a priority in the 2nd phase of Choose Life funding and will be addressed by linking with the DAAT planning structure.

- **People in prison**

We do not have a prison in this area but will keep in touch with developments through the National Choose Life structure and our local criminal Justice service.

- **People who are recently bereaved**

We have established counselling services attached to GP practices – and a local directory of Mental Health and support services for East Lothian is widely available.

- **People who have recently lost employment, and people who have been unemployed for a period of time**

This has not been addressed as yet.

- **People in isolated or rural communities**

This is an issue for East Lothian, which is being addressed through the wider community planning structure.

- **People who are homeless**

This is a priority grouping for our housing services.

b) Improving Co-ordination and Achieving Wider Ownership to and Awareness of Suicide Prevention

This is an area that is vitally important and we are aware that if we are to achieve the Choose Life National Strategy suicide reduction targets of 20% in 10 years then we need to achieve a wide ownership and awareness of Choose Life in East Lothian.

We have made considerable progress in this area and have held a number of events and seminars to bring organisations and individuals together to talk about suicide and suicidal behaviour, which is often a taboo subject.

A directory of mental health resources for East Lothian has been developed, published and widely circulated in partnership with East Lothian Health Care Co-operative and Tynepark Resource Centre. This has been well received by those working in mental health services and service users.

Specific work in the area of coordination and wider ownership has involved:

- Successful one day conference held in September 2005 with the aims of raising awareness of Choose Life, develop networking amongst local practitioners and promote good practise
- Multi media group performance for local school and development of a promotional DVD
- A ½ day seminar on the Mental Health of Children' s & Young People: A Framework for Prevention promotion and Care delivered jointly with Children's Services Planning. Leading to the formation of a working group and the development of an action plan
- A ½ day seminar on After a Suicide – to look at coping with completed suicide and aimed at mental health services staff in statutory and voluntary sector

- A steering group has been formed to organise a showcase of choose life projects in Sept 2006 at the Brunton Hall as part of International Suicide Prevention Week 2006.

c) Planning and Delivery of Training and Education at a Local Level

Choose Life East Lothian is currently supporting the development and delivery of Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) & Mental Health First Aid Training (MHFA).

ASIST had been delivered to 136 people by end of May 2006, mostly to people in professional care giving roles.

MHFA had been delivered to the staff of a voluntary sector children's services provider with plans to open courses out to the general public in September 2006. In addition the following is available or has been delivered in East Lothian over the last year: -

- Choose Life East Lothian has supported the delivery of the 'Incredible Years' Parenting programme by staff in the East Lothian Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) team.
- Choose Life has supported the school nursing team to develop the 'Headstrong' resource for school children in P7 and S1.
- Mental Health Promotion Training is offered by Lothian NHS as part of its regular calendar of health promotion training.
- Self-harm Awareness Training provided by Penumbra has been accessed by a number of East Lothian staff with support from East Lothian Choose Life.
- Choose Life has organised East Lothian wide co-ordinating and networking event for people involved in mental health improvement.
- Choose Life East Lothian has supported Tynepark to develop its multi media group to deliver information about mental health issues in a variety of medias.
- Changes Community health supports a range of promotional and awareness raising events related to mental health issues.
- Parent 4 Parents organises training and awareness raising events for parents on mental health.
- Young Guns organises seminars on current issues for young men's mental health promoted to East Lothian caregivers.

- The East Lothian Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) in East Lothian provide regular information and advice surgeries for people involved in caring for young people.

There will be a very specific focus on learning and training in the second phase of Choose Life in East Lothian and the Choose Life implementation group has developed a 'Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Promotion Learning & Training Action Plan' (Appendix 1).

d) Support to the (Local) Media in the Reporting of Suicide

We have circulated advice and guidance that we have received from Choose Life NIST in relation to our local press. We have not had any specific issues of concern locally and have a good relationship with the local press with regard to publicity for Choose Life issues.

3. Achievement of local milestones and proposed future action

The Milestones to be achieved at local level by 2006 were identified in East Lothian's Choose Life Local Action plan (December 2004).

The following is not an exhaustive list of the achievement of East Lothian Choose Life but does record key highlights. A full report of progress will be available when the planned review of the Local Choose Life Action Plan takes place in the autumn of 2006.

Establishment of effective local alliances with recognised co-ordination

- ✓ Local partnership developed to implement Choose Life in East Lothian
- ✓ Steering group formed to organise a showcase of choose life projects in International suicide prevention week 2006.
- ✓ A ½ day seminar on the Mental Health of Children's & Young People: A Framework for Prevention promotion and Care delivered jointly with Children's Services Planning. Leading to the formation of a working group and the development of an action plan.

Local action plans for implementation in place with annual reviews and updates

- ✓ Suicide Prevention action plan developed for East Lothian and agreed by Community Planning Partners.
- ✓ Review of Local Action Plan to take place Autumn 2006.

Development of local health improvement and community plans incorporating key points of local suicide reduction plans

- ✓ Suicide prevention is incorporated into Joint Health Improvement Plan for East Lothian.

Action underway to implement local action plans with additional local investment on top of the 'Choose Life' implementation support fund

- ✓ Co-ordination and Choose Life activity has been incorporated into the remit of Mental Health Planner and Public Health Workers allowing all Choose Life funding in East Lothian to be targeted at the main objectives and priority groups.
- ✓ Additional support funding has been made available from the CHP (Community Health Partnership) as a contribution to the East Lothian Mental Health Directory.

Provision of funding support that helps to direct resources to priority groups within mainstream programmes and activities

- ✓ Choose Life Project Nurse employed to lead work in school aimed at addressing mental health literacy, promoting self-esteem, and supporting transition from primary to secondary school.
- ✓ Headstrong pack developed by East Lothian school nursing service, and a one day training on the pack delivered for school nurses across Lothian.

Local innovative practice established and undertaken by local community and voluntary groups

- ✓ Local voluntary project – Stepping Out – supported to develop supper club for users of mental health services who were at risk of experiencing suicidal thoughts.
- ✓ Citizens Advice Bureau supported to deliver money advice at Herdmanflat hospital and Tynepark resource centre.
- ✓ Development worker employed to address identified mental health needs of men and in particular young men. This work is being carried forward in partnership between Tranent Social Inclusion Partnership & CHANGES community health project.
- ✓ Mental health Befriending organisation supported to continue its work.

Support given to establish and maintain local self-help groups

- ✓ Multi media project launched supporting users of mental health services to develop a variety of mediums for promoting mental health and talking about suicide.
- ✓ Local voluntary group working with Brain injured adults supported to deliver support to a group of people who are at higher risk of suicide.

Local training programmes developed

- ✓ Incredible Years Parenting Classes run for parents of children with behavioural problems.
- ✓ Incredible Years Parenting Classes further developed with support from Changing Children's Service fund
- ✓ Staff identified for and supported to train as trainers in Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training. Almost 200 local caregivers trained in ASIST.

- ✓ East Lothian first Mental Health First Aid Trainer completes training and delivers first course to staff working with disadvantaged young people
- ✓ A ½ day seminar on After a Suicide – to look at coping with completed suicide and aimed at mental health services staff in statutory and voluntary sector.

Local areas provided with effective support and information

- ✓ Multi media group perform for local school and develop a promotional DVD
- ✓ A directory of mental health resources for East Lothian developed in partnership with East Lothian Health Care Co-operative and Tynepark Resource Centre

Local developments informed by evidence of effective interventions and by sharing of practical experience

- ✓ Successful one day conference held in Sept 2005 with the aims of raising awareness of 'Choose Life, develop networking amongst local practitioners and promote good practise.

4. Plans for sustainability and mainstreaming of local Choose Life initiatives evaluated as successful

Issues in relation to sustainability have been covered in relation to individual projects. The fact that Choose Life funding was likely to be temporary was acknowledged at the beginning of the funding allocation process and many of the individual projects will be mainstreamed into their agencies or will have a natural end point. We have only agreed 3 year funding at present to all projects and any extensions will be subject to evaluation and exit strategies.

The co-ordination and planning functions can continue, as they are not dependent on Choose Life funding as can much of the training subject to charging for courses.

There are some services provided by CHANGES and CAB that will raise sustainability issues but some money from the local mental health strategy may support this work.

5. Extent of linkage and absorption of suicide prevention activities within related local strategies and policies

There is evidence that suicide prevention activities are becoming part of East Lothian local strategies and Policies.

- There is a Suicide Prevention Action Plan that has been developed for East Lothian and agreed by Community Planning Partners.

- Suicide prevention is now incorporated into Joint Health Improvement Plan for East Lothian.
- The Joint Mental Health and Well-being Strategy for Lothian and Local Implementation Plans refer to Choose Life objectives.

6. Conclusion

We feel that we have made real progress in East Lothian in relation to the Choose Life agenda as this report demonstrates. We look forward to developing the Strategy locally into the second phase and beyond.

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Chair of Community Planning Implementation Group (CPIG)

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chooselife

A national strategy and action plan
to prevent suicide in Scotland

Suicide Prevention & Mental Health Promotion Learning & Training Action Plan 2006 - 2008

Draft 21/6/06

chooselife

A national strategy and action plan
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Suicide Prevention & Mental Health Promotion Learning & Training Action Plan 2006 – 2008

Introduction

If mental health promotion and suicide prevention is truly everyone's business then it is important that opportunities for training and learning about mental health issues are available and accessible to a diverse range of professional and community groups.

Training forms a significant part of the [Choose Life National Strategy and Action Plan](#) to Prevent Suicide in Scotland, and a national training strategy is currently being developed.

The focus of much of suicide prevention work in East Lothian to date has been raising understanding and awareness of suicide, and challenging the stigma associated with suicide and mental health problems.

We know that many people who complete suicide do attempt to communicate their intent in one manner or another, and therefore the more people who are aware of the danger signs and are confident to intervene the more opportunity there will be to prevent people attempting suicide. We believe training and learning has a vital role to play in reducing the number of attempted and completed suicides in East Lothian.

We also know that of those that complete suicide in East Lothian only a minority are actively involved with health services because of their mental state. Therefore it is vital that knowledge and skills about suicide prevention is disseminated widely in the community.

Suicide & mental ill health can affect any one of us and it is our responsibility to find ways to make suicide-safer communities.

Objectives of the Plan

This action plan has been developed by the Choose Life Implementation Group in East Lothian and seeks to build on and develop the good work that is already taking place.

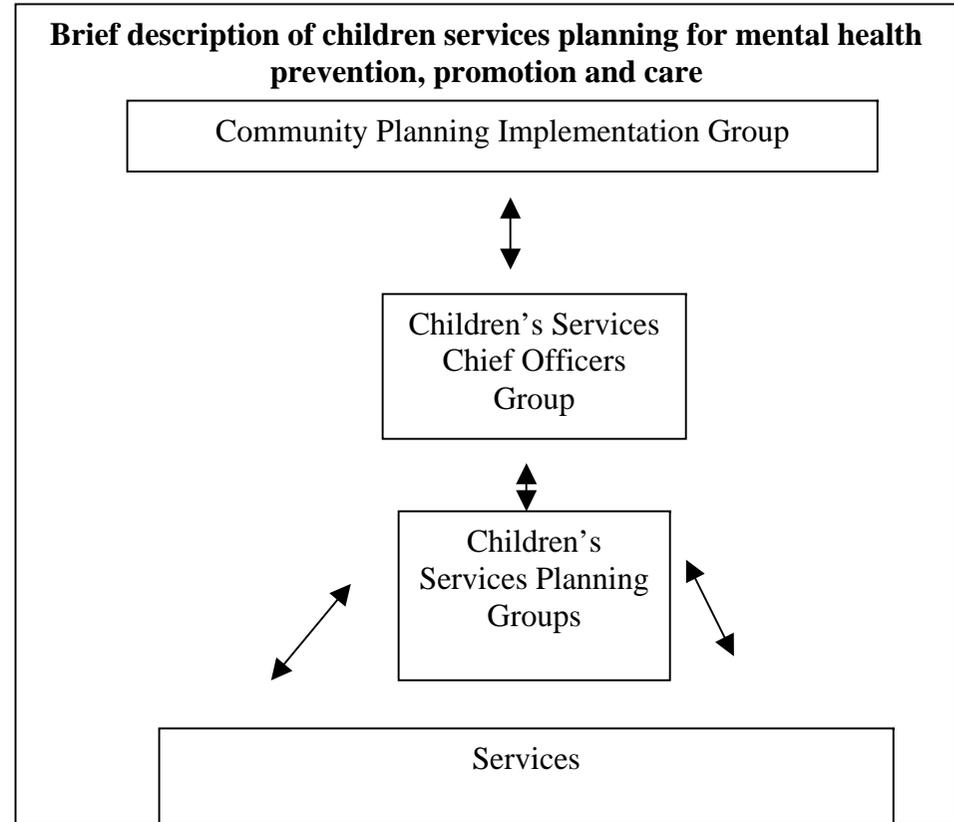
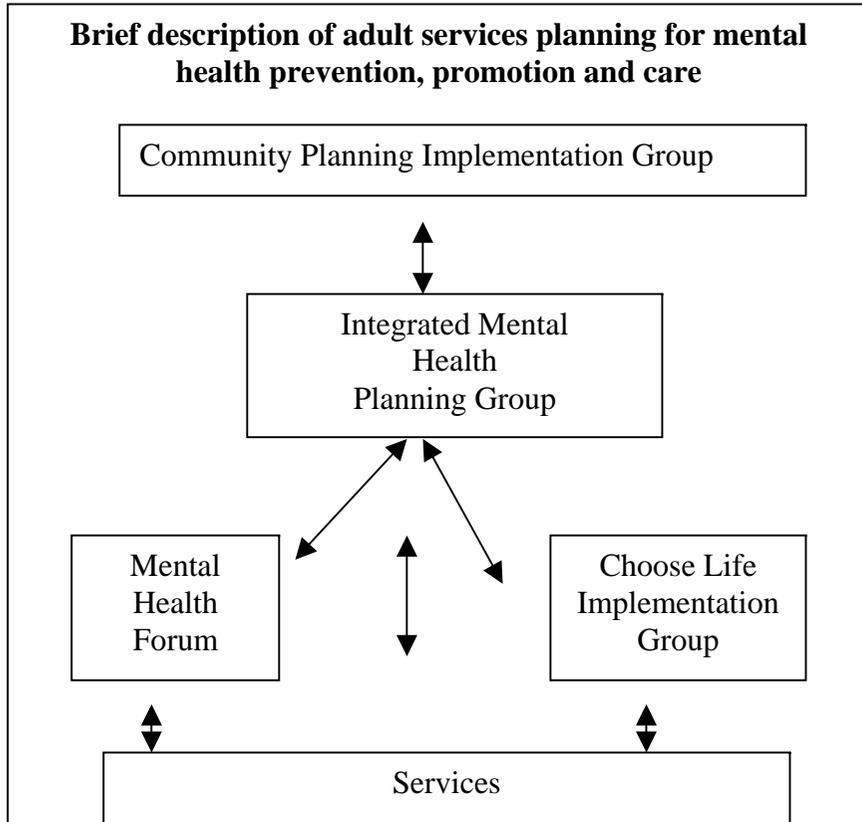
This action plan is concerned only with training and learning that develops capacity for mental health promotion and specifically suicide prevention. It does **not** attempt to include the mental health aspect of training and learning for personal growth and well-being, which are already a part of the East Lothian Learning Partnership strategy and action plan. Nor does it attempt to include training and learning support for the range of therapeutic and clinical interventions available in East Lothian, which is planned for through service providers and the East Lothian Mental Health Strategy.

Phase II of 'Choose Life' in East Lothian will have a major focus on training and learning for suicide prevention, and on ensuring that the learning from phase one is sustained and where appropriate mainstreamed into services. The aim of this action plan is to ensure that the work planned for phase II of 'Choose Life' is co-ordinated and directed at achieving the overall goal of reducing suicide, and promoting positive mental health in East Lothian

The action plan also begins to shape the way in which learning and training for suicide prevention and the broader promotion of mental health and anti stigma work might be co-ordinated and sustained beyond the end of the 'Choose Life' initiative.

Planning structures for mental health in East Lothian.

East Lothian has two distinct planning processes for mental health care, prevention and promotion, both are linked to planning for care services in relation to mental health – one for adults and one for children & young people.



Current Training and Learning Opportunities in Suicide Prevention & Mental Health Promotion.

The interventions listed below are those that are specifically aimed at developing knowledge, skills and understanding on mental health promotion issues and specifically suicide prevention. It does not include the range of educational experiences that are aimed at improving well-being and personal development, nor the range of therapeutic interventions and mental health support services.

Choose Life East Lothian is currently supporting the development and delivery of Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training & Mental Health First Aid Training. ASIST had been delivered to 136 people by end of May 2006, mostly to people in professional care giving roles. MHFA had been delivered to the staff of a voluntary sector children's services provider with plans to open courses out to the general public in Sept 2006. In addition the following is available or has been delivered in East Lothian over the last year: -

- ✓ Choose Life East Lothian has supported the delivery of the 'Incredible Years' Parenting programme by staff in the CAMHS team
- ✓ Choose Life has supported the school nursing team to develop the 'Headstrong' resource for school children in P7 and S1
- ✓ Mental Health Promotion Training is offered by Lothian NHS as part of its regular calendar of health promotion training
- ✓ Self-harm Awareness Training provided by Penumbra has been accessed by a number of East Lothian staff with support from East Lothian Choose Life
- ✓ Choose Life has organised East Lothian wide co-ordinating and networking event for people involved in mental health improvement.
- ✓ Choose Life East Lothian has supported Tynepark to develop its multi media group to deliver information about mental health issues in a variety of medias.
- ✓ Changes Community health supports a range of promotional and awareness raising events related to mental health issues.
- ✓ Parent 4 Parents organises training and awareness raising events for parents on mental health
- ✓ Young Guns organises seminars on current issues for young men's mental health promoted to East Lothian caregivers.
- ✓ The East Lothian Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) in East Lothian provide regular information and advice surgeries for people involved in caring for young people.

Issues in training and learning for mental health promotion and suicide prevention

Diversity

Suicide prevention & mental health promotion necessarily involves a diverse range of people and services across the spectrum of age groups and settings. Mental Health Promotion is then definitely **not** a situation in which 'One size fits all'. Even training that is designed for a broad target group such as ASIST & MHFA is not suitable to all sectors and age groups.

Mental health promotion also covers a diverse range of issues from challenging stigma and suicide prevention to stress reduction and emotional literacy. Obviously different client groups have different priorities when it comes to learning and training needs in relation to mental health.

Learning and training about improving mental health also has a diversity of delivery vehicles from experiential training to written information with different implementation costs and sustainability issues.

Co-ordination and Planning

Currently need for learning and training in mental health promotion including suicide prevention is assessed on a service by service basis, if at all. Co-ordinating training and learning needs on mental health promotion across services is not currently a feature of planning processes within East Lothian.

Thinking about community needs for mental health improvement training and learning is not currently a feature of community planning within East Lothian. However, the East Lothian Learning Partnership does provide a wide range of adult learning opportunities that support well-being and personal growth.

The development of the East Lothian mental health strategy has clearly placed the promotion of mental health and suicide prevention as a key component of the mental health strategy. However, it is important that the responsibility for promotion of positive mental health and the prevention of suicide is not seen as the preserve of mental health services.

Capacity for meeting training & learning needs

Agencies have significant pressures on training budgets, which tend not to have been a growth area in budgets over the last decade. Training resources are usually directed to core service delivery areas. Skilled trainers are available within statutory services and the voluntary sector but releasing such individual from service delivery presents considerable difficulties.

Some learning & training needs in mental health promotion can be most effectively met by targeting key groups. For example awareness of self-harming behaviour is a key issue for youth workers and teachers particularly 'Guidance Staff'. Other forms of training need to reach a much wider population if they are to achieve their real potential benefit. ASIST & MHFA are examples of this type of training, where the need is to raise awareness and knowledge across a community and not just in key individuals. The capacity for the former can be feasibly met through purchasing from external providers, but the latter would be much more difficult to meet on this basis and needs a sustainable local capacity for delivery.

Evaluation

Measuring the impact and effectiveness of learning and training in mental health promotion & suicide prevention is not an issue that has been addressed in any systematic manner with East Lothian planning processes. In East Lothian it may not be feasible to fully evaluate the impact of the training delivered, but the question we will need to answer is – ‘How far into the community are we reaching with training and learning?’

To answer this question it will be important for us to track the following: -

- number of people who have received training
- professional roles of those trained if any
- geographical spread of those receiving training
- type of training delivered
- user perception of quality & usefulness of training received

Moving Forward

The development of training and learning on mental health promotion and suicide prevention in East Lothian needs to address some key challenges:

- 1) Ensuring that development of training and learning is co-ordinated across agencies and service boundaries
- 2) Ensuring that priority areas for training and learning can be delivered on a sustainable basis within East Lothian
- 3) Ensuring that service providers identify training & learning on mental health promotion and suicide prevention is prioritised
- 4) Ensuring that appropriate training & learning is available
- 5) Ensuring that appropriately qualified trainers are available within East Lothian
- 6) Ensuring that appropriate linkages are made with other learning and training strategies

The following action plan is an initial attempt to address some of these issues

	Objective	Action	Outcome	Lead agency / individual	Timescale
1.	Improve co-ordination of learning and training for mental health promotion and suicide prevention	Develop an adult Mental Health Learning Network in East Lothian within adult mental health planning structures	Co-ordination of opportunities for learning and training in adult mental health, and development of information sharing	Lothian NHS (Mental health Promotion Specialist East Lothian Public Health Team	End 2006
1a.		Develop a Children & Young Peoples Mental Health Learning Network within Children's Services Planning structures	Co-ordination of opportunities for learning and training in children and young people's mental health and development of information sharing.	Training sub group of Children's Services Planning process	End 2007
2.	Developing sustainability for training and learning on mental health promotion with in East Lothian	Identify funding and resources for learning and training in mental health promotion	Resources available to deliver learning and training mental health promotion	Lothian NHS (Mental health Promotion Specialist East Lothian Public Health Team Integrated Mental health Planning group Children's services COG	On-going
2a		Identify & implement new funding arrangements for ASIST by end 2008	ASIST is sustainable beyond current choose life funding	Choose Life East Lothian	End 2008
3.	Ensure service providers prioritise mental health promotion and suicide prevention within training and learning plans	Training needs assessment	Identify training needs Workers in adult services Workers in and children and young people Community	Integrated Mental Health Planning Group Children's Services COG	End 2007

draft 21/6/06

	Objective	Action	Outcome	Lead agency / individual	Timescale
4.	Ensure appropriate training resources are available	Continue to deliver Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training with the target of training 1% of EL population in either ASIST of MHFA	Minimum x courses per year Awareness of suicide and how to provide initial support and to access help increased across a range of statutory and community agencies	Choose Life East Lothian	End 2013
4a.		Make the 'Suicide Talk' programme available in East Lothian	Deliver 'Suicide Talk' in International Suicide Week and on x occasions	Choose Life East Lothian	Dec 2006
4b.		Continue to deliver Mental Health First Aid with the target of training 1% of EL population in either ASIST of MHFA	Minimum x courses per year	Choose Life East Lothian	End 2008
4c.		Develop and deliver training in relation to postvention	Training education in what happens after a suicide available within East Lothian	Choose Life East Lothian	End 2006
4d.		Support delivery of 'Evidence into Practise' programme by 2007	Greater awareness of evidence base for mental health prevention and promotion	George Clark mental Health Promotion Specialist & Ginnie Moreton Health Promotion Specialist	End 2007
		Support uptake of Mental health Promotion course delivered by Lothian NHS	X no of people have participated in the course	Ginnie Moreton Health Promotion Specialist	End 2008
5.	Ensure that qualified trainers are available within East Lothian	Recruit & Train two additional trainers for ASIST	Increase number of courses and sustainability of training resource	Choose Life East Lothian	March 2007
		Recruit & train two additional trainers for MHFA	Increase number of courses and sustainability of training resource	Choose Life East Lothian	March 2007
6.	Ensuring appropriate linkage with other strategies	Negotiate continuing support for learning and training on mental health promotion and suicide prevention in JHIP	Maintaining linkage with Public health with East Lothian	Choose Life East Lothian	Ongoing
6a		Develop support for learning networks in planning groups	Learning networks linked into appropriate planning processes	Choose Life East Lothian	March 2007
6b		Liase with ELLP on a regular basis	ELLP informed and aware of action plan	Choose Life East Lothian	End 2006

