



Suicide Safety Policy

Date Agreed: 15th April 2022

Review Date: 14th April 2023

1. Purpose and Context

- 1.1. Rates of suicide are 5 times higher in male prisoners and 20 times higher in female prisoners than in the general population. Internationally, high rates of suicide have been consistently identified for people in police custody, the courts, and probation services in the community.
- 1.2. The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear framework for the prevention of suicide and the procedures to follow in the event of a suicide.
- 1.3. This policy is intended to help suicide prevention by encouraging a culture of hope, compassion and connectedness, enhancing confidence in dealing with the subject of suicide, and reducing stigma around suicidality and its contributing factors.

2. Scope

- 2.1. The policy sets out LandWorks' principles and methods of helping create a suicide safer community and to increase suicide awareness. The policy cannot cover all eventualities and it is recognised that not all suicide is preventable. The policy aims to minimise suicide and attempted suicide in so far as is possible.
- 2.2. This policy applies to trainees (those currently on placement at LandWorks), graduates (former trainees), and staff (including trustees, paid staff and volunteers) at LandWorks.
- 2.3. This policy should be read alongside our other policies including:
 - **Safeguarding Policy and Procedures**
 - **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**

3. Definitions

- 3.1 **Suicide** is the act of intentionally ending one's own life.
- 3.2 **Suicidal thoughts**, also known as **suicidal ideation**, can range from being preoccupied by abstract thoughts about ending one's life, to thinking about methods of suicide, or making clear plans to take one's life.

3.3 **Suicidal behaviours** mean behaving in a way that puts one's life in danger.

3.4 **Means** of suicide refers to the method used by an individual to end their own life.

3.5 **Postvention** means interventions taking place after a suicide has occurred to address the care of bereaved survivors, caregivers, and health care providers; to destigmatize the tragedy of suicide and to assist with the recovering process; and to serve as a secondary prevention effort to minimize the risk of subsequent suicides due to psychological responses including contagion. Postvention efforts also enhance suicide prevention by providing support to the survivors.

3.6 **Suicide Cluster** The term "suicide cluster" describes a situation in which more suicides than expected occur in terms of time, place, or both. It is difficult to precisely define a cluster. A suicide cluster usually includes 3 or more deaths; however, 2 suicides occurring in a specific community or setting (such as a prison or offender resettlement project) in a short time period should also be taken very seriously in terms of possible links and impacts (even if the deaths are apparently unconnected), particularly in the case of those impacted by the criminal justice system.

4. Policy Principles

4.1 LandWorks' beliefs about suicide and its aims at prevention.

A. LandWorks believes that every suicide is a tragedy.

B. Suicide is complex – We acknowledge that thoughts of suicide are common among those who have been impacted by the criminal justice system and also that suicide is a complex phenomenon. There are a number of contributory factors surrounding a suicide and the reasons are often complex and individual to that person.

However, we believe that there are lessons that may be learned from each death that may help to prevent future deaths.

C. Stigma – LandWorks recognises that the stigma surrounding suicide and mental illness can be both a barrier to help seeking and a barrier to offering help. LandWorks is committed to tackling suicide stigma. In our language and in our working relationships, we will promote open, sensitive talk that does not stigmatise or perpetuate taboos. This will include avoiding the use of language which perpetuates unhelpful notions that suicide is criminal, sinful or selfish. We know that unhelpful myths and misconceptions surrounding suicide can inhibit people in seeking and accessing appropriate help when it is most needed.

D. Compassionate Community - As an organisation we recognise that trainees, graduates and staff may seek out someone whom they trust with their concerns. We want to play our part in

supporting anyone who may have thoughts of suicide. We aim to have a compassionate community of trainees and staff which encourages disclosure of distress, and which identifies, signposts and follows up with those who are getting into difficulty.

E. The importance of Safety - We know that people who are having thoughts of suicide may or may not also be behaving in a way that puts their life in danger (suicidal behaviours). People experiencing suicidal thoughts are potentially at risk of acting on these thoughts. Those who are already engaging in suicidal behaviours are also clearly at risk of death or harm. LandWorks wants to work with our trainees, graduates and staff who may be thinking about suicide, or acting on their thoughts of suicide. We want to support them, sometimes working in partnership with other professionals where this may enhance suicide safety.

F. Talking about suicide does not in itself create or worsen risk - We will provide our trainees and staff with opportunities to speak openly about their concerns with people who are ready, willing and able to support them. We want to ensure it is possible for everyone to do so safely. This will be in a way that leads to support and help where this is needed. We will do all we can to refrain from acting in a way that stops anyone from seeking the help they need when they are struggling with thoughts of suicide.

G. Support - We will provide a range of support for our staff, trainees and graduates which is accessible and culturally appropriate for those who are experiencing difficulties. This supplements, but does not replace, statutory support available. We will keep our support services under regular review to ensure that they remain relevant and appropriate.

H. Communications - We recognise the importance of openness and will encourage trainees to involve support workers, family and others whom they trust early if they are feeling distressed. We encourage good communication between all who are involved with trainee and graduate welfare. We will ensure that we signpost all the available support available to staff, trainees and graduates in all relevant areas of LandWorks such as the resettlement office. This includes both support provided by LandWorks and that available externally.

I. Smooth Transitions - We recognise that transition both into and out of placement at LandWorks can be hard for trainees and LandWorks will work together with trainees and the prison and probation services in our area to help enable smooth transitions.

J. Misconduct, Hate Crime, Bullying and Harassment - We aim to prevent all forms of misconduct, hate crime, bullying and harassment. We will take action to educate and inform trainees and staff on these matters so that we promote open, inclusive, accessible communities. Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy reflects LandWorks' commitment to the importance of mutual respect and dignity of all staff, trainees, visitors and members of the LandWorks

community in their work and interactions with others. We will undertake appropriate campaigns and review our reporting and recording systems to ensure they are fit for purpose.

4.2 Intervention

A. Alert - We aim to be alert to signs and vulnerabilities and have systems in place to ensure that patterns of difficulty are noticed where possible. Staff at LandWorks are trained in counselling skills and provided with Suicide Prevention Guidance which highlights patterns and behaviours to look out for and what level of intervention is needed in response.

B. Awareness - We will ensure that all staff receive training which increases awareness around suicide and enables them to signpost trainees and colleagues appropriately. We recognise the potential impact of supporting those with suicidal thoughts and behaviours and will provide support mechanisms for staff at intervention and postvention level. We will raise awareness around openness, spotting the signs, appropriate language and similar throughout the LandWorks site. We will ensure that our resettlement and trainee support staff receive help to develop their skills in recognising when a person may be close to suicide and working in such a way as to enhance safety at all times, whether suicidal thoughts are disclosed or not.

C. Information sharing - We will keep our policies around consent and information sharing under review in order to balance the safety of those at risk against individual autonomy. We will keep timely and accurate records of concerns and actions to ensure continuity, enhance our ability to notice patterns of difficulty, and allow us to learn from case review in the event of a suicide.

D. Support pathways - We will ensure that we have clear and collaborative pathways to support distressed trainees both within LandWorks and externally to local NHS services and that these pathways are kept under review. LandWorks retains a provision of private psychotherapy available to trainees, graduates and staff experiencing difficulty.

E. Suicide prevention plans – As part of the support in place for trainees and graduates at LandWorks, those identified at risk of suicidal thoughts will be supported through creating a Suicide Prevention Plan which identifies actions to be taken in times of crisis to prevent a suicide. This plan will be recorded on In-form (LandWorks' client record system) and a copy given to the individual in difficulty.

4.3 Postvention

A. Response plan - Our trustees and management team will be clear about how we will respond in the event of a suicide. Each member of our management team will have a defined

responsibility within our plan including leadership, reporting, family liaison and any communications with external agencies, including the media.

B. Communication - LandWorks will be aware of the importance of the most appropriate way to communicate regarding a suicide. It will take into account the Samaritans' Media Guidelines for Reporting Suicide.

C. Suicide Cluster Awareness - Our management team understand what a suicide cluster is and know when to be concerned that one may be emerging. It will be aware of and pay heed to the guidance issued by Public Health England 'Identifying and responding to suicide clusters: A practice resource'.

D. Reporting - In the event of a suicide, trustees will consider whether it meets the criteria for reporting as a serious incident to the Charity Commission and, if so, will ensure that it is reported in a timely manner.

E. Support - will be provided for those in the LandWorks community impacted by a suicide. This will include, but not be limited to, individual and group opportunities to talk, opportunity to attend commemorative events where possible and if individuals chose to, and provision of a physical focus of remembrance on site. Signposting to external sources of support will also be provided.

F. Case review - LandWorks will carry out a trustee led case review following a trainee, graduate or staff suicide to include records of observations, decisions, actions and information sharing to ensure that any lessons for improved practice are learned. We will cooperate with any case reviews carried out by other agencies involved, with regard for confidentiality and data protection.