

Newsletter June 2026

Welcome to the June 2026 edition of the Suicide Prevention Scotland newsletter.

This newsletter is a way of keeping the Suicide Prevention Scotland Network up to date with progress on implementation of the national suicide prevention strategy and also any other relevant information.

This edition will mainly focus on a wrap up of our recent conference: Creating Hope: Growing Capacity for Hope through Action.

Please share this newsletter with others. If you've been forwarded the newsletter and would like to sign up to receive it directly please complete the form [here](#).

If there is anything you would like to see included in future editions or a contribution you'd like to make, please let us know via email:

psh.suicidepreventionteam@psh.scot



In Scotland our work to prevent suicide is guided by the Creating Hope Together Strategy and Action Plan, you can click on the documents to the left to find out more.



The reality of creating hope together



For the last three years we have endeavoured to build a community for people and organisations who care about suicide prevention. We've worked hard to build connections with people who felt excluded from our work previously or who felt their voices had been ignored or not been heard. We've tried to build links between the national work we are tasked to do and the amazing work that happens across Scotland through our local co-ordinators and the third sector organisations who are all striving to prevent suicide. I'm under no illusion that we've always got things right or that there isn't more we could be doing - of course there is, but this year, our annual Creating Hope Together conference served as a reminder of how far we've come.

A conference for 300 people takes an enormous amount of organisation, building the programme for the day that meets the needs of a wide range of people and organisations, using systems for registration which don't always do what we hope they would do, negotiating with hotels, organising travel, organising materials etc etc is relentless for months before the big day. We don't have an events team who help to organise this, our amazing delivery, implementation and outcome leads somehow manage to bring their skills and time to this while also continuing to deliver the work of the action plan, it astounds me that nothing grinds to a halt, everyone steps up and mucks in to ensure a great experience for everyone who attends the conference. It is a joy to watch, true multi-agency partnership in action, no egos just a shared ambition to get it all done. They pulled out all the stops this year, when people had to pull out at the last minute, people stepped up and stepped in. I have to pinch myself sometimes that I get to work with some of the most brilliant people, with such can do attitudes, even when they have their own challenges to deal with - they just get sh*t done and the conference wouldn't happen without them.

Every year, we aim to make sure our programme is interesting and informative. That we create a space of safety and inclusion, where everyone feels welcome and that their contribution is valued. I know we still have a long way to go on this but it was such a joy to have people from across Scotland and from communities in Scotland who, as we were reminded by our host for the day, are often described as hard to reach, but in reality it is often more they are



easy to ignore. I hope they all felt the warmth and care in the room and that the space that was created was welcoming for everyone. I know I have a very privileged position but I felt like I was wrapped in a massive hug for the whole event.



Haylis Smith, National Delivery Lead for Suicide Prevention Scotland, talking to a conference delegate

Our programme only works because of the external partners who are willing to show up and host workshops for us. The range of different topics showcased this year was no exception. I am very grateful to the Andy's Man Club, Papyrus, RSABI, Police Scotland and University of Edinburgh teams who helped bring their knowledge and expertise to the audience in interesting and engaging ways. I'm also grateful to the members of our own delivery collective who hosted workshops with HIS, LGBT Health and Wellbeing, our local suicide prevention leads, members of our Youth Advisory Group, academics from GCU and service design specialists on collaboration, service design and children and young people - they all helped create a rich, thoughtful and varied programme.

We also had fantastic keynote speakers to open and close the day. Iain Corbett started us off with an incredibly powerful and thought provoking presentation which I have no doubt will stick with everyone who was there, we were smart enough this year to record this and it's available online for everyone to see (read on in the newsletter for the link). Anna Wroblewska finished the day talking about the importance of translation, if we truly want everyone across Scotland to feel included in our work, then the very least we can do is ensure that information is translated and culturally sensitive, I'm looking forward to working further with Anna and the team at WESREC on this and to seeing the hopeful words that people on the day wrote translated into languages used across Scotland.

Our strategy is co-owned by COSLA and Scottish Government and it was great to hear from Jane O'Donnell COSLA CEO and Neil Rennick Director General for Education and Justice at Scottish Government about the ongoing commitment both spheres of government have to the suicide prevention work in Scotland. Having the opportunity to hear their thoughts about how local and national government can work together to ensure suicide prevention is built into policy across topic areas and with the hint that a refreshed Verity House Agreement may also include a focus on mental health and wellbeing feels like a recognition of the importance of our work.

We've had some great feedback from people in the room, we're working away to pull it all together so we can share it and use it to help shape future events. We have also been pondering the question of who wasn't in the room, what communities are we still not reaching and what can we do differently to encourage them to come and be part of the Suicide Prevention Scotland community. I'd welcome a conversation with anyone who has ideas on this!

As a team, we don't stop now, we have a new action plan to deliver, plans to think about for world suicide prevention day and work to improve what we do and how we do it, but I also think it's important to stop and breathe for a moment and recognise the conference was a job well done by everyone involved and will no doubt have helped those in attendance consider what actions they can do to grow capacity for hope in their communities.

Haylis

Creating Hope: Growing Capacity for Hope through Action.



Suicide Prevention Scotland's Creating Hope Together national conference took place at the end of May in Glasgow, bringing together people from across sectors, communities and lived experience networks to focus on how to grow capacity for hope through collective action.

The day featured a keynote address from Iain Corbett, alongside opportunities for participants to explore what helps turn ideas into meaningful impact. A mix of presentations, discussions and interactive sessions created space to share learning with others working in suicide prevention.

You can watch the keynote from Iain by clicking the picture below



There was time for participants to help shape what comes next, contributing ideas and priorities for future work and national direction.

Over the last year, organisations and communities across Scotland have developed powerful work that demonstrates how hope can flourish when people collaborate, share learning and take action rooted in compassion, and the Creating hope Together conference was a powerful example of that in action.

You can watch some videos of attendees and presenters sharing what action they are taking to provide hope.

Main reel - what action are you taking to provide hope?

Kevin Ditcham - what action are you taking to provide hope?

Anton, A Place Called Here - what action are you taking to provide hope?

Parisa and Max - what action are you taking to provide hope?



Creating Hope: Growing Capacity for Hope through Action.



Check out the full [Interview with Jane O'Donnell and Neil Rennick](#) by clicking the link or the picture below.



Check out the conference webpage here:

<https://www.suicideprevention.scot/conference>



Time Space Compassion – Reflections

After Creating Hope Together

It's the Friday after our Creating Hope Together conference, and I'm sitting in the middle of a complete mògar, a guddle of unpacked conference kit. The dog has made herself comfortable in my empty suitcase, as if to make sure I don't disappear again too soon. I've been asked to share a short reflection for the newsletter. I can feel the pull to tidy my thoughts, to make them neat and insightful. But, like the floor around me, they're still a bit messy. And that feels important.

As the Time, Space, Compassion Delivery Lead for Suicide Prevention Scotland, my work is about creating the conditions for people to slow down together, to set aside our agendas, and to focus on what's possible and hopeful in the space between us. It's messy work. So perhaps it makes sense that any honest reflection should be too.

My first reflection is about the contribution of the Lived & Living Experience Panel. Not only the depth and generosity of what they shared, but how natural their role in the day now feels. Even though this was only the second year, I can't imagine the conference being led any other way. It's a powerful reminder that what feels new, or even radical, one year can quickly become part of our everyday practice. It leaves me wondering: what else currently feels just out of reach, but may, in fact, be closer and more possible than we think?



Linda presents on the Lived & Living Experience Panels work on power in clinical settings

Another moment that stayed with me was Iain Corbett's call to action: to spend our time on hope-creating actions, rather than reiterating our good intentions. That is, after all, what Time Space Compassion is about. But it has left me with questions I'm still sitting with, about my role in making that shift happen. How can I make better use of the relationships and resources I already have? What am I willing to do differently? And how do I remain compassionate to myself and others as I push further in this work?

Alongside the keynotes, I also appreciated the quieter spaces, the workshops that created conditions for honest, meaningful conversation. I'm hugely thankful to everyone who joined the service design taster session, and to my co-hosts, for the care and effort that went into making that space possible (see photo for credits).

One of the small-group conversations that has stayed with me was about power. When it's difficult to talk about, it is often because unspoken dynamics are already shaping, and limiting, our impact as a team or service. Creating space to name and explore this feels essential if we are serious about equity and person-centred care. It was therefore brilliant to share work developed alongside the Lived & Living Experience Panel: a tool to support practitioners and teams to do just that.



Left to right, Service Design workshop crew: Rebecca Hoffman, Judy Wasige, Tara French, Laiba Tahami, Linda Hunter, Chamithri Greru and Benj Mcelwee (part of the team but not pictured)

Another conversation, with Dr Judy Wasige, has also stayed with me. We spoke about the urgent need to expand stigma-free and safe access to support, for all those who need it. We also reflected on the importance of joy, care and mutual growth in this work, a helpful counterbalance to the weight of the issues we hold every day.

And yet, returning to a busy inbox, I was also reminded how easily compassion is disrupted. Time pressure. Task focus. Overlooking our own needs. These show up quickly in our systems, often at the very moment when what people most need from us is time and human connection.

So, for now, I'm left with reflections that are still unfolding and not fully resolved. But perhaps that's the work. To stay with the mess a little longer. To keep creating time, space and compassion as we return to our everyday practice. And to notice what becomes possible when we do.

What did our attendees think



Dr Sarah Huque,
Senior Research Fellow,
University of Edinburgh

I attended CHT with **Suicide Cultures** & **Discovering Liveability** team members to share what in-depth, qualitative, and community-based research can contribute to our understandings of suicide. Our work focuses on creating more liveable lives, and embracing complexity, and the presence of these throughout the whole day is what felt most meaningful to me from the CHT. The presentations and workshops embraced thinking about the impact of emotion, injustice, oppression, and social (in)justice on suicidality. I took away a sense that 'hope' doesn't mean the absence of other feelings - including anger and frustration - but is concerned with working together through the difficulty and messiness.

Having recently joined the suicide prevention policy team in the Scottish Government, I was keen to attend the conference to gain insight into the current landscape and to meet more of the wonderful people working across the area. I found it really powerful to have such varied perspectives brought together in one room, and to have the chance to learn more about how suicide prevention efforts can respond to the unique circumstances of different groups of individuals. What I took away from it was that while there may be challenges in our work, there is also such a sense of hope. By working together and listening to each other, we have the opportunity to address these challenges effectively and creatively.



Millie Morgan,
Suicide Prevention Policy Team,
Scottish Government



What did our attendees think



Fiona White,
Development Officer,
Renfrewshire Council

Attending the Suicide Prevention Scotland Creating Hope Together conference was both inspiring and affirming. I found the reflections from the Lived and Living Experience Panel both deeply moving and thought-provoking, reinforcing why this work matters so much. It was encouraging to take time to consider the meaningful progress already being made across Renfrewshire, while also recognising the continued support schools need to effectively nurture and protect children and young people in line with the action plan.

These conversations re-energise and motivate continued partnership working and remind us that we're part of a bigger movement.

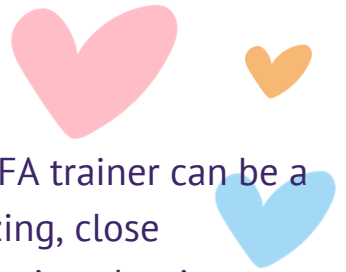
As a postgraduate student with a passion for mental health research in racialised communities, attending Creating Hope Together was truly enlightening. The lived experience panel reminded me that real change begins with listening, with empathy, inclusion, and hope at its heart.



Laiba Tahami,
Postgraduate Student,
Glasgow Caledonian University



What did our attendees think



**Chris Grant,
Mental Health First Aid &
Suicide Intervention Trainer**

Being a freelance ASIST and SMHFA trainer can be a little lonely. You have these amazing, close engagements with learners all the time, but it can be hard to be around your peers, and it's easy to lose the pulse on what's happening in the wider suicide prevention sphere.

That's how I found myself at Creating Hope Together, and what a brilliant day it was. From Iain Corbett's opening talk I felt really galvanised to work with integrity, think about the wider issues of inequality and how to be more responsive - I also picked up the killer 'hope is infectious' line that I used in an SMHFA training the next day! I'll be back again.

I was interested in attending as growingly I can see how mental health is becoming more of a commonly spoken about issue across all communities. I wanted to learn more from experts and people with lived experience on what I can do, as a community representative, colleague, friend and family member, to support people wherever I can. Iain's opening was one of the best addresses I have witnessed at any conference, touching on something pivotal which isn't always explored in our conversation on mental health - how much of an effect society, politics, culture and economics has on us.

I left the conference feeling hopeful. Something I didn't expect, in all honesty, when arriving that morning. Hope, because there were enough well intentioned, compassionate and holistic practitioners in that room, capable of making real change and influence.



**Aneel Singh Bhopal,
Deputy Chief Executive Officer,
West of Scotland Regional
Equality Council (WSREC)**



What did our attendees think



I've just been part of a truly inspirational day at the Creating Hope conference in Glasgow, learning from people directly affected by challenging mental health and suicide.

The drive and determination from everyone involved to create change for everyone affected by these issues was so apparent and gives me hope for the future!

Colin MacFarlane
National Programme Director,
YMCA

I was keen to attend the 'Creating Hope Together' Conference to represent our service and learn more about the community-led suicide prevention action research being led by my colleague Dr Manal Eshelli in partnership with Suicide Prevention Scotland. What resonated most throughout the day was the power of lived experience, with speakers and participants sharing courageous, honest, and deeply moving reflections that highlighted the importance of creating services and support systems that are truly shaped by the voices of those they seek to serve. The conference reinforced the value of hope, inclusion, and community-led approaches in suicide prevention. I left the conference inspired by the collective commitment to creating hope, reducing inequalities, and ensuring that research, policy, and practice work together to build more compassionate, accessible, and responsive support for communities.



Maria Hurtado,
Project Support Officer,
WSREC



What did our attendees think



Josh McCormack,
Suicide Prevention Policy Team,
Scottish Government

This was my first time attending the conference having recently started working on the topic. I was keen to broaden my understanding of suicide prevention, particularly around the positive work that is already happening, as well as the potential challenges barriers across sectors.

Being in the room with such a variety of people who are all actively involved in suicide prevention work across sectors was amazing. Having the opportunity to connect with those people was really valuable to me.

I left feeling the need to take action, which is mainly me echoing Iain's keynote, which really stuck with me and is something that will drive me in terms of how I can support actions that are needed to have a positive impact on suicide prevention.

The Creating Hope 2026 conference was a really valuable day of listening, learning, and connecting. I've recently started in a new role working on suicide prevention, so it was great to meet lots of new people and hear about all the important work happening in communities across Scotland. Iain Corbett's keynote speech was incredibly powerful, and I will continue to reflect on this and show up with compassion, empathy, and hope every day.

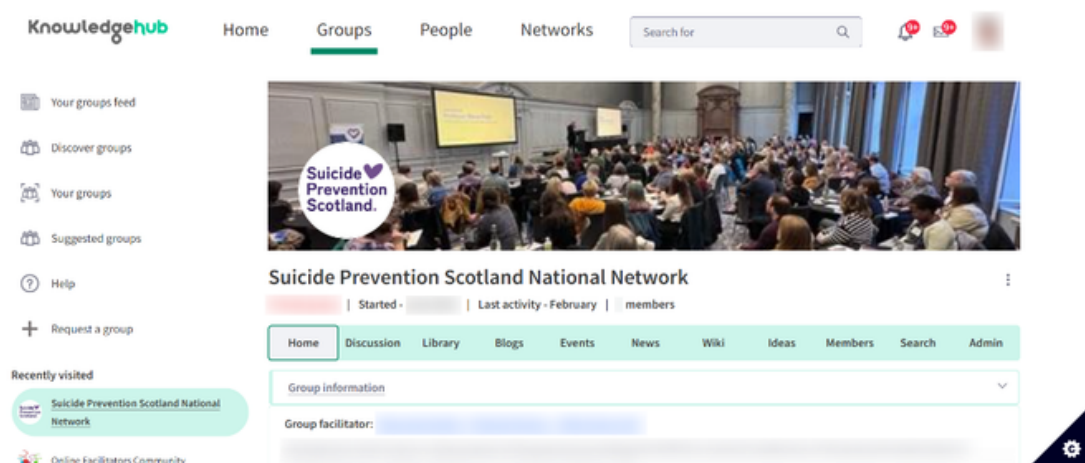


Lewis Macleod,
Policy Manager,
COSLA



Suicide Prevention Scotland National Network Knowledge Hub - Keep the conversations & connections going

At our Suicide Prevention Scotland National Network meetings earlier in the year members discussed the value of having an online space where members can connect with each other directly using a message board function. We have launched a Suicide Prevention Scotland National Network Knowledge Hub group as a professionally focused space where information can be offered, questions can be asked and answered, resources can be shared and discussions can take place.



To sign up you need to create a free Knowledge Hub account and then request access to the closed group. Create your account here: [Sign up - Knowledge Hub](#) and then go to “Discover Groups” and search for Suicide Prevention Scotland National Network and request to join the group. Once you have joined, please take a couple of minutes to read over the group rules, create a member profile and introduce yourself to the group on the intro thread.

It is very important for you to note that our Knowledge Hub is not a place for people to seek support with their own suicidality or for advice on situations which require an urgent response. We would also ask members not to share details of specific situations – although this is a closed space, it is a large group and therefore not appropriate.

Please also note that the page is not moderated except through self-moderation by you, the members, though if you do have a very strong concern about a post you can contact us at PHS.SuicidePreventionTeam@phs.scot

Fathers Network Scotland: Dads Survey 2026



The Dads Survey is an annual opportunity to hear directly from fathers across Scotland and understand how modern fatherhood, work and family life, and well-being are evolving.

Each year, we aim to reach dads from across the country and from all walks of life, building a representative picture of fathers' experiences, priorities, and challenges.

By sharing the survey with the dads you support, you'll help ensure their voices are heard and contribute to evidence that can shape policy, services, and support for families.

Who can take part?

Any dad aged 16 or over, currently living in Scotland, who has at least one child under the age of 18.

Timeframe:

The survey will be live from June 15th and will close on August 16th (11:59PM).

Survey Links:

<https://fathersnetwork.wufoo.com/forms/dads-survey-2026/>

<https://bit.ly/dads-survey-2026>

Key documents and information

Key documents around suicide prevention

Local Area Suicide Prevention Planning & Implementation Toolkit



Document 1: Introduction



Document 2: Action Plan Development



Document 3: Outcomes, Monitoring & Evaluation



Document 4: Governance & Collaboration



Document 5: Data & Information



Document 6: Involving People with Lived & Living Experience



Document 7: Youth Participation Practice



Document 8: Postvention & Incident Response



Document 9: Induction Pack

You can also listen to our accompanying podcasts on topics covering data, suicide bereavement, involving people with living and lived experience and work around children and young people.

Creating Hope Together -
strategy.

Updated!

Creating Hope Together -
action plan

Creating Hope Together -
EQIA

Creating Hope Together -
strategy (easy read).

Outcomes Framework

Knowledge and Skills Framework for Mental
Health Improvement and Suicide Prevention

Locations of Concern guidance

Cluster guidance

Public Memorial guidance

Time Space Compassion - supporting people
experiencing suicidal crisis: introductory guide

