

Suicide Prevention: Offshore Energy Sector

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Please note this practice example has been drafted from the input Kirstie provided to our event in March 2026.

Introduction

My name is **Kirstie Langan**, whilst I do a lot of public speaking, it's very unusual for me to be speaking about a topic like this to an audience that works in a very different sector to my own.

I find it interesting, and if I'm honest, a bit nerve-wracking, but it's also a really important reminder of *why* conversations like this matter. Suicide prevention isn't the work of one profession or sector. We're all citizens in this together, and we all have something to learn from each other.

I'm the Director of an engineering company in Aberdeen called PDI Ltd. We employ around 150 people. But today, I'm not speaking as an employer, a mental health professional, a psychologist, or a doctor.

I'm here as a **concerned citizen**.

Someone who has seen, first-hand, how close suicide can come, and who wanted to do something meaningful rather than look away.

I supported someone who was suicidal. I won't go into detail, but it was a deeply formative experience that shaped how I think and feel about this area. Sadly, I've seen that not all of these stories have happy endings.

That raises really difficult questions:

- ♥ Is intervention always worth it?
- ♥ What if we get it wrong?
- ♥ What if it makes things worse?

I think the confidence I had to do something came from previous experiences of doing the uncomfortable, awkward thing – fearing I might not get it 'right', but also knowing that doing nothing wasn't an option.

And that's really where this work comes from: a belief that **through education, shared stories, simple tools and confidence-building**, we can help more people feel able to step in, start a conversation, and not be paralysed by fear when someone might need us.



Background

The project I want to talk you through today was developed in partnership with **SAMH**, and it focuses specifically on the **energy sector**.

The very early roots of this work go back to the summer of 2025, when I started hearing concerning anecdotal stories from across the sector about mental health in the workforce. The energy sector remains under enormous strain and is reported to be facing significant job losses of around 1000 per month', with a heavy concentration in the **north-east of Scotland**.

We already know that offshore workers are a **higher-risk group in relation to suicide**. The workforce is predominantly male, often works in isolation, and faces demanding, high-stakes environments. What worried me was that this already high-risk group was now under even more pressure.

I shared my concerns with a **close and trusted industry friend**, a Director at a major North Sea operator. I told him what I was hearing and what was troubling me.

His response was simple:

"Yes - I share those concerns. I think there are very real reasons to be worried."

I told him I wanted to do *something*, even though I didn't yet know what that would look like. What bothered me most was that while there was a lot of good work happening, I wasn't seeing anything **collective, accessible, and truly sector-wide** - especially for the smaller companies, contractors, and one-person operations. It disturbed me that the level of support someone received could depend on the colour of the overalls they were wearing.

My trusted friend asked, "Can you make something happen?"

And I said, "Yes. I think I can."

So we started.

What We Did

We knew we couldn't wait for perfection. People were losing their lives. Movement mattered more than having all the answers.

Listening first

The first thing we did was run an **anonymous survey** with offshore workers. I wanted to hear directly - honestly - how people were feeling, without fear of repercussions.

Reading the responses was heartbreaking.



Overwhelmingly, people told us:

- ♥ “I need help.”
- ♥ “I’m struggling with my mental health.”
- ♥ “I’m scared to ask for help in case it affects my job.”

The pressure to provide, the fear of being singled out, and the concern about employment consequences were constant themes. That survey gave us a very clear signal: we had to push on.

Bringing the sector together

I organised an event in Aberdeen that brought together **72 senior leaders from the energy sector**, alongside SAMH and speakers I felt had powerful stories which could be translated to our sector. This took place during one of the busiest event weeks of the year – and people cancelled other commitments to attend.

That told us everything we needed to know about how seriously this was being taken. We focused on learning; not just from within our own sector, but from others facing similar risks. We heard from:

- ♥ A former professional footballer
- ♥ Someone who transitioned from the Armed Forces into energy

Both spoke powerfully about **identity, transition, and loss** - themes that strongly resonate offshore.

We asked difficult but necessary questions:

- ♥ Do we really believe we have a problem - and if not, why?
- ♥ What’s already working well?
- ♥ What can we do that doesn’t cost a fortune?
- ♥ How do we support people who don’t trust employer-led routes?

A clear message emerged: the sector wanted something **collective, practical, and one step removed from employers**. There was a lot of nervousness about employee assistance programmes being the first port of call.

That night, we committed to doing something meaningful together.

Co-designing with workers

SAMH shared their experience from the construction sector, and with funding from energy partners, we moved quickly.

We set up two focus groups - one offshore, one onshore - and spent full-day workshops and multiple online sessions co-designing the training. Every word, every example, every module was sense-checked with workers.

We wanted to avoid:



- ♥ Talking *at* people
- ♥ Accidentally alienating them
- ♥ Losing attention or credibility

The stories shared in those sessions were extraordinary, and difficult, but they shaped everything we built.

Where we are now

At the time of writing, in just **five months**, alongside our day jobs, we:

- ♥ Established a steering group
- ♥ Agreed a clear mission statement
- ♥ Developed a modular training programme with SAMH
- ♥ Began pilot delivery
- ♥ Prepared for sector-wide rollout

We've employed a full-time training specialist, and we're rolling this out **face-to-face on offshore assets** in the coming weeks.

We've only started on this journey, and achieved a lot in the initial 5 months, but we know there is more to do.

Final thoughts

I had no suicide prevention credentials when I started this.

What I did have was the willingness to be uncomfortable, to take a risk, and to surround myself with the right people. Together, we've created something that we genuinely believe will save lives. This is about empowering people, at work and at home, to have confidence, to start conversations, and to reduce stigma.

Costs matter when navigating funding. But the **value of a human life is immeasurable**.

If we feel able to do something, anything, then it's worth doing.

