



# National Review of Higher Education Student Suicides

## Introduction

Each student death is a tragic loss. Where a student dies by suicide or attempts to take their own life, UUK guidance is explicit that HEPs should examine the relevant context and interactions with the institution, fellow students, relatives and staff in partner organisations (e.g. NHS services). This internal review should evaluate whether changes to policies, procedures, or processes could be made to reduce future suicides.

There is potentially huge benefit in HEPs learning the collective lessons from these reviews. To this end, Robert Halfon has announced the commissioning of an independent organisation to conduct a national analysis of these local reviews of serious incidents. HEPs will be expected to submit their reviews as part of this initiative. This will enable the publication of an anonymous meta-analysis of student suicides and near-misses, focusing on lessons learnt and areas for improvement. Unlike other work strands, this is an area where relative size or capacity of an HEP regulated by the Office for Students does not suggest an alternative approach should be pursued.

## Taskforce Objective

- To enable broad lessons around addressing serious mental illness and preventing suicide in HEPs to be shared more widely across the sector such that HEPs can enhance processes and policies.
- To encourage HEPs to engage with the current Postvention Guidance, including submission of internal reviews for external analysis, and discuss with the selected provider any further developments of the current suicide review template that good practice in other sectors may suggest.
- To ensure there is a robust method of collecting data on student suicides.

## Proposed Work Programme

- Consultation (July-November)
  - To start consultation with IHE, AoC, GuildHE and UUK on the methods for and safeguards around submission of internal reviews for analysis.
  - To consider any specific approaches that will support smaller HEPs and FECs.

- Notification (November-May)
  - To notify HEPs of the agreed process to submit a review to the national organisation.
  - To work with the selected provider to identify any developments to the existing template for HEPs when reviewing a suspected suicide or near-miss.
  - To consider progress towards a robust data collection approach.

A procurement process is currently taking place and these timescales may be subject to change.

This will determine when the independent organisation can commence work and when it will publish its report. Only student suicides and near-misses occurring in the 2023/24 academic year will be reviewed in the first instance but the report will consider how and whether lessons have been learnt from historic cases.

Under the direction of HEMHIT, a sub-group of relevant colleagues and organisations may be formed to oversee the consultation and develop the review template.

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