

## SUICIDE SAFER STRATEGY

### Statement of purpose

The ICR is committed to create a suicide-safer community. Every suicide is a tragedy with devastating effects on family and friends. Yet suicide is in many cases preventable and the ICR aims to ensure that students and staff who are contemplating suicide (or having suicidal thoughts or feelings) or are affected by a suicide or attempted suicide have access to appropriate support.

## CONTEXT

### Determinants and Risks

In 2020 the rate of suicide across England was [10 per 100,000 people](#). Each suicide affects a much [wider circle of around 135 people](#) and only [1 in 3 people](#) who die by suicide are known to mental health services. However, suicide is preventable and talking about suicide does not increase the risk or worsen the situation.

Students can have an added risk of [experiencing poorer mental health and wellbeing](#), due to a number of unique factors that relate to academic, financial and social pressures (Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2011).

Every death at the ICR has a huge impact and resonates across the organisation. While death by suicide is a rare event, we do not know how many people at the ICR have considered suicide, or who may be thinking about it right now.

The ICR has adopted a “whole university” (*One ICR*) approach which resonates with ICR values and the Cultural Engagement Strategy, acknowledging the specific factors and risks that may affect our student and staff populations, reviewing the processes and safeguards in place and identifying what else the ICR could do.

### Location of staff and students at the ICR

Staff and students at both the Chelsea and Sutton sites should have equal access to any provision.

### Wellbeing and mental health provision at the ICR

Wellbeing and mental health support and provision are a cornerstone of the [ICR value](#) “Valuing all our people” and is key to delivering our [ICR Strategy – Defeating Cancer 2022 – 27](#), as part of delivering as an excellent organisation. A new Wellbeing Strategy was agreed for 2025, with regular reports on progress to the ICR Health Safety and Environment Committee. Wellbeing provision at the ICR is central to the Suicide Safer Strategy.

## **SUICIDE SAFER FRAMEWORK**

The Suicide Safer Framework centres on three main areas: prevention, intervention and postvention.

### Prevention

The ICR is very much concerned about prevention of suicide. Wellbeing provision, both practical and emotional support, is provided by:

- Mental health awareness training – available to all at the ICR.
- Wellbeing Champions –“First point of contact” volunteers, available to listen, support and signpost.
- Health, Safety & Environment Advisors (HSEQ) team - Provide advice on health and safety in the workplace.
- Occupational Health – Can provide objective information to assist members of staff and their managers address concerns that their health is affecting their work. Appropriate adjustments can then be put into place.
- Human Resources - HR are available to staff and managers, to provide advice and support on many workplace issues.
- Peer support networks – [Offer support and networking](#) e.g. AdminNet, Postdoc Association. There are also social clubs and interest groups such as UPS club, sports activities, and crafts groups.
- Union – Union members can access support for employment issues via their Union representatives.
- Line managers – Managers receive mandatory training on “A supportive workplace”, including active bystander training.

Additional support is [available to students](#) via their supervisory team, and extra pastoral support via trained senior tutors and deputy deans, Registry, Student Wellbeing Champions and the [Student Disability Support advisor](#).

All staff and students also have access to the [Employee Assistance Programme \(EAP\)](#) provided by Spectrum Life – A confidential 24 hour life management and personal support service, including telephone counselling, legal information and financial advice, as well as an online wellbeing hub and app.

Bullying and harassment of any kind has no place at the ICR and we take report of such behaviour very seriously. Whether staff, a student or a visitor to the ICR, [Report and Support](#) provides an alternative, safe and secure way to report any concerns in confidence.

### Intervention

The importance of family and friends in supporting people who are experiencing suicidal thoughts is well recognised and should be encouraged. However, it is essential that the ICR has an environment where talking about suicidal feelings and thoughts is destigmatised.

The ICR's frontline of services including the Wellbeing Champions and Registry are trained in recognising people at risk of suicide and to react appropriately, suggesting which service(s) to go to for more support. At a moment of crisis, or when more specialist mental health support is needed, the ICR signposts to external support such as the Employee Assistance Programme (available 24/7), [Samaritans](#), [Mind](#) and [NHS](#).

While this is proportionate given the numbers of staff at the ICR, this information needs to be clearly visible to someone at the moment they need it.

### Postvention

The aim of postvention is to support people who have been affected by a suicide and learn lessons to reduce future risk.

Following a suicide, HR have procedures in place to offer advice and guidance, bereavement services, and advise on ICR communication, liaise with wellbeing champions and managers who may be talking to those affected, signpost to support and provide further opportunities for discussion.

Direct postvention support is provided by the EAP Spectrum Life, and by Occupational Health if people affected by a suicide feel that their work is suffering.

### Monitoring the strategy

Due to the size of the ICR it is difficult to monitor the numbers of any specific group accessing support whilst protecting their anonymity.

HR monitor anecdotal evidence from support mechanisms. This information is used to identify hot spots and focus the wellbeing provision, and will be used to determine the effectiveness of the strategy and any feedback inform future review.

The strategy will be reviewed should an event take place.

The higher education environment will be monitored to see if lessons can be learnt from other small institutions.