

restoring  
wellbeing  
through

**Contact**

# Manifesto 2017

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Zero Suicide -  
A Culture of Innovation  
A Culture of Discipline

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# Zero Suicide the only target to aim for, a commitment to patient safety, commencing with NI health & justice systems:

## 1.

**Driving suicide to zero must commence with health and justice care systems, affirming the conviction that, 'no one should die alone, in despair, by suicide'. All learning achieved from saving lives in our care must be urgently applied to community and family settings.**

The zero suicide concept and disciplined practices emerged from the ambitious 'perfect depression care' quality performance improvement initiative at Henry Ford Health System, Detroit. The results were remarkable, driving the suicide death rate to zero in just three years. The zero suicide challenge is a bold aspiration commencing with health and justice systems. More than 200 zero suicide pilots are underway across the US while Mersey Care NHS Trust leads the UK initiative. The NI Assembly All Party Group on Suicide Prevention will champion zero suicide early adoption for NI health and justice systems. As the current provider, Contact propose the regional Lifeline service as the inaugural NI zero suicide pilot.

## 2.

**Continuity of care at crisis point must ensure critical real-time information sharing agreed by memorandum of understanding, investing in robust multi-agency relationships, applying 24/7 'air traffic control', gold standard patient safety quality assurance for everyone in our care.**

The zero suicide model requires unhindered commitment to real-time patient information sharing, ensuring the most accessible blended care package for the person in distress, including support for family/loved ones/safety contacts. We believe Lifeline has a vital regional bridging and linking role, from crisis point to stabilisation, ensuring robust clinical assessment, safety planning and warm handover to the right care, at the right time, engaging GP and family/loved ones, navigating the often difficult crisis stabilisation to recovery journey.

## 3.

**No wrong door every patient at risk of suicide must receive comprehensive clinical assessment and safety plan at first point of contact (including family/loved ones, GP and crisis clinical support), testing safety plan relevance on every subsequent contact.**

Promising 'no wrong door' at crisis point, complements the urgent drive to achieve 'air traffic control' quality care safety standards. 'No wrong door' affirms care system commitment to eradicate delay, guaranteeing care continuity at crisis point. Crisis service excellence requires maximum cross-service liaison, guaranteeing competent, cooperative workforce collaboration, agreed by memoranda of understanding, ensuring real-time safety planning - 100% of the time - shared by secure online systems, complemented by 24/7 telephone hotline, text and email connectivity. In practice 'warm handover' means not one of our patients gets lost in the system; no one falls through the cracks; every service partner commits to real-time bridge-building, dissolving silo working; celebrating humane and engaging systems of care; supported by switched-on, can-do leadership, enlivening everyday health and justice system bureaucracy with a comprehensive suicide prevention policy-to-practice commitment to drive significant reduction in suicide deaths for people in our care.

## 4.

**Perfect crisis care requires 100% commitment to a 'no blame' culture, championed by accessible, visible and competent corporate leadership accountability – with immediate learning from honest mistakes celebrated as opportunities to achieve continuous service improvement excellence.**

For enduring zero suicide culture change within health and justice systems, staff must experience visible, competent leadership, demonstrating everyday values of disciplined, compassionate care,

**Every suicide is preventable until the last moment of life**



driving patient safety. Crisis care excellence celebrates learning from honest mistakes as opportunities for immediate system-wide change, generating workforce trust by valuing courageous, sustained innovation. Zero suicide initiatives dramatically improve staff experience of management support, replacing the blame culture with fair accountability and supportive, disciplined change strategies. The zero suicide philosophy celebrates small triumphs of recovery, affirming every life as a life worth living. Key success measures include confidential assessment of workforce confidence in management competence and commitment to generate humane communication, trusting relationships, and robust pathway to care systems designed to greatly reduce patient deaths by suicide.

**5.**

**NI civic leadership must invest in competent, courageous suicide prevention championship, encouraging compassionate understanding while promoting courageous lived experience voices of hope and recovery. We need a regional Suicide Prevention Standing Conference to celebrate what works and drive the zero suicide challenge.**

The NI Assembly All Party Group on Suicide Prevention will feasibility test the zero suicide model, facilitating regular suicide prevention learning events, generating unity of purpose and cohesive civic leadership understanding and support. Trauma informed practice explains the torment preceding and following death by suicide. Suicide bereavement brings complex grief and heightened community tension. A Suicide Prevention Standing Conference uniting public, private and charitable efforts is required to drive the zero suicide culture of hope, innovation and discipline, showcasing hard evidence on what works, mobilising leadership, championing suicide prevention messages of hope and recovery, particularly at times of increased community tension.

**6.**

**If suicide is preventable, then NI health and justice systems have a unique opportunity and compelling obligation to provide world-class suicide prevention integrated care, from crisis-point, to stabilisation and recovery, with a renewed, ambitious, relentless resolve to drive the NI suicide death rate down, establishing NI as the safest-from-suicide region in the UK and Ireland within the next five years.**

The zero suicide twin focus on health and justice systems appreciates that police, prison and probation services often encounter vulnerable people at grave risk of harm. Of concern, emergency services have no formal links with health care systems enabling reciprocal, comprehensive critical health care information sharing for people in crisis. This gap represents an enduring risk to life for people suffering suicidal crisis, repeatedly noted by serious adverse incident (SAI) review following suicide deaths. Cross-sector communication gaps at crisis point must be remedied. Culture change is urgently required, transforming silo-bound incrementalism towards whole-system excellence – transforming piecemeal stop-start change to a no-excuses drive for perfect crisis care. Championship for time-bound, measureable, disciplined culture change will bring the zero suicide concept to life. Five years concentrated effort over the course of the NI Assembly 2016-2020 Programme for Government will make an immense difference, substantially reducing the NI suicide death rate for people in our care. Now is the time for the zero suicide approach. Nothing less will do.

**Perfect  
crisis  
care**

**No wrong  
door at  
times of  
crisis**

# WHO IS CONTACT?

**Contact is a charity specialising in crisis counselling and suicide prevention**

## OUR VISION:

**Society free from suicide**

## OUR MISSION:

**Getting you through the most difficult times**

- ▶ Contact provides the free-phone regional Lifeline crisis response helpline and wraparound counselling service Lifeline 0808 808 8000 for NI, under license to the NI Public Health Agency.
- ▶ Contact pioneered Independent Schools Counselling in Northern Ireland (2006-2009).
- ▶ Contact provides the independent counselling support and advice service to the Northern Ireland Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry, in partnership with Advice NI.
- ▶ Over the past five years Contact annual International Suicide Prevention: What Works? conference series, showcase suicide prevention research and best practice.

*Contact workforce and Board are committed to ensure that no one should die alone, in despair by suicide, welcoming the World Health Organisation ambitious goal to drive the global suicide rate down 10% by 2020.*

*Our goal is zero suicide for people in our care.*

For further information about Contact and useful resources, including expert video presentations from Contact annual International Suicide Prevention: What Works? Conferences, please visit

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Contact contributed to the International Zero Suicide in Health Care Declaration, published March 2016, which can be viewed by visiting [www.zerosuicide.org](http://www.zerosuicide.org)