

Talking really helps suicide prevention campaign

Briefing newsletter

August 2026

This document provides an overview of the Public Health Agency's 'Talking really helps' suicide prevention mass media campaign, which will run during August and September 2026.

The campaign aims to encourage anyone with feelings of anxiety or distress, or who is in crisis, to start the conversation about their real feelings. The campaign also promotes Lifeline, Northern Ireland's crisis response helpline.

The campaign was developed in 2022 and last ran from November 2025 to March 2026. Campaign evaluation is underway and will be available soon at www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications

Current landscape

Suicide is complex and often occurs as a result of a number of interacting factors, making it a major challenge for public health. Areas of higher socioeconomic disadvantage tend to have higher rates of suicide and the greater the level of deprivation experienced by an individual, the higher their risk of suicidal behaviour.

There is also a gender aspect to suicide. More males die from suicide than females. Males are the most at-risk group in society, and the risks increase further for those who are single, unemployed and living in more deprived areas.

The most recent Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) data is for 2024*. There were 290 suicide deaths registered in 2024. Around four fifths (79%)

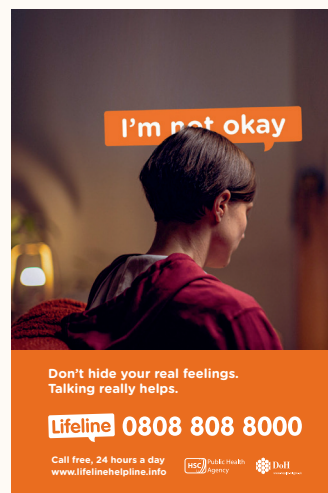
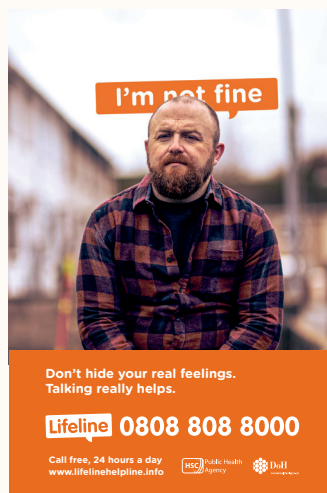
of the total suicide deaths were males and around one fifth (21%) were females.

As with previous years, suicide remains the leading cause of death in males under 50 in Northern Ireland. Of the 690 male deaths registered in 2024 where the deceased was under 50 years of age, 151 were to suicide (22%).

Northern Ireland's most deprived areas had a suicide rate that was almost four times (28%) that of the least deprived areas in 2024 (8%).

More information on suicide statistics is available from **NISRA**.

*All percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.



Campaign target audience

The target audience is the Northern Ireland population, especially those people at greater risk of suicide. The highest rates of suicide are among males from more deprived areas. Family and friends of those most at risk of suicide are a secondary audience.

Key campaign messages

- Talk to someone if you are feeling low and you are struggling to cope
- Opening up to someone about how you are feeling will help
- With the right help and support, things will get better
- If you are in distress or despair, or you know someone who is, call Lifeline on 0808 808 8000 for advice and support

Mass media advertising

The campaign will run during August and September 2026, taking in World Suicide Prevention Day on 10 September.

- **Broadcast TV** – UTV
- **Broadcast Video on Demand** – ITVX, Channel 4 and Sky
- **Radio** – Cool FM and Downtown Radio
- **Outdoor** – bus external supersides
- **Digital** – Google search, YouTube, social media advertising (Snapchat, Facebook and Instagram) and Belfast Live homepage takeover

The campaign will be supported by PR and engagement with partners and stakeholders.

Lifeline service information

- Lifeline provides support to people of every age, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability and sexual orientation.
- Lifeline's professionally trained counsellors are available for free, 24/7
- Calls are free for people living in Northern Ireland who are calling from a UK landline or mobile
- Deaf people and those with hearing difficulties or speech impairment can contact Lifeline using:
 - Textphone on 18001 0808 808 8000
 - the **Relay UK app**
 - the **SignVideo app** (for British and Irish Sign Language users)
- For callers whose first or preferred language is not English, Lifeline can access translators
- Find out more about Lifeline and the support available at www.lifelinehelpline.info

'Talking really helps' campaign resources

Help support the campaign and raise awareness of Lifeline by using and sharing the resources at

www.pha.site/talkingreallyhelps

- Video advertisement (for viewing only)
- Social assets and suggested post wording
- Webpage banners and email signatures
- Posters



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