

## INTRODUCTION

A mental health crisis should be taken as seriously as a physical health emergency. During a crisis, individuals may discuss thoughts or plans of suicide. If a member of staff is experiencing a mental health crisis, **please act immediately**.

This guidance is primarily intended for managers and the People & Organisational Development team.

It may also be helpful to share this guidance with the wider staff group, in acknowledgement that a member of staff may discuss their situation with any one of us. It is important that all staff are aware of how to access support from relevant agencies.

## IN CASE OF A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS OR EMERGENCY

If someone expresses thoughts of taking their own life, or you are worried that someone is at immediate risk of doing so, please consider removing anything the person could use to harm themselves, providing this is safe.

It is best to stay with them and take one of the steps below. The step you take may be different dependent on the situation, and will vary depending on the location of yourself, the person in question and the resources available.

- Contact the person's GP or out-of-hours service. You may need to consider accompanying the person to this appointment
- Contact the Crisis Team. A list of local numbers is available on the final page
- Go to the nearest Accident & Emergency (A&E) department, or call 999 for an ambulance
- Contact the Community Mental Health team if the person is under their care
- Encourage the person to call Samaritans on 116 123

If the person leaves your area, or if they are not on-site and you have concerns about an immediate risk to life or their safety, you should contact the police.

If you have a concern related to safeguarding, please call the Safeguarding Adult team on 0191 445 2036 between the hours of 9:00am - 5:00pm.

## PRINCIPLES OF SUPPORT

It can be very distressing for us when we are worried about someone who has experienced suicidal thoughts or plans, or when we see a colleague experiencing a mental health crisis.

Below are some general principles for you to consider when supporting a colleague, helping you to provide effective support.

**Listen:** Simply giving someone the space to talk and listening to how they're feeling can be helpful.

**Provide reassurance:** Seeking help can feel lonely and scary. Your reassurance can let someone know they're not alone and that help is available.

**Remain calm:** Your own calmness will help your colleague to feel calm; this can encourage them to talk openly to you without judgement.

## SELF-CARE

During and following these experiences, it is important to also look after your own wellbeing.

If you would like to discuss your experience and/or access further support, you can contact the Occupational Health team between Monday to Friday, 8:30am - 4:30pm via the following details.

**Phone:** 0191 445 5494; or

**E-mail:** [ghnt.occupational.health@nhs.net](mailto:ghnt.occupational.health@nhs.net)

Further support and resources are also available through our dedicated health and wellbeing website, [balancegateshead.com](http://balancegateshead.com).

## SUPPORT ROUTES FOR THOSE IN CRISIS

### General Practice (GP):

GPs should be contacted wherever ongoing mental health support is required, and can make an appropriate assessment of suicidal risk and co-ordinate care.

### Emergency Services (999 or A&E):

If you're significantly worried about someone who is not on-site, this route is likely to provide the most appropriate support. The Emergency Services are an appropriate route of support when one is at significant risk or has already come to harm.

### Crisis Teams:

Set up to support individuals at risk of harm to themselves, crisis teams cannot provide an emergency service but do provide a 24/7 service staffed by mental health professionals. Local teams include:

- Newcastle and Gateshead: 0191 814 8899 or 0800 652 2863
- South Tyneside and Sunderland: 0303 123 1145 or 0800 652 2867
- North Tyneside and Northumberland: 0800 652 2861
- Durham, Darlington, Teesside, North Yorkshire & York: 0800 051 6171
- Cumbria: 0300 123 9015 or 0800 652 2865

**The Samaritans:** A free, 24/7 helpline. Dial 116 123.

**Shout:** A free confidential text service supporting those in crisis. Ttext SHOUT to 85258.

**Papyrus Hopeline UK:** A confidential free helpline there to support those under 35 who are at risk of suicide. Call 0800 068 4141 or visit [papyrus-uk.org](http://papyrus-uk.org).

**Mind:** Mental health information and resources, including a directory of helplines and listening services. Visit [mind.org.uk](http://mind.org.uk).

**Hub of Hope:** A free mobile app that can be downloaded and provides signposting to supporting organisations based on specific troubles.

**SANeline:** A national out-of-hours mental health helpline offering specialist emotional support, guidance and information to anyone affected by mental illness, including family, friends and carers. They are open 365 days per year between 4pm - 10pm on 0300 304 7000.

**Balance:** The home of our support, [balancegateshead.com](http://balancegateshead.com) is home to mental health resources and signposting, as well as a [suicide prevention](#) page.