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Suicide Rate Among UK Men at Lowest Since 1981 – ONS 'Suicides in UK' Report Published and Samaritans 'Suicide Statistics' Report Published:

To: All Branches

Dear Colleagues,

The Office of National Statistics ONS has published its annual [report](#) on suicides in the UK, which shows that there were 5,821 suicides registered in the UK in 2017. Last year saw a decrease in the number of male [suicides](#), which is now at the lowest rate for more than 30 years. Still, however, the statistics show that males account for three-quarters of all suicides registered last year, which has been the case since the mid-1990's, the report says.

In 2017, there were 4,383 male suicides and the rate was 15.5 per 100,000 men - down from 20 in the late 1980s, the Office for National Statistics data reveals. Although the male rate is falling, men still account for three-quarters of suicides in the UK.

There were 1,438 female suicides. The female suicide rate has remained stable for the past 10 years.

Men aged 45 to 49 are the age group with the highest suicide rate, of 24.8 deaths per 100,000, the ONS figures show.

The data summarising deaths registered in 2017 also found:

- Among women, 50 to 54-year-olds had the highest suicide rate - 6.8 deaths per 100,000.
- There had been 5,821 suicides in the UK last year, 1,439 among women - a rate of 4.9 per 100,000.
- The English region with the highest suicide rate was the North East and the region with the lowest rate was London.
- Scotland had an overall suicide rate of 13.9 per 100,000 population - higher than England (9.2) and Wales (around 12) in 2017. Northern Ireland figures for 2017 are published later this year.
- Scotland had its lowest suicide rate in 2017 since 1981 and, in recent years, it has seen one of the largest decreases in the male suicide rate.

The Government updated the National Suicide Prevention Strategy in 2017 to strengthen its key areas for action, including expanding the scope of the strategy to include addressing self-harm as an issue in its own right. Through the Five Year Forward View for Mental Health, the Government has promised to invest £25m in suicide prevention over the next three years. The

new figures show that the number of suicides in England has reduced for the third consecutive year, and the national ambition is to reduce suicides by 10% by 2020/21. The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care also announced a zero suicide policy ambition in January, which will see every mental health trust implement a suicide prevention policy this year.

The Charity Samaritans who provide emotional support to anyone in emotional distress, struggling to cope, or at risk of suicide throughout the UK - have published their own annual suicide statistics report and have said the focus in recent years on suicide prevention to tackle the higher rates in men and efforts to prevent suicides had helped but although [the figures](#) were "encouraging", every death was still one too many. Samaritans add that reducing stigma around men's mental health and encouraging men to open up and seek help when they are struggling has been beneficial also.

Every single suicide is a tragedy and, despite this welcome reduction, the number of people who die by suicide remains too high. That is why suicide prevention remains a priority for everyone. We need to see the reduction repeated and sustained. In the meantime we must all continue to target expertise and resources at preventing men from taking their own lives and to reduce suicide across the board. We need to work harder at understanding who is taking their own lives and why, and what support and interventions work to save lives.

If you, a family member, friend, work colleague or branch member is struggling to cope, call Samaritans free 24 Hour Helpline on 116 123 (UK and Ireland).

Yours sincerely



Dave Joyce
National Health, Safety & Environment Officer

