

Community Conference 7th July 2022

Session 1

Surviving Bereavement

In attendance:

Hilary Goodreid – Town Clerk

Sarah Bushby – Lichfield and Rugeley SoBS

Julie – Swadlincote SoBS

Joan – SoBS

Phill Abbiss – SoBS

Cllr Angi Cooney – Rugeley Town Council

Chris Stanley – Staffordshire and Stoke Suicide Bereavement Service

Cllr Christine Martin – Rugeley Town Council

Michelle Cliff – Support Staffordshire

Sarah informed the session about the history of SoBS – Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide. The loss experienced to those left behind is peculiar and different to any other bereavement.

Phil is one of the paid volunteers for SoBS and identified that suicide is one of the biggest killers in men. SoBS branches offer meetings last approx. 2 hours, once per month but those needing support are able to attend any of the SoBS groups – they are not confined to just one.

The groups are open for over 18's only and they offer a safe space for people to speak, or not, about their experiences and feelings. The facilitators of these meetings also in turn received self-care support. The groups are for those who have lost someone to suicide. This loss may be recent or may have occurred many years ago.

Support can come in the form of physical groups, virtual groups, online support and email support.

Contact details for the local group for Rugeley is via email: lichfield@uksobs.org or tel: 07946 527606.

There is also a group for men which is called BereaveMENT.

Chris Stanley from the Staffordshire and Stoke Bereavement Service spoke about the signposting service that is offered to all those seeking help and support. SOBS does offer great support for adults but suicide also affects younger people. There are two key support groups for younger people which are Child Bereavement UK [Child Bereavement UK](https://www.childbereavementuk.org/) and also Winston's Wish [Winston's Wish - giving hope to grieving children \(winstonswish.org\)](https://www.winstonswish.org/). In addition there is a group called Papyrus [Papyrus UK Suicide Prevention | Prevention of Young Suicide \(papyrus-uk.org\)](https://www.papyrus-uk.org/) which tackles suicide prevention in the under 35's and Harmless [Home - Harmless](https://www.harmless.org/) which deals with issues of self harm.

There seemed to be a perception that suicide numbers were increasing but statistics show that this is not the case nationally. However figures for Staffordshire are sadly on the increase.

Michelle spoke about the signposting and support groups [Suicide prevention in Staffordshire - Staffordshire County Council](https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Support-Staffordshire) that are available within Staffordshire – more about this in the next session for the day. She spoke about Compassionate Communities – working with voluntary sector offering support to those experience issues around loss and bereavement.

Community Conference 7th July 2022

Session 1

Surviving Bereavement

Today's groups would be in Rugeley offering support on Saturday 23rd July between 2.30pm and 4.30pm as we are unveiling the Mindfulness Garden as the Queens Baton Relay passes through the town. The garden is currently being built with funding from Staffordshire Community Foundation and National Lottery money and donations of time, money and materials from local firms who have all been touched by loss through suicide.