



NSRF
National Suicide
Research Foundation

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Promoting research and understanding into suicide and self-harm since 1994

Prof. Ella Arensman, Chief Scientist
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Vacancy: Lived Experience Lead for Suicide and Self-Harm (1.0 FTE)

1. Summary of position

Applications are invited for the post of Lived/living Experience Lead for Suicide and Self-Harm.

About the National Suicide Research Foundation

The National Suicide Research Foundation (NSRF) is a research organisation, founded in 1994, that produces research and evidence for policy development and intervention in the prevention of self-harm, suicide and related mental health and social problems. The NSRF has been designated as a World Health Organisation Collaborating Centre in Surveillance and Research in Suicide Prevention. The NSRF's vision is to support the reduction of suicide and self-harm in Ireland and globally, through impactful research, outlined in our current Strategic Plan – [Leading Research, Shaping Change](#).

The NSRF works closely with HSE NOSP, providing the research evidence and data that underpin national suicide prevention strategies and initiatives. Through this partnership, the NSRF supports the development, monitoring, and evaluation of evidence-based policies and programmes aimed at reducing suicide and self-harm.

The NSRF employs approximately 50 staff and have an annual turnover of approximately €1.8m.

More information about the organisation can be found here: www.nsrif.ie.

About the HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention

The HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention (NOSP) was established to strategically lead on suicide prevention efforts across the HSE and in collaboration with multiple partners. This work is underpinned by Connecting for Life, Ireland's National Strategy to Reduce Suicide and its successor strategy to reduce suicide and self-harm which will be published in 2026. NOSP is based in the HSE's Access and Integration function and works closely with other HSE functions, Regional Health Areas (RHA), Integrated Health Areas (IHA), the HSE Resource Officers for Suicide Prevention as well as a range of statutory bodies and non-government organisations working in the area of suicide prevention.

About HSE Mental Health Engagement and Recovery

The Mental Health Engagement and Recovery (MHER) Office is the lead function for implementing PPI and recovery-oriented practices within Irish mental health services. MHER facilitates the inclusion of service users and family members/carers in the design and delivery of services through Area Leads with personal lived experience. It drives the implementation of national policies like Sharing the Vision, focusing on recovery-focused and trauma-informed care models. MHER oversees Recovery Colleges and mental health promotion initiatives (e.g., "Minding Your Wellbeing") to empower individuals in their own recovery journeys. The office provides the Mental Health Engagement Framework, offering guidance on accountability and partnership to staff and stakeholders.

Summary of position

This post provides an exciting opportunity to join and be a key member of the interdisciplinary team at the National Suicide Research Foundation and to lead out on the integration of lived experience expertise as part of the next suicide and self-harm reduction strategy with the HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention and in collaboration with the HSE office of Mental Health Engagement and Recovery.

The Lived Experience Lead for Suicide and Self-Harm will support the implementation of priorities under the next national suicide and self-harm reduction strategy, ensuring that the voices of people with lived experience of suicide, self-harm, and suicide bereavement are meaningfully integrated into all aspects of policy development; service design and improvement; training and workforce development; research and evaluation; and public communications and stigma-reduction initiatives.

Please note that this is a designated lived-experience role. Applicants must have lived/living experience of suicidality or self-harm, either personally, as a family member or carer supporting someone with these experiences, or through bereavement by suicide. The successful candidate will bring their lived/living experience perspective in an objective way to inform all aspects of the role.

The successful candidate will promote safe, ethical, recovery and trauma-informed engagement, ensuring that participation contributes to supporting improved outcomes and service quality.

This is a unique opportunity for the candidate to apply their skills to an important area of suicide prevention and mental health research. The successful candidate will work collaboratively with lived experience expertise, statutory and voluntary sector partners, clinicians, researchers, and policymakers.

Furthermore, the purpose of this post is to

- Establish and co-ordinate a Lived/living Experience perspective Reference Group for the new suicide and self-harm reduction strategy and other lived experience advisory groups for the HSE NOSP as required.

- Lead, contribute and support the meaningful integration of lived/living experience expertise and perspective of suicide, self-harm, and bereavement into national policy, service design, service implementation, training, communications, and evaluation within the HSE NOSP.
- The post holder will work collaboratively with people with lived experience, statutory and voluntary sector partners, clinicians, researchers, and policymakers to ensure that lived experience informs the development and implementation of national suicide-prevention priorities.
- Support the development, implementation and delivery of national policy objectives, annual operational plans, HSE actions and the HSE National Service Plan as they relate to Lived Experience NOSP-led work.
- Develop and extend the work stream in regard to lived experience expertise involvement in suicide and self-harm reduction.

The successful candidate will report to dedicated senior management within NOSP and the NSRF. The post will be based at the offices of the HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention (Dublin) for the duration of contract of employment.

Blended working arrangements may be considered for this post, in line with the HSE Blended Working Policy and subject to the exigencies of the service/management approval.

2. Key duties and responsibilities

Co-ordination and planning

- Work as part of the HSE NOSP team ensuring lived/living experience expertise informs all activities to support national priorities.
- Contribute to the planning and delivery of work programmes that support national priorities, working collaboratively with colleagues and stakeholders and ensuring lived/living experience expertise in forms all work programmes.
- Manage projects and work streams as assigned.
- Plan, coordinate, and monitor assigned projects or work streams to ensure delivery within agreed timelines, standards and fidelity to principles of recovery and lived experience engagement.
- Prepare reports, presentations, and briefings.
- Produce clear and accurate reports, presentations, and briefing materials to support decision-making and communication.
- Participate in relevant committees and working groups or ensure lived experience perspective is included.
- Attend and contribute to committees and working groups, providing updates and progressing agreed actions.
- Ensure effective and timely communication is in place with Lived experience reference group and other lived experience groups engaged with.

Leadership and programme development

- Lead on the co-creation and development of a national framework for engaging people with lived/living experience in suicide and self-harm prevention initiatives, with the aim of enabling regional implementation.
- Developing the lived experience expertise and engagement function within the HSE NOSP.
- Support the establishment and coordination of a lived experience reference group for the new suicide and self-harm reduction strategy and other lived experience reference/advisory/working groups where required.
- Contribute to the development and implementation of national suicide reduction strategies, implementation plans, and programmes. Support delivery of actions within the national suicide and self-harm reduction strategy relating to participation, engagement, and person-centred approaches through ensuring the centrality of lived and living experience perspective.
- Seek to develop and support structures that enable meaningful participation of people with lived experience at national and regional levels.
- Contribute to national working groups, implementation plans, and reporting processes ensuring lived/living experience informs all decision making.
- Ensure that engagement processes are ethical, trauma-informed, and aligned with best practice standards in relation to involving and supporting lived experience expertise input.
- Work in collaboration with the NOSP team to support the implementation of a national framework for engaging people with lived experience in suicide and self-harm prevention.

Multi-sectoral engagement

- Build and maintain relationships with groups including:
 - People with lived experience
 - HSE Office for Mental Health Engagement and Recovery
 - HSE Resource Officers for Suicide Prevention
 - Government departments and national agencies
 - HSE Mental Health Offices
 - HSE Mental Health Services
 - Community and Voluntary Organisations
 - Clinical, Research and Academic Partners
 - Department of Health and other government departments
 - WHO and other international partners
- Facilitate workshops, consultations, and forums with people of lived experience and other stakeholders to inform policy and service development.
- Identify opportunities to promote lived experience feedback to frontline HSE staff.
- Work collaboratively with mental health service leads and mental health service teams.
- Represent the HSE NOSP at national meetings, conferences, and working groups as required.

Policy and service development

- Provide expert advice on incorporating lived experience into:
 - Training and education initiatives
 - Public awareness campaigns
 - Service design and evaluation
 - Research and programme development
- Contribute to briefing papers, reports, and policy documents.

Training and capacity building

- Work closely with Programme Leads within the HSE NOSP to embed lived experience perspectives in training, campaigns, and service initiatives.
- Support the development of guidance and training for HSE staff and partners on:
 - Meaningful engagement with lived experience
 - Safe and responsible communication about suicide and self-harm
 - Co-production approaches
- Identify opportunities to build lived experience engagement into gatekeeper training into the annual prospectus of programmes of education and training.
- Develop guidance and resources to support co-production and participatory approaches across NOSP programmes.
- Support the safe and appropriate use and sharing of Lived experience by individuals in public or group settings.

Professional

- Organise, plan workload, and manage time in an efficient and effective manner in order to carry out professional duties.
- Keep informed of national and international emerging developments in mental health and suicide prevention and best practice with regards to Lived Experience involvement and PPI.
- Maintain own knowledge of relevant policies, procedures, regulatory standards and legislation to perform the role effectively.
- Take responsibility for own professional development, reflection on practice and continuous performance improvement.
- Adequately identifies, assesses, manages and monitors risk within their area of responsibility.
- Engage in the performance achievement process in conjunction with your Line Manager and staff as appropriate.
- Work in accordance with the principles and values of recovery as described in the National Framework for Recovery for Irish Mental Health Services 2024-2028.
- Model and demonstrate best practice in use of lived experience and self-care in all your activities.

Monitoring, evaluation, and governance

- Support and facilitate the co-creation and development of mechanisms to evaluate the impact of lived experience engagement.
- Ensure governance, safeguarding, and risk management processes are in place for all engagement activities.
- Maintain accurate records, reports, and documentation in line with HSE requirements.

Other

- Any other duties as assigned by the line manager/ Director.

3. Criteria for position

Essential skills

- Relevant third-level qualification (e.g. BSc or MSc, Level 7 or higher) in a health, social care, psychology, public health, community development, or a related field.
- This is a designated lived-experience role. Applicants must have lived/living experience of suicidality or self-harm, either personally, as a family member or carer supporting someone with these experiences, or through bereavement by suicide. They should also have an ability to demonstrate insight and objectivity relating to that experience.
- Experience of using their lived experience in an intentional way to support others or to support service improvement initiatives.
- Experience of group facilitation or similar engagement process with service users, family members/carers and/or supporters.
- Experience of working collaboratively at a strategic level in co-production processes with internal and external stakeholders as relevant to this role demonstrating an understanding of the importance of partnership working in the service improvement process.
- Experience of developing, leading and delivering projects in a timely and cost-effective manner.
- Knowledge of project methodology and service improvement approaches within organisations.
- Knowledge of quality assurance and best practice within statutory and organisational settings.

Desirable skills

- Experience working in mental health, suicide prevention, community development, or related area.

4. Skills, competencies and/or knowledge

Professional knowledge

- Demonstrate current knowledge of mental health and suicide and self-harm reduction policies and best practices – national and international.
- Demonstrates current knowledge of Ireland's Mental Health Engagement and Recovery Office approach and associated services, policies and frameworks.
- Demonstrates up to date knowledge of Trauma-informed approaches.
- Demonstrates working knowledge of participation and co-production principles.
- Demonstrates a strong awareness of safe communication and self-care about suicide and self-harm.
- Maintains up-to-date knowledge of national and international best practice in relevant areas.
- Demonstrates up to date knowledge of suicide/self-harm statistics and Data Capturing organisations.

- Demonstrates an ability to assess and manage sensitive issues in a small group environment and signpost to appropriate supports when appropriate.
- Demonstrates an ability to use problem-solving processes.

Interpersonal and communication skills

- Demonstrate effective interpersonal and communication skills including the ability to transmit information fluently and persuasively in an engaging, respectful and sensitive manner.
- Demonstrates sensitive and effective communication on complex and emotionally charged topics.
- Demonstrates carrying out discussions and consultations in a safe and respectful manner.
- Demonstrates the ability to build trust with stakeholders, including people with lived experience.
- Demonstrate ability to build and maintain effective working relationships.
- Demonstrate evidence of ability to provide constructive feedback to encourage learning.
- Demonstrate ability to engage in reflective practice and an ongoing commitment to personal development and growth.
- Demonstrate evidence of information technology literacy including ability to use email, PowerPoint, excel, database, search engines etc.
- Demonstrates the ability to produce clear written reports, briefing papers, and presentations.

Planning and organising

- Demonstrates evidence of organisation and time management skills to meet objectives within agreed timeframes and achieve quality results.
- Demonstrates evidence of effective planning and organisation skills including awareness of resource management, co-ordinating and scheduling of activities.
- Demonstrates the ability to coordinate multiple stakeholder engagement and activity, monitoring progress to ensure objectives are achieved.
- Demonstrates the ability to identify potential risks or issues and implements practical, timely solutions to keep work on track.

Analysis and decision making

- Demonstrates the use of evidence, data, and stakeholder feedback to inform recommendations and decisions.
- Demonstrates applying critical thinking to programme development, implementation, and evaluation.
- Demonstrates contributes to policy development and service improvement initiatives.

Sustained personal commitment to providing a quality service

- Demonstrate evidence of ability to analyse and evaluate information and situations quickly and accurately to solve problems and make decisions.
- Demonstrate evidence of a commitment to self-evaluation, reflection and continuous performance improvement.

Leadership and teamwork

- Demonstrate evidence of motivation and an innovative approach to the job in a changing work environment.

- Demonstrate evidence of ability to work in a co-operative and collaborative manner with other teams and disciplines.
- Demonstrate ability to support the empower of others to reach their full potential particularly those with lived experience.

5. Details of post, duration and salary

The appointment will initially be for three years, full-time, with the prospect of prolongation of the term of employment, subject to funding. The salary for this position will be in accordance the HSE Grade VII salary scale (01/08/2025 - €60,013 €61,479 €63,192 €64,911 €66,636 €68,176 €69,745 €71,272 €72,788 €75,397 €78,015 LSIs).

This is a full-time (37.5 hours per week) position.

Annual leave entitlement will apply in line with the HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention terms and conditions and relevant leave policies.

The location of the post will be at the offices of the HSE National Office for Suicide Preventions, Stewarts Care, Mill Lane, Palmerstown, Dublin 20. Access to own transport and a full clean driving license is required, as the position may involve travel.

Blended working arrangements may be considered for this post, in line with the HSE Blended Working Policy and subject to the exigencies of the service/management approval.

The NSRF promotes the wellbeing and professional development of all staff members. As part of this role, the successful candidate will have access to the NSRF's Employee Assistance Programme. They will also be supported through structured supervision and reflective practice and will have access to peer support and supervision via the HSE.

6. Application Process

For informal enquiries on the post, candidates should contact:

Name & Title: Sarah Toye Clinical Advisor NOSP
Tel: 087 1669096
Email: Sarah.toye@hse.ie

Name & Title: Sarah Woods Strategy and Policy Lead NOSP
Tel: 01 6201670
Email: Sarah.woods1@hse.ie

To Apply:

Applicants are requested to send a cover letter detailing relevant experience, skills and motivation for applying together with their curriculum vitae, including the names of two referees to niall.mcternan@ucc.ie.

Closing date for applications is Friday April 24th, 2026, at 5pm

It is expected that interviews will take place online on the weeks commencing May 4th and May 11th, 2026

Shortlisting will apply and shortlisted candidates will be notified by e-mail of interview date and time as applicable.

The National Suicide Research Foundation is an equal opportunities employer.

Directors: M Kelleher J McCarthy B McGale M O'Callaghan J O'Brien K Galway D Flynn E Kelleher

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