

ben

Support for life

Suicide prevention

Information for employers and managers

The purpose of this leaflet is to provide information and raise awareness about suicide and suicide prevention in the automotive industry.



Many people struggle to cope at some point in their lives. Suicide can be a difficult subject to talk about and people can find it challenging to open up about how they are feeling. That's why it's so important to raise awareness on this important topic, keep checking in with others and look out for the warning signs.

It's a common misconception that those affected by suicide also struggle with their mental health. It isn't always the case that someone who is suicidal or has died by suicide had pre-existing mental health issues – it can be situational e.g. becoming homeless, struggling financially or experiencing grief or a relationship breakdown.

Suicide – the stats

According to the World Health Organization, over 700,000 people take their own life each year, which is one person every 40 seconds, and the UK is ranked 116 out of 183 countries for suicide figures¹. Suicide is a prevalent issue within the UK, with a total of 1 in 5 people having suicidal thoughts², while 1 in 15 attempted suicide³.

Within organisations, 9% of employees have thoughts of suicide or self-harm, with female employees almost twice as likely to seek mental health support⁴. Financial stress doubles the likelihood of experiencing such thoughts⁵. Suicide rates vary by UK region and deprivation, with rates the highest in North-East England⁶.

Suicide in a male dominated industry

According to ONS, in 2021, there were 6,567 deaths by suicide registered in the UK, with males aged between 45-49 as having the highest suicide rate in England and Wales⁷. A total of 126 people die by suicide in the UK every week, with around 74% of those being male⁸. There are many factors that make men more vulnerable to suicide and the automotive industry is male dominated so this is a particular area of concern.

The automotive industry experiences instances of suicide even with employers implementing initiatives to support their employees. Sadly, at Ben we have seen an increase in calls to our helpline for support around suicide over recent years.

Men are often under pressure to appear strong and not show signs of weakness. This means they are less likely to talk about any issues they are facing or seek help when they are struggling with their mental health.

Sometimes pride comes into the equation and men may think they can handle their issues on their own or worry about being a burden to others. Men are also more likely to respond to stress with risky behaviour such as abusing alcohol which increases the risk of suicide by **up to eight times**.

Employers have a role to play in reducing the stigma around male mental health and provide relevant support to prevent suicide. From **findings in our survey report 2023**, 1 in 3 automotive workers reported having had issues managing their mental health, compared with 1 in 6 of the general UK working population.

-
1. WHO, Global Health Observatory (2022), [Our World in Data](#)
 2. Suicides in England and Wales: 2021 registrations; Suicide Statistics | 2023 Data; Suicide statistics - House of Commons Library - UK Parliament
 3. McManus, S., Bebbington, P., Jenkins, R. & Brugha, T. (2016) Mental health and wellbeing in England. Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey 2014, NHS Digital, 2014, Chapter 12
 4. Pindar, J. (2023) Champion Health Suicide Statistics Accessed from: <https://championhealth.co.uk/insights/suicidal-thoughts-statistics/>
 5. Champion Health (2022) Cost of Living Crisis Wellbeing Report Accessed from: [cost-of-living-crisis-wellbeing-report.pdf \(championhealth.co.uk\)](#)
 6. ONS (2022) Suicides in England and Wales 2021 registrations Accessed from: [Suicides in England and Wales tables, Table 4](#)
 7. ONS (2020) Accessed from: [Suicides in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)
 8. ONS (2022) Suicides in England and Wales 2021 registrations Accessed from: [Suicides in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

An employer's responsibility

Employers have a responsibility to support the mental health and wellbeing of their employees and understanding the risk of suicide should be part of the mental health strategy of every company.

In 2022, Ben supported 303 individuals who disclosed they were experiencing suicidal ideation or intent. Around 7 employers each year call on our Urgent Response Service after an employee has taken their own life. As part of the service, Ben supports their colleagues to come to terms with the devastating news and its impact. With this in mind, employers need a clear approach to suicide prevention as part of a robust health and safety strategy. This is about ensuring that there is not only support for those who are at risk of self-harm and suicide but also raising awareness and educating more people to look out for warning signs and know how they can help someone at risk.

Things that employers can do:

- Foster a positive and [inclusive workplace culture](#)
- Promote good mental and physical health
- Reduce [stress at work](#)
- Develop a health and wellbeing, or specific mental health and wellbeing support plan for employees
- Be approachable – have dedicated staff who can be approached
- Promote [Ben's support & services](#)
- Educate and train managers and key staff in [mental health first aid](#) and [suicide first aid](#).



Warning signs to look out for

Firstly, it's important to know the warning signs to look out for that could indicate someone is at risk of suicide:

Acting differently

- Giving away possessions
- Writing goodbye letters
- Becoming withdrawn or isolated
- Increase in alcohol or drug use
- Behaving erratically or experiencing extreme mood swings
- Giving up previously loved activities

Saying phrases like...

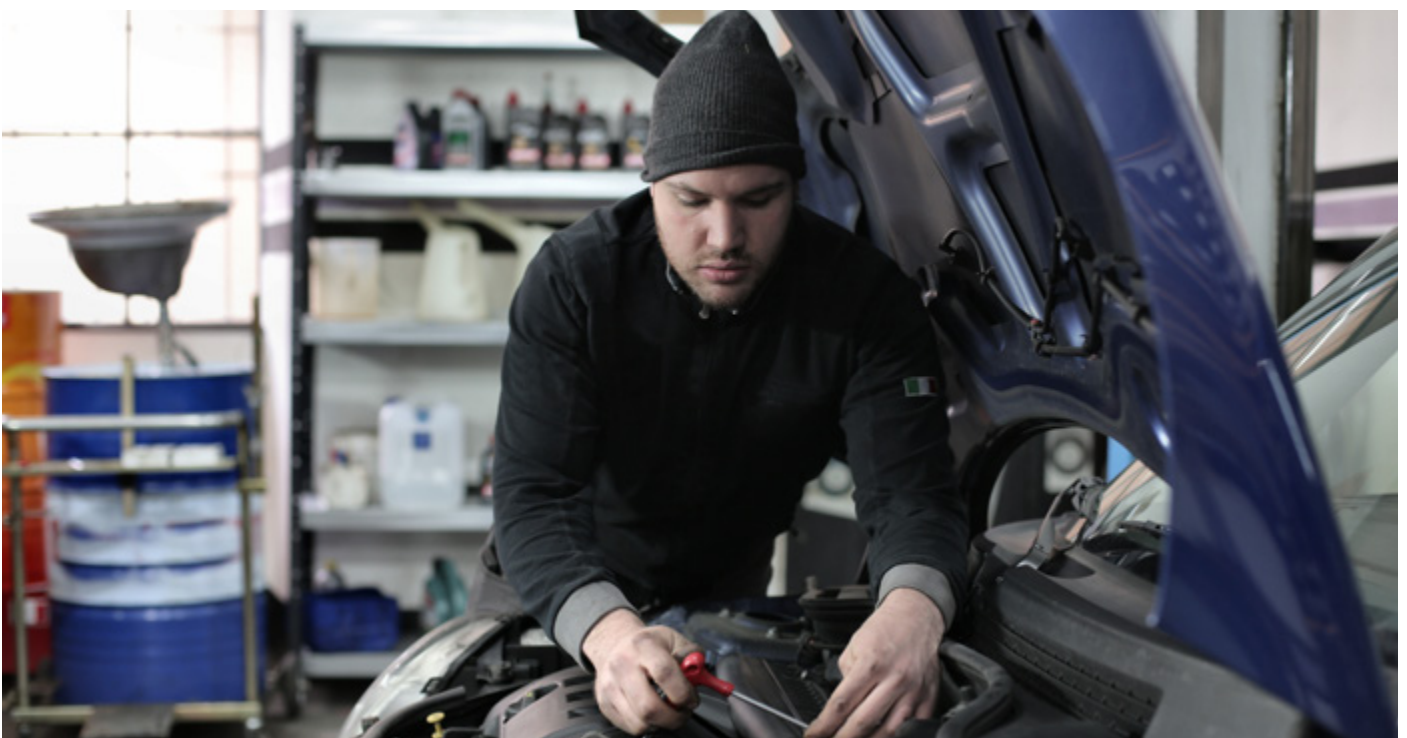
- They don't want to be here anymore
- Wanting a way out
- That life has no purpose
- Being a burden to others
- That nobody cares

Impactful life situations

Impactful life situations that bring loss, stress or trauma can be a trigger, such as:

- Bereavement
- Money worries – debt
- Loss of job
- Abuse of any kind
- Relationship breakdown
- Feelings of failure / rejection

The areas listed above don't always lead to suicidal thoughts and everyone is different so some people may not display any of these signs. However, don't be afraid to check in with someone if you feel something has changed or is worrying you more than usual.



Support - working with Ben

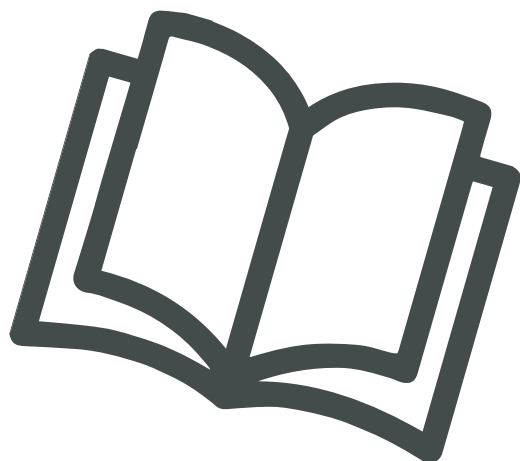
If you are an employer or HR professional and need further guidance on the topic of suicide and self-harm, we work with employers to help them support their employees.

Urgent response service

Our urgent response service offers support with critical incidents that affect your people including support for suicide, self-harm and safeguarding concerns, as well as complex cases. For more information [click here](#) or contact your dedicated Account Manager or our Helpline on 08081 311 333.

Suicide First Aid training

The Suicide First Aid through Understanding Suicide Intervention (SFAUSI) course gives learners the knowledge and tools to understand that suicide is one of the most preventable deaths and some basic skills can help someone with the thoughts of suicide stay safe from their thoughts and stay alive. For more information [click here](#) or contact your dedicated Account Manager or email bentraining@ben.org.uk.



Mental Health training

Ben's Mental Health First Aid course enables participants to gain in-depth understanding of mental health and factors that affect wellbeing, develop practical skills to spot the triggers and signs of a range of mental health issues, build the confidence to step in, reassure and support a person in distress using the Mental Health First Aid action plan. It qualifies participants as Mental Health First Aiders. For more information [click here](#) or contact your dedicated Account Manager or email bentraining@ben.org.uk.

Ben's Managing Mental Health in the Workplace training enables participants to gain a greater understanding of mental health and recognise common mental health conditions. It gives participants the confidence to effectively manage and support someone who may be experiencing poor mental health. For more information [click here](#) or contact your dedicated Account Manager or email bentraining@ben.org.uk.

We also provide a number of other training courses to support employee health and wellbeing. [Click here](#) to find out more or contact your dedicated Account Manager or email bentraining@ben.org.uk.

Personal support

Emergency support

If someone you're with has seriously harmed themselves, or you think they might be at risk of acting on suicidal thoughts, please do the following:

- Call 999 if there is an immediate risk to life
- Visit your nearest Accident and Emergency (A&E) department and explain that the person you are with is thinking of suicide
- Call 111 if the person you're with can stay safe for now but you still require urgent support

If someone needs support but is not currently in an emergency situation / crisis then Ben is here:

Ben's helpline

Chat online or call our helpline. It's free & confidential and available.

Opening hours: **Monday to Friday - 8am to 8pm.**

Call - **08081 311 333**

Email - supportservices@ben.org.uk

Chat online - [click here](#)

It's also possible to **request a call back** from our helpline at a time that suits you between our operating hours. Find more ways we can support you [here](#).

Ben's out of hours text service

For those who work, or have worked, in the automotive industry who are struggling or in crisis.

Opening hours: **8pm – 8am**

Text the word **BEN** to **85258**

Ben's online mental health support

Ben provides a whole host of mental health support online at www.ben.org.uk/mentalhealth and via its online therapeutic platform, Silvercloud at www.ben.org.uk/silvercloud.

National crisis support

Samaritans

Emotional support for those struggling to cope, or at risk of suicide.

Opening hours: 24/7

Call: **116 123**

Calm

UK wide service for those looking to talk.

Opening hours: 5pm-midnight

Call: **0800 58 58 58**

Sane

Out of hours mental health helpline for those affected and also family, friends, or carers.

Opening hours: 4:30pm – 10:30pm

Call: **0300 304 7000**.

Hopeline UK

Confidential support for children and those aged under 35 who are at risk of suicide, or for anyone concerned about them.

Opening hours: 9am – midnight

Call: **0800 068 4141**

Text: **07860 039967**

Other resources

If you are worried about yourself, please see our leaflet called 'Suicide prevention – I'm at risk of suicide'. If you are worried about someone, please see our leaflet called 'Suicide prevention – I'm worried about someone'.