suicidebereavement[uk]
EXPERTS IN THE FIELD

postvention trust

NEW VENUE IN LIVERPOOL

Suicide Bereavement UK (SBUK) and Postvention Trust CIC are collaborating to host the Suicide Bereavement UK's 15th International Conference.

Suicide Bereavement: Silence Isn't Always Golden

One day conference: 16th September 2026

9am – 4.30pm (F2F registration from 8am)
Titanic Hotel Liverpool, Stanley Dock, Liverpool

FACE2FACE £180 + Booking Fee + VAT | **LIVESTREAM** £75 + Booking Fee + VAT

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SPEAKERS | WORKSHOPS | PROGRAMME | FACE2FACE ONLINE BOOKING | LIVESTREAM ONLINE BOOKING | LOCATION AND CONTACT

Sponsored by

PABBS Evidence-based Suicide Bereavement Training

RTS2 RESPONDING TO SUICIDE EMERGENCY SERVICES

Liverpool City Council

Speakers

Dr Angela Samata

Nicole Cool

Johnny Santer

Pete Johnson

Dr Sharon McDonnell

Barry McGale

Geoff McDonald

Lisa Bourne

Allison Furlong

Madeleine Moon

Dr Kathryn Gardner

Amber Williams

Claire McNaney

Louise C Smith

Dr Angela Samata

Suicide Bereavement UK

(Chair, morning)

Angela Samata is a Deputy Lieutenant of Merseyside and Creative Consultant and Trainer at Suicide Bereavement UK. A Psychotherapist, TEDx speaker, Churchill Fellow and Mind Media Award winner, Angela presented BBC 1's BAFTA nominated documentary Life After Suicide. She works across both Suicide Prevention and the Arts, speaking internationally on both subjects. Angela is a SOBS Ambassador, an invited attendee of the Parliamentary Suicide Prevention APPG. Co-author of the Zero Suicide Alliance training accessed by 3 million people, Angela Chairs Tate Liverpool's Advisory Board and contributes to media including BBC, Channel 4 and has written for The Lancet Psychiatry and Huffington Post.

Nicole Cool

Co-Chair, Australian National Postvention Leadership Group

Nicole is an Australian leader in suicide postvention, whose work has strengthened service delivery, national collaboration and support pathways after suicide. As the former National Program Manager of the StandBy Support After Suicide program, Nicole coordinated national program delivery across a network of partners. She strengthened commissioning and contract management frameworks, expanded program reach and supported the consistent delivery of evidence-informed practice across diverse communities. She also helped mobilise and launch new counselling and peer-support services, creating additional pathways for people bereaved and affected by suicide. In 2024 Nicole established and co-chaired the Australian National Postvention Leadership Group, strengthening collaboration between national organisations and improving the coordination of postvention support on the ground. Her purpose driven leadership is informed by lived experience, having lost her grandfather to suicide at 16.

Johnny Santer

Founder and Campaign Director at Gabe's Law

Johnny Santer is the Founder and Campaign Director at Gabe's Law, a UK not for profit that focuses on social justice campaigning and youth safety, particularly around early intervention, suicide prevention and mental health, using art and street culture as effective means for messaging and participation, after the Multi Storey Car Parks (Safety) Bill was introduced into Parliament at the start of 2023, following on from the preventable death of his son, Gabriel (Gabe), in Liverpool, October 2020. In May this year, he also founded 720 Degrees CIC, building community around a future skatepark in the city which will serve as a cultural hub and portal to wellbeing, working alongside other CICs, charities, and Liverpool City Council to deliver an inclusive, safe space that will empower, educate and provide opportunities for all users, whilst holding a sense of fun, connection and belonging at the heart of operations.

Pete Johnson

Platfform

Pete Johnson spoke at the Suicide Bereavement UK Conference in 2021, sharing his experience of the complex impacts of losing his mother to suicide when he was just 15 months old. Since then, he has joined the mental health and social justice charity Platfform as Commercial Director for a national project advancing trauma informed and relational approaches across organisations. He will reflect on his learning since his last conference appearance and share Platfform's work on developing community as a mental health intervention. Pete has also contributed to Heart of Glass's art project *The Suicide Chronicles*.

Dr Sharon McDonnell

Suicide Bereavement UK

Dr Sharon McDonnell is a suicidologist whose work is internationally recognised. She is an international speaker known for amplifying the voices of those bereaved by suicide. Sharon is the Founder and Managing Director of Suicide Bereavement UK (SBUK), an award-winning organisation specialising in research, training and consultancy. She is also an Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Manchester and a Winston Churchill Fellow. Personally bereaved by suicide, she combines lived-experience with academic leadership. She has led pioneering work including the largest suicide bereavement survey internationally, the NIHR-funded evidence-based PABBS training and evidence-based suicide bereavement guides for the Armed Forces community. Sharon hosts SBUK's international conference, bringing together global expertise and best practice. She has published widely, and her work has informed policy, practice and parliamentary debate.

Barry McGale

Suicide Bereavement UK

(Chair, afternoon)

Barry McGale is Senior Suicide Prevention Consultant and Trainer at Suicide Bereavement UK (SBUK). He is a qualified (but recently retired) Cognitive Behavioural Therapist. In 2008 he developed and led the first postvention service in the Northern Ireland, which is currently being replicated in the UK. Barry was the first Suicide Liaison Officer in the UK and consequently has considerable experience working with those bereaved by suicide. He has worked on several ground-breaking research projects and received a number of international awards in recognition of his work in this field.

Geoff McDonald

Geoff McDonald Consulting

Geoff McDonald is a former Global Vice-President of HR, Marketing, Communications and Sustainability at Unilever, is an internationally recognised advocate for purpose driven leadership and workplace wellbeing. Over a distinguished 25-year career at Unilever under Paul Polman's leadership, he gained extensive experience embedding purpose into business strategy and addressing mental health as a corporate imperative. For more than a decade, he has advised organisations across sectors and spoken at leading institutions worldwide, including senior forums in government and global boardrooms. Geoff also serves as a trustee and strategic advisor to multiple organisations, advancing wellbeing as a fundamental driver of organisational performance. His mission is bold and urgent: to help businesses unlock performance through purpose and make mental health a board-level priority.

Lisa Bourne

Leeds MIND Suicide Bereavement Services

Lisa Bourne is a Senior Suicide Bereavement Practitioner at Leeds Mind, where she has worked for over five years supporting people affected by suicide loss across West Yorkshire and Craven. She manages a team of practitioners with lived experience of suicide bereavement and coordinates the service's volunteers. After losing a friend to suicide in 2017, Lisa accessed the same suicide bereavement service she now works within, giving her a valuable perspective as both a former service user and practitioner. This lived experience shapes her compassionate, trauma-informed approach and her strong commitment to delivering meaningful, person-centred postvention support.

Allison Furlong

Alfie's Squad

Allison Furlong is CEO of Alfie's Squad, the only UK charity focused on peer support solely for children, young people, and their families who have been bereaved by suicide. She leads the organisation's national growth, developing structured, trauma-informed programmes rooted in lived experience. Her work centres on an innovative whole family approach, building strategic partnerships and creating sustainable frameworks that allow the model to be replicated in communities across the country. Allison advocates for earlier intervention and greater recognition of the long-term impact of suicide bereavement on children and young people.

Madeleine Moon

Suicide Bereavement UK
Patron

Prior to becoming MP for Bridgend in 2005 Madeleine worked across mental health issues in Child and Adult Protection, hospital based Social work, contracting with, then inspection of, Social Care providers. In 2008 deaths by suicides across Bridgend County Borough resulting in major press coverage. To understand causes of the deaths Madeleine reached out to academics. professionals and charities working in the field. In 2009 she founded, with the Samaritans, the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Suicide and Self Harm Prevention. Madeleine was a member of the Parliamentary Defence Select Committee 2009 – 2019 and Chair of the RAF APPG. She was a member of the UK delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly 2010-2020 and was elected its President in 2018.

Dr Kathryn Gardner

Associate Professor, University of Lancashire

Dr Kathryn Gardner is an Associate Professor in Clinical Psychology at the University of Lancashire, specialising in self-harm and suicide research. In 2017, she co-founded *Suicide and Self-Harm Research North West* (SSHaRe NoW), a collaborative network bringing together researchers, clinicians, and stakeholders. Her current work examines the clinical and psychological significance of self-harm injury location, with implications for suicide prevention. Kathryn has led an award-winning NHS project addressing workforce shortages by training Associate Psychological Practitioners and works with external partners, including Suicide Bereavement UK, to evaluate mental health services and evidence-based suicide bereavement training.

Amber Williams

California, USA

Amber Williams is a writer, speaker, therapist, and business owner pursuing a Ph.D. in Counselling Psychology at San Diego National University. She is a Marriage and Family Therapist, who supports individuals navigating trauma, grief, loss, substance use, anger, suicidal ideation, mood disorders, and interpersonal challenges. A survivor of homelessness in Los Angeles and San Francisco, Amber brings lived-experience of mental illness and adversity to her work. Through resilience and support, she rebuilt her life and became a committed mental health advocate. Her mission is to inspire healing, strengthen resilience, and save lives by empowering others to overcome hardship and reclaim hope.

Claire McNaney

Gateshead Council

Claire joined Gateshead's Public Health Team in 2024 as the Lead for Suicide Prevention and Mental Health. Before this she was a Police Officer for 18 years where she helped people affected by suicide and experiencing mental health crisis. Her passion for improving people's mental health led her to become a Wellbeing Champion, supporting and mentoring Police colleagues struggling with their own mental health. Claire is passionate about preventing suicide, with a particular focus with hearing the voices of people with lived-experience whose knowledge and expertise is paramount to reducing the number of suicides and the devastating impact that follows.

Louise C Smith

Independent Celebrant

Louise has been an independent funeral celebrant since 2017, working closely with bereaved families to shape ceremonies that reflect the lives of those who have died. Through listening to stories, memories and complexities, she helps people find language for loss at moments when words are often difficult to access. With personal experience of long-term suicidal ideation, Louise has a particular sensitivity to the realities of suicide and its impact on those left behind. She has worked with many families bereaved by suicide and recognises funerals and celebrations of life as one of the first spaces where people may feel able to speak openly about their loved one and their death. Her work explores how ritual, narrative and honest conversation can support people navigating the early stages of suicide bereavement.

Conference Workshops

Please note, it is only possible to register on ONE of the following Workshops

For those attending the LIVESTREAM, they will only be able to attend workshop 1

Workshop 1

Addressing the Stigma of Mental Ill Health – First Step to Preventing Suicide

Geoff McDonald

Geoff will share his lived experience of how being free from the stigma of mental ill health helped save his life, and how stigma contributed to the loss of a close friend to suicide. He will explore what organisations need in order to challenge stigma effectively, what good practice looks like, and what each of us can do, both within workplaces and in everyday life, to reduce stigma and ultimately help prevent suicide.

Workshop 2

How Employers Can Best Support Employees Bereaved by Suicide

Lisa Bourne

Supporting an employee impacted by a suicide can be positive for all involved; the employer retains a valued employee, while the employee regains control, confidence and meaning in their life. This workshop explores the short and long-term impacts of suicide bereavement that employers may need to consider and outlines effective ways to support employees. It draws on Leeds MIND Suicide Bereavement Service's employment support leaflet and National Mind's Wellness Action Plan.

Conference Workshops

Workshop 3

Holding the Pieces Together: A Whole Family Peer Support Model After Suicide

Allison Furlong

After a suicide, families can feel fractured, with each member grieving differently and often in silence. This interactive workshop explores how a structured whole family peer support model can rebuild connection, strengthen communication and reduce isolation after suicide loss. Drawing on the innovative approach of Alfie's Squad, the session will demonstrate how parallel, trauma-informed groups for children and young people, and for parents and carers create safety, shared understanding and long-term resilience. Through a collaborative activity, delegates will reflect on how individual experiences form a connected community, and how family-centred peer support can strengthen postvention pathways.

Workshop 4

How Politics Works – and How to Make It Work for You

Madeleine Moon

Former MP and Founder of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention. Also, Patron of Suicide Bereavement UK

Madeleine Moon brings decades of experience at the heart of UK politics and mental health advocacy. As a former Member of Parliament, a Social Worker in Child and Adult Protection, and the founder of the influential APPG for Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention, Madeleine has played a central role in shaping national conversations around suicide prevention, bereavement support, and the wellbeing of Armed Forces communities.

Last year, Madeleine joined Suicide Bereavement UK's *Hope Show* panel, where her insights into political systems and public advocacy prompted attendees to ask for more.

Conference Workshops

Workshop 4 (continued)

This year, we are delighted that Madeleine will be hosting a dedicated workshop at the conference.

What This Workshop Will Focus On

In this interactive session, Madeleine will explore:

- **How political systems really work** behind the scenes
- **The role and power of citizens** — and why you have far more agency than you might think
- **Practical guidance on engaging with politics**, policymakers, and parliamentary processes
- How to influence change within your community or organisation
- **Key organisations and pathways for getting involved**

Why Attend?

This workshop offers a rare opportunity to learn directly from someone who has spent years navigating and shaping the political landscape. Madeleine's down to earth, accessible approach will help demystify politics and equip you with the tools to use political structures effectively and confidently.

If you've ever wondered how politics *really* works, or how to make it work for you, your organisation, or your community – this workshop is for you.

Who should attend?

This event is suitable for anyone who works in suicide prevention and those who come into contact with those bereaved or affected by suicide, including, but not limited to:

- Armed Forces Charities
- Bereavement Specialists
- Celebrants
- Clinicians
- Coroners and Coroners' Officers
- Commissioners
- Community and Voluntary Sector Staff
- Emergency Services
- Employers
- Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) Providers
- Faith Leaders
- Funeral Directors
- General Practitioners
- Housing Association Staff
- Human Resources Staff
- Job Centre Staff
- Mental Health Professionals/Therapists
- Ministry of Defence
- Occupational Health Staff
- Pharmacists
- Policymakers and Government Staff
- Primary Care
- Prison Staff
- Public Health Staff
- Rail and Highway Authorities Staff
- Researchers/Academics
- Social Workers
- Teachers/Lecturers

Those who work with/ specialise in services for:

- Black and Minority Ethnic Groups
- Children and young people (including looked after children)
- Disenfranchised Groups
- Educational Settings
- Suicide Prevention/ Postvention
- Substance Misuse
- The Elderly
- Unions
- Workplace Support

Those developing/ implementing/maintaining:

- Postvention Services
- Suicide Prevention/ Postvention Strategies
- British Standard: Suicide in the Workplace

Is this conference suitable for those bereaved by suicide?
This event is organised to inform and guide professionals who come into contact with those bereaved by suicide and those in a position to influence policy and practice. Therefore, it is presented in a factual manner and is not suitable for people bereaved by suicide during the early stages of loss and/or struggling to cope with their loss.

Programme

Registration		**8.00 am- 8.55am**
Chair: Dr Angela Samata	Welcome to the conference	9.00am
Nicole Cool	From Small Beginnings to Stronger Communities: What Australia's Postvention Journey Taught Me About the Way We Respond After Suicide	
Johnny Santer	Suicide: Maybe? The Agonising Liminality of a Coroner's Open Verdict	
Coffee break		
Pete Johnson	Community as a Response to Suicide	
Dr Sharon McDonnell	Unheard, Unseen, Unspoken: The Silent Struggles of Older Adults Bereaved by Suicide	
Lunch/networking		
Chair: Barry McGale		
Workshops – Delegates must **CHOOSE ONLY ONE WORKSHOP** Those attending the **LIVESTREAM, will only be able to attend Workshop 1**		**Click here to see Workshops 1-4**
1. Geoff McDonald	Addressing the Stigma of Mental Ill Health – First Step to Preventing Suicide	
2. Lisa Bourne	How Employers Can Best Support Employees Bereaved by Suicide	
3. Allison Furlong	Holding the Pieces Together: A Whole Family Peer Support Model After Suicide	
4. Madeleine Moon	How Politics Works and How to Make It Work for You	
Coffee Break		
Dr Kathryn Gardner	Strengthening Postvention: The Impact of "PABBS" Training on Professionals Supporting Those Bereaved by Suicide	
Claire McNaney	How Are You Really Though?	
Louise Smith	Giving voices to the Newly Bereaved	
Amber Williams	Minority Suicide Loss Survivors: Interpersonal Factors, Mental Health, and Post-Traumatic Growth	
Chair: Barry McGale	Reflection and Closing remarks	
Close		**4.30pm**

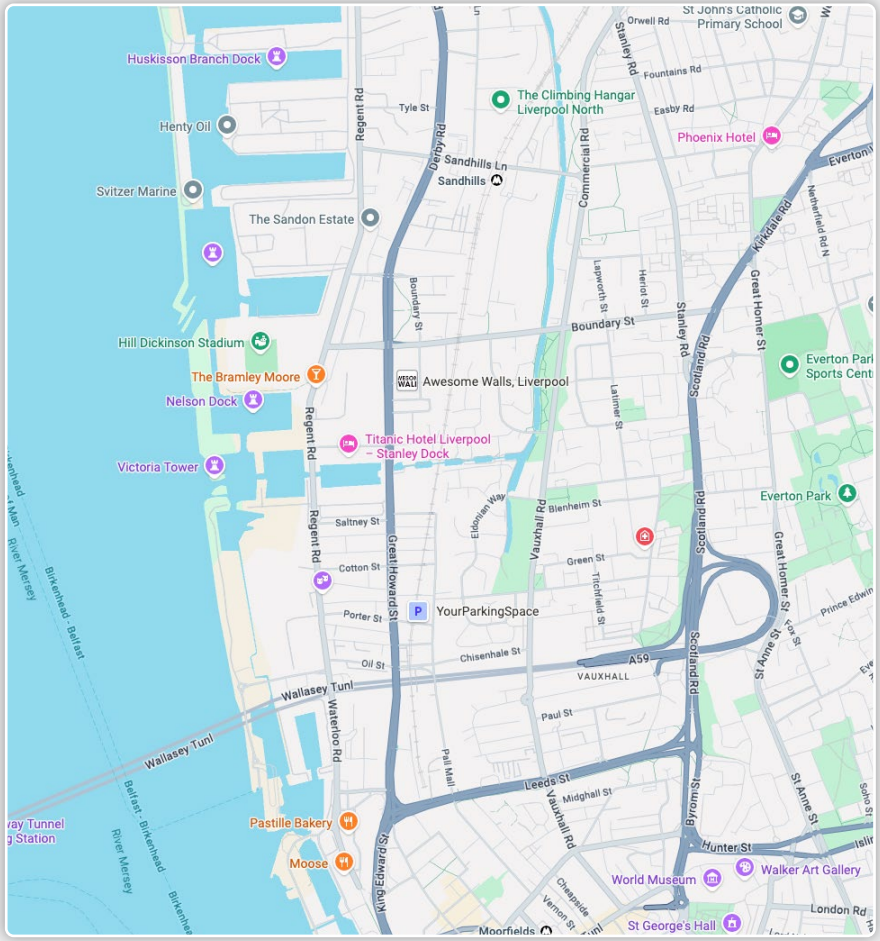
Location

Rum Warehouse
Titanic Hotel Liverpool

Stanley Dock
Regent Road
Liverpool
L3 0AN

Tel: **0151 559 1444**

LOCATION DETAILS



Contact

Suicide Bereavement UK

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