

## **Guidelines for interpreting headings in the audit tool spreadsheet**

Some of the headings in this audit tool can be interpreted in different ways. It's important that everyone carrying out suicide audits across the region has the same understanding of what the headings mean, so that the data collected is consistent and comparable. To enable you to interpret the headings in a similar way to others using the audit tool, we have included below guidance on what to record, or what to consider, when inputting data under certain headings in the spreadsheet.

### **Column B: Date of inquest:**

Please record the date the inquest closed.

### **Column AD: Armed Services**

Choose "yes" from the dropdown heading if the person has ever served in the armed forces.

### **Column AE: If yes, Armed Services**

If yes has been selected in AD, this drop down list allows you to select more details relating to their service.

### **Column AH: Dependents**

Record dependents in the broadest sense, e.g. children under 18 and dependent adults. You can make a note in column AI to give details of the age and nature of the dependents if it's relevant. (E.g. if the person who died was a carer for an ill, elderly or disabled adult, or had a child living at home who was financially dependent).

### **Column AT: Suicide note present**

A social media post, or a text, indicating someone's intention to take their own life might be counted as suicide note. A suicide note doesn't need to be on paper.

### **Column AW: Previous suicide attempt**

Choose "yes" from the dropdown heading if the person has made a previous suicide attempt. You can make a note in column CL to give details of how long ago and how frequent.

### **Column AX: History of self-harm<sup>1</sup>**

Choose "yes" from the dropdown heading if the person has ever self-harmed. You can make a note in column CL to give details of how long ago and how frequent.

### **Column AY: History of violence**

This heading can be interpreted quite broadly. Consider:

- An individual having a history of inflicting physical violence on others.
- An individual having a history of experiencing physical violence from others.
- An individual having a history of inflicting non-physical, aggressive, intimidating behaviour on others.
- An individual having a history of experiencing non-physical, aggressive, intimidating behaviour from others.

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<sup>1</sup> Mind gives the following definition: Ways of self-harming can include: cutting yourself, poisoning yourself, over-eating or under-eating, burning your skin, inserting objects into your body, hitting yourself or walls, overdosing, exercising excessively, scratching and hair pulling, putting yourself in risky situations, not looking after your own physical or emotional needs.

- An individual (particularly a child) having witnessed violence.

**Column AZ: If yes, type of violence**

If yes has been selected in AY, this drop down list allows you to select more details of the nature of the “history of violence”. You can make a note in column CL to give details of how recent, how sustained it was and the impact it had on the individual.

**Column BA: History of alcohol misuse**

This heading should be interpreted quite broadly. Consider the following as history of alcohol misuse:

- Drinking over the recommended weekly units (even if it’s not excessive)
- Binge drinking
- Addiction to alcohol

You can make a note in column CL to give details of the nature of the “history of alcohol misuse” how recent and how sustained it was and the impact it had on the individual.

**Column BB: History of drug misuse**

This heading should be interpreted quite broadly. Consider the following as history of drug misuse:

- Use of any amount of illegal drug (even if it’s not excessive)
- Misuse of prescription medication

You can make a note in column CL to give details of the nature of the “history of drug misuse” how recent and how sustained it was and the impact it had on the individual.

**Column BE: History of domestic abuse**

This heading can be interpreted quite broadly. Consider:

- An individual having a history of being a perpetrator of domestic abuse.
- An individual having a history of experiencing domestic abuse.
- An individual (particularly a child) having witnessed domestic abuse.

**Column BF: If yes, type of domestic abuse**

If yes has been selected in BE, this drop down list allows you to select more details of the nature of “domestic abuse.” You can make a note in column CL to give details of how recent, how sustained it was and the impact it had on the individual.

**Column BG: History of sexual assault**

This heading can be interpreted quite broadly. Consider:

- An individual having a history of being a perpetrator of sexual assault.
- An individual having a history of experiencing sexual assault.
- An individual (particularly a child) having witnessed sexual assault.

**Column BH: If yes, type of sexual assault**

If yes has been selected in BG, this drop down list allows you to select more details of the nature of the “sexual assault”. You can make a note in column CL to give details of how recent, how sustained it was and the impact it had on the individual.

**Column BJ: Relationship problems**

Consider the broad range of relationships which an individual might have, include here not just relationship problems with a spouse or partner, but with parents, siblings, children, wider family and friends. You can make a note in column CL to give details of the nature of the relationship problems.

**Column BK: Financial problems**

Only choose “yes” from the dropdown heading if the person had financial problems when they died.

**Column BL: Bereavement**

It’s important to bear in mind that bereavement which occurred many years ago, may still be affecting someone.

**Column BM: Bereavement by suicide**

It’s important to bear in mind that bereavement which occurred many years ago, may still be affecting someone. To decide whether the person was bereaved by suicide consider:

- Whether they had a close relationship to the person who died by suicide
- Whether they had a sense of personal loss

Select yes from the drop down list only if the answer to the above points is yes.

If the answer to the above points is no please consider whether the person has still been affected or exposed to suicide, column BN.

**Column BN: Exposed or affected by suicide**

It’s important to bear in mind that somebody may be affected or exposed to suicide even if they are not bereaved by it e.g. emergency service staff who attend the scene after a suicide. The impact of exposure to suicide which occurred many years ago, may still be affecting someone. You can make a note in column CL to give details of the circumstances of the exposure and the impact it had on the individual.

**Column BP: Welfare reform concerns**

This could include difficulty with, or anxiety about, one or more of the following:

- housing issues (e.g bedroom tax)
- benefits
- fit for work assessments

**Column BS: Disability**

We suggest you use the definition of disability from the Equality Act 2010. I.e. An individual is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities.

**Column BT: Perinatal (i.e. from the start of pregnancy till the baby is a year old)**

This is specific to mental health during pregnancy and the first year after birth. Mental health problems not linked to pregnancy/birth/new parenthood are recorded under other headings in the audit tool. Please consider that this could affect both males and females. For any physical health problems this needs to be reported in BO/BP.

**Column BU: Known to mental health services**

This heading should be interpreted quite broadly. Consider the following as known to mental health services:

- On a waiting list
- Telephone contact with crisis services/mental health services
- Previously in receipt of mental health services

You can make a note in column CL to give details of the nature of the “know to mental health services” how recent, type of service/s and duration of involvement.

**Column BV: Detained**

Only choose “yes” from the dropdown heading if the person was detained under a section of the Mental Health Act when they died.

**Column BW: Open Spell of Care**

Only choose “yes” from the dropdown heading if the person was in receipt of clinical mental health services at the time of their death.

**Column CC: If physical health was the reason for their last visit to their GP**

If physical health has been selected in column CB, please indicate whether mental health was also discussed in the appointment by selecting an option from the drop down list.

**Column CE: Subject to Care Programme Approach**

Only choose “yes” from the dropdown heading if the person was subject to the CPA when they died.