



Commissioners	SASP
Budget	£16,700
Deadline for proposal submission	18/09/2022
Applicant interviews	w/c 19/09/2022
Contract duration	6 months

We are seeking an experienced individual researcher or team to conduct interviews and/or focus group discussions (or alternative participatory approach as directed by a lived experience panel) with people belonging to LGBTQ+ communities who have experienced bereavement by suicide with a focus on which supports they found most useful and their likelihood to engage with suicide bereavement support services.

This document provides background to the project and information about Support After Suicide Partnership (SASP). It also includes the requirements of the project, key milestones, budget, ethical considerations and how to apply.

Background and context

The Support After Suicide Partnership is a UK wide network of over 70 members and supporters. We were founded in 2013 to bring together national and local organisations that are involved in delivering suicide bereavement support across the UK and to address the need for formal, multi-agency, proactive suicide bereavement support. We're a special interest group of the National Suicide Prevention Alliance (NSPA) based at Samaritans.

Our vision is that Everyone bereaved or affected by suicide is offered timely and appropriate support.

Key

- LGBTQ is an umbrella term used to refer collectively to individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer and/or questioning. We include the '+' to signify other minoritised sexual and gender identities not specifically included in these initials. Within these terms, we recognise there is significant diversity, fluidity, and overlap.
- Bereavement by suicide can refer to any experience of loss due to suicide among family, friends or acquaintances
- Suicide Bereavement Support Services refers to services that provide bereavement support to people who've lost a loved one to suicide. Some of these services are commissioned by the NHS and provide support to people in the immediate aftermath of a death, whereas others provide longer-term on-going support. Providers are often from the voluntary sector.
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Evidence



What does the evidence tell us about LGBTQ+ individuals or groups and their engagement with suicide bereavement support?

- Support organisations suggest that marginalisation, prejudice and discrimination that is perceived, experienced or expected by LGBTQ+ people during the grief process can create a barrier to accessing safe and appropriate support when bereaved by suicide. However, there is a scarcity of published research evidence that explores these experiences.
- Whilst a considerable body of research has documented the experiences of suicide bereavement, the vast majority of this work has focused on heterosexual populations.
- This lack of attention to suicide bereavement in LGBTQ+ populations is an important gap, particularly as bereavement research from other causes of death (e.g. cancer) has highlighted unique challenges linked to the persistence of sexual stigma, wherein same-sex relationships are denigrated, discredited and discriminated against (Herek, 2007), in a way that could also lead to disenfranchised and/or complicated grief (Ferlatte et al, 2019).
- There is also a clear absence of focus on intersectional factors such as ethnicity, disability and socioeconomic disadvantage in LGBTQ+ populations, and the impact of this on help seeking, trust and adherence (to support).

What can we learn from the broader evidence base about LGBTQ+ communities as an audience that doesn't engage in support for bereavement (i.e., not specific to suicide), or mental health and wellbeing support more generally?

And what do we know about the role of trust in this relationship?

Overall service use and preferences

- There is some (often anecdotal) evidence to suggest that LGBTQ+ people prefer to access LGBTQ+ specific services; but little empirical evidence exploring their overall service and support preferences. (Wilson & Cariola, 2019).

Norms, experiences and behaviour

- LGBTQ+ persons may have prior experience of, and/or expectations of services or communities of support that are heteronormative – this may drive a dominant narrative that people do not share their experiences, and therefore may not be able to provide appropriate support. In particular, research refers to experiences of sexuality being ignored, and therefore discredited, by mental health professionals, or services perpetuating a biologically focused understanding of 'family' (Rivers et al, 2018; i.e., as opposed to chosen family).
- 'Belonging' is important to inclusive care and support for LGBTQ+ individuals, where there is an unconditional acceptance and recognition of gender and sexual diversity (see also McDermott & Roen, 2016).
- There is also some evidence to suggest greater use of informal support structures (e.g., online chat rooms and forums) among LGBTQ+ communities, over and above formal help seeking (Rivers et al, 2018).

Bereavement specific challenges



- There are a number of bereavement-specific challenges that may act as barriers to help seeking. When the deceased identifies as LGBTQ+, the bereaved may fear that a person may be 'outed' in death, or may be at risk of being misgendered. There may also be issues if relationships are not recognised (by services) in the way they are experienced by the individual (e.g., a same sex couple being treated as friends/a platonic relationship). Social norms dictate that some peoples' experiences of grief are validated more than others (Bristowe et al, 2016).
 - Disenfranchised grief is "the grief that persons experience when they incur a loss that is not or cannot be openly acknowledged, publicly mourned, or socially supported" (Doka, 1989).

Project remit: guidelines and requirements

Aims and objectives

The aim of the project is to understand the nature of bereavement by suicide among LGBTQ+ communities with a specific focus on engagement with support. The overarching aim of the research is to guide how services can be more accessible and inform the support offered to people bereaved by suicide who identify as LGBTQ+. This should be achieved through a primary qualitative or mixed methods research study, for which the researcher(s) will be expected to work with an advisory panel of people with lived experience of suicide who also identify as LGBTQ+. The specific nature of the questions explored by the research can be determined by the researcher and the panel, but should include:

- Experience of bereavement by suicide
- Offer of support if any
- Willingness to engage with support offered if any
- Support sought
- Preferred support
- Suggestions to improve accessibility

We envisage that the research will engage approximately 20 research participants, although we welcome ideas from applicants as to a suitable sample size, based on the proposed methodology and the funding available.

Project structure

Following the appointment of the successful researcher(s), an inception meeting will take place with the SASP team and lived experience panel. This meeting will include discussions about methodology, timescales, milestones and reporting expectations. SASP will provide support to access a sample of participants.

Following the inception meeting the practitioner will then be asked to provide a timeline for data gathering, analysis and reporting which should include a summary of findings, conclusion and recommendations.

Role and responsibilities

Responsibility for this project will lie with Michelle Stebbings, Executive Lead at Support After Suicide Partnership. The Lived Experience panel will be identified and facilitated by NSPA. The researcher will be responsible recruiting participants with support from SASP. The researcher will also be responsible for gathering data according to the agreed methodology and delivering against agreed timescales identified during inception. They will also be expected to update SASP as to progress at regular update meetings throughout the project. SASP will have the opportunity to comment on any draft outputs before finalising. If required, SASP or the contracted researcher may engage with Samaritans' research team for advice and guidance.

Ethical considerations

Whilst the methodology will need to be agreed with the commissioned researcher / team, Samaritans Research Ethics Policy must be considered and adhered to (which may require submission to Samaritans Research Ethics Board (SREB)), or an equivalent alternative ethics policy followed. The commissioned researcher / team will be required to develop clear inclusion/exclusion criteria to minimise the risk to participants as part of this process, as well screening and consent documentation. Ethical issues will therefore need full consideration, and approaches / policies should be summarised as part of proposals.

Deliverables

Purpose	To present key findings and conclusions from engagement with people who have been bereaved by suicide and who identify as LGBTQ+
Composition	A report that includes an executive summary, description of key findings, key themes and conclusions and recommendations for practice/further research
Sign off	The outputs will be endorsed and signed off by SASP
Dissemination	<p>The findings will be disseminated within SASP and Samaritans as our host organisation as well as among our membership</p> <p>SASP may want to write further publications or present the finding from this report more widely to inform decisions that relate to the commissioning of suicide bereavement support services</p> <p>The commissioned researcher may also want to write publications or present findings. This can only be done in agreement with SASP.</p>

Budget

The budget for this work is set at a maximum of £16,700, including VAT (if VAT registered) and all expenses and participant payments. Criteria for payments will be agreed via contracts.



Timeline

The completion date for this project is 28th February 2023. The timelines outlined below are illustrative, and applicants are expected to produce a more detailed plan, based on their proposed methodology.

w/c 29/08/22	ITT issued
18/09/22	Deadline for submission of proposals
w/c 19/09/22	Interviews with shortlisted applicants
w/c 03/10/22	Inception meeting
w/c 01/12/22	Data collection
01/02/23	Analysis and reporting
31/03/23	Reporting and final deliverables

Contract

The successful applicant(s) will be required to enter into a contract with Samaritans, within Samaritans' standard terms and conditions. This will include conditions such as:

1. Completion of the services within the timeframe specified.
2. Reduction of payment or non-payment for work not completed.
3. The work cannot be sub-contract to a third party without the prior written consent of Samaritans.
4. Agreed input from Samaritans during reviewing and editing stages.
5. Terms related to intellectual property.

Once the contract is agreed and signed, the successful applicant(s) and Samaritans will be required to adhere to all terms and conditions.

How to apply



Support
After Suicide
Partnership

To be considered for this work, please submit a short proposal (no more than 10 pages) outlining the following:

- Background of you/your organisation (if multiple people are to be involved in delivering the work, a short bio for each person should be included)
- Previous experience and examples of research activity related to this project (such as work on suicide, bereavement, support services, with LGBTQ+ communities, etc)
- Proposed methodology (including sampling, data collection and analysis)
- Ethical considerations and practices
- A commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), including any experience of working with marginalised and disadvantaged groups and/or individuals
- Proposed timelines, including key milestones
- Breakdown of costs

Applications should be submitted in writing to michelle@supportaftersuicide.org.uk by 5pm on the closing date. SASP may contact applicants to clarify aspects of their submission. Applications will be shortlisted (against the criteria given above), and shortlisted applicants will be invited to interview, where they should be prepared to present their proposal and discuss it in detail with a panel. We will aim to conduct interviews the week commencing 19th September.

We will make every effort to ensure the application process and working relationships are as accessible as possible. If you require this invitation and any other documents and communications in a different format, or have any other accessibility requirements for the tender process, please let us know.

Further information

For any further information, please contact Michelle Stebbings at michelle@supportaftersuicide.org.uk