

Claire Giraud

Outstanding Contribution to the Sector

This nomination is for Claire Giraud, a Senior Public Health Practitioner with the Hackney and City of London local authorities. Claire has been an industry-leading force for change in the suicide prevention space, working tenaciously to save lives for many years.

Claire has been responsible for spearheading this work, initiating an [action plan](#) with 64 streams of work, and bringing together multi-agency teams to collaborate, ranging from the City of London Police to schools and libraries.

Importantly, Claire's approach has been rooted in research, ensuring that the delivered outputs are equally motivated by the compassion and empathy needed in mental health, and by a robust, academic evidence base.

The bottom line of this entry is that Claire's passion and expertise has saved lives, and this recognition will provide her with an additional platform to save even more.

In 2024, there were 5,690 suicides registered in England alone, and it remains one of the leading causes of death in the UK. In the face of a turbulent socio-economic macro-climate, risk factors are increasingly present, and access to support and care continues to be complicated.

Claire Giraud has led the work of the City of London, which is uniquely placed to address the risk of suicide in innovative ways. Claire has rallied colleagues in this work, significantly contributing to the mental health sector. Through a multi-faceted approach involving collaboration with key partners, innovative use of technology, and community engagement, Claire has ensured that the Corporation has implemented a series of impactful initiatives aimed at reducing suicides and supporting mental health within the Square Mile. The key initiatives and achievements that Claire Giraud has spearheaded include:

1. **Multi-Agency Suicide Prevention Steering Group:**

- € Established in 2017, this group has developed a comprehensive Suicide Prevention Action Plan focused on minimizing risks in vulnerable groups and promoting sensitive media reporting on suicide. Claire has managed all 64 of the workstreams in the action plan in recent years.

2. **Mental Health Street Triage (MHST):**

- € Claire has been integral in managing the collaborative effort between the City of London Police, NHS, and other partners for the MHST. The MHST enhances crisis response by providing real-time mental health support during police callouts. This initiative has significantly reduced the use of police custody for mental health crises and improved outcomes for individuals in distress.

3. **Secure City Programme:**

- € This programme leverages advanced CCTV technology to enhance situational awareness and response capabilities on City Bridges, a critical area for suicide prevention. The transition to high-definition 4K digital cameras and the integration of a new Video Management IT System have been pivotal in safeguarding vulnerable individuals. Claire has led on bringing together the right agencies for this work to be applied to suicide prevention and safeguarding.
4. **Bridge Watch Programme:**
 - € Claire independently co-founded Bridge Watch. Supported by the City Bridge Foundation, this initiative deploys trained volunteers to patrol Thames bridges, offering timely interventions to individuals at risk of suicide. The programme has already shown promising results in reducing suicide attempts and providing crucial support.
 5. **Designing Out Suicide:**
 - € The City of London Corporation has adopted a Planning Advice Note (PAN) authored by Claire Giraud, to guide developers in integrating suicide prevention measures into high-rise buildings. This innovative approach ensures that new developments consider and mitigate suicide risks from the design stage, so that it can be a core part of the way in which the City develops in the future.
 6. **Thrive LDN Partnership:**
 - € Claire has been a leading light in collaborating with Thrive LDN, where the Corporation has promoted regional suicide prevention efforts, including the #ZeroSuicideLDN campaign and wellbeing initiatives across London's transport network.

Spearheaded by Claire, the City of London Corporation's proactive, data-informed, and partnership-driven approach to suicide prevention is a model of how local authorities can lead the way in addressing this complex public health challenge.

To anyone who meets Claire, it is clear that she lives and breathes suicide prevention. Her passion and enthusiasm are well paired with her expertise and knowledge to create solutions which are creative, academically rigorous, and human-centric. She looks beyond the written remit of her role to seek innovative solutions, and looks beyond the City of London (and even the UK) for examples of good practice to apply to her own framework of suicide prevention. Peers from as far as New York have been in contact with Claire to seek her expert advice and support, which she has gladly given, despite her role being specifically related to suicide prevention in Hackney and the City.

Claire has been masterful in convening groups and individuals for the purpose of progressing the suicide prevention work which her career is rooted in. This is evident in her ability to bring together diverse partners, from police and healthcare providers to educators and local businesses, leading to transformative initiatives that not only work to prevent suicide but also to foster positive mental health and wellbeing in the long term. A brilliant example of this is when she thought of and facilitated an

unprecedented conference on suicide prevention in the City of London, attended by leading mental health specialists and advocates. This was also evident in her co-founding of Bridge Watch, an initiative in which volunteers are trained to undertake patrols on high risk bridges to intervene with members of the public in crisis. Importantly, Claire co-founded Bridge Watch independently of her professional role and remit, a testament to her willingness to dedicate every waking hour to the cause.

A further example of the way in which she goes above and beyond is reflected in the fact that she is the only London suicide prevention lead who sits on the Tidal Thames Water Safety Forum and cooperates with partners such as the Royal National Lifeboat Institute and the Port of London Authority on reducing drowning in the Thames. In addition, she works closely and tirelessly with Transport for London and the Department for Transport on making suicide prevention awareness training mandatory for taxi drivers and private hire vehicles to obtain their licences.

Claire's unwavering dedication and leadership have made a profound and lasting impact on suicide prevention and the broader mental health sector.

Claire's work speaks for itself in its robust and evidence-based approach to suicide prevention, but there are a great many testimonials which bring this to life, and illustrate the far-reaching impact her work and her values have had on the mental health and suicide prevention community:

"Claire Giraud is a passionate advocate for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention and has been the City of London Corporation (CoL) Suicide Prevention Lead for 6 years. In those years she has pioneered some incredible work in the sphere of public health and suicide prevention informing best practice nationally"

- Director of Communications to Mayor Sadiq Khan, former Deputy Town Clerk of the City of London Corporation

"City and Hackney are lucky to have [her] knowledge and passion."

- Haringey Council Public Health Team

"Claire has been instrumental in getting Bridge watch off the ground and has continued to be the main driver behind drowning and suicide prevention along the Thames (which sees 30 deaths a year at least).

Claire's passion for ensuring that this is at the forefront of everyone's minds has really helped support me as chair of the London Water Safety Partnership in bringing everyone together. Claire's knowledge in prevention is also significant and she is often the first port of call for any questions.

Claire's passion and drive to get funding for Bridge Watch will be the reason it will continue to grow over the coming years."

- London River Services, Transport for London

"The details you have provided are extremely helpful and showcase all the work that has taken place to reduce incidents.

The images in the presentation slides help visualise the complexities of the structures and is something I will be including in the local proposal as we face similar issues.

I'm sure I will be in contact again, as its great gain knowledge of successful interventions."

- Department of Public Health, Manchester City Council, in response to Claire's help with documenting suicide prevention methods at bridge locations.

My name is Kelli Peterman and I am the Director of Suicide Prevention Initiatives at the New York City Department of Health.

Over the past year, we have been working with [gootz](#), a multi-disciplinary architecture and design studio, to analyze suicide deaths associated with jumping from NYC buildings and other structures. Given that jumping from a high place is the second most common method of suicide in NYC (8 times the national proportion), we believe this analysis - and subsequent acti is essential public health work.

We are well familiar with the UK's efforts in this area and are hoping to speak with you about lessons learned. We intend to convene key NYC stakeholders in the spring to discuss our findings and co-create recommendations. It would be helpful to hear how the UK has operationalized its guidance and practice documents, to inform our convenings.

Please let us know if you are open to virtual meeting within the next few weeks and I will send a scheduling link.

- The New York City Department of Health recognising Claire's work and asking to knowledge share.
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"In my time as the Bridge Watch lead Claire has enabled me to develop my understanding and expertise of suicide and suicide prevention. She models the changes she wants to see in others, always challenging ideas and ways of thinking but with the aim of getting others to use evidence, analyse data and listen to others. She does this professionally but with the enthusiasm and passion that drives improvement. It is because of this she is respected by colleagues who know her mission. To reduce suicides. Claire is a chief energiser and is able to bring colleagues with her but equally she is collaborative in her approaches and effectively builds

teams and networks and take advice or try different ways of doing things. This led to the beginning of Bridge Watch. On a personal level Claire has been so supportive to me when I have faced my own challenges which has been invaluable. As I said, she models the behaviour she wants from others. Claire is driven, gets things done and does not shy away from difficult conversations but she is also a relationship builder, a good listener and creative in her approaches. It is because of people like Claire - we are getting on the right road to support the people who need it most in suicide prevention."

- Bridge Watch Coordinator

"Claire is a powerhouse of energy and passion when it comes to mental health and the mental health of the public. She has supported me 100% in my role on a mental health team that she helped to create with The City of London police. Claire has always advocated for my team to have proper funding and proper support from the police as the team has such a huge impact and positive outcomes for patients that we support who, are in a mental health crisis.

Claire is always approachable and very helpful, she has included our team to work collaboratively with many other teams and services so we can all improve the outcomes for people in a mental health crisis.

I have observed that Claire interacts with everyone in a positive friendly way; she will speak to police officers on the ground to the highest commissioner and she creates a fantastic rapport with them all.

I have also seen the product of Claire's hard work to create Bridge Watch. I know she worked determinedly for a long time to get Bridge Watch created as she was so passionate that more needed to be done for people that are trying to end their life by jumping from the bridges. Bridge Watch is a success from all that I have seen and I have many referrals from them."

- Senior Mental Health Social Worker, Mental Health Street Triage Team

"Claire is driven by an unwavering passion for suicide prevention and helping those in mental health crisis. Claire's enthusiasm is contagious, and she inspires those around her to confront the stigma surrounding mental illness and suicide prevention. Claire is an advocate for greater understanding and pours her energy into training programmes and educational initiatives to give those living and working in the City of London the skills and confidence to approach people who may be in need of help or a friendly ear. Claire is constantly seeking innovative ways to prevent suicide attempts in the City, be it physical measures on the bridges and tall buildings or

being instrumental in the set up of Bridge Watch, a project where volunteers patrol the bridges in the City with the intention of intervening when someone is in mental health crisis and contemplating or attempting suicide. Claire has an extremely focused approach that ensures every effort, no matter how small, contributes to her ultimate goal of reducing suicides, making sure that everyone feels valued, and people can get the help they need."

- City of London Police

Claire's work has been sustained over more than two consecutive years, and has been a constant for the 6 years that she has been the Suicide Prevention Lead for the City of London Corporation, and the Hackney Public Health team.

- The [planning guidance note](#) authored by Claire and approved in June 2021 has been in use since, and is now being positioned for even more use for future-proofing the City
- Since Claire championed the City of London and Hackney local authorities signing the Prevention Concordat for Better Mental Health, it now uses her suicide prevention action plan as a blueprint for best practice nationally
- Claire's strategy for reducing suicide in public locations is quoted in the [Suicide Prevention Strategy for England 2023-2028](#), clearly demonstrating that her work has not only sustained since 2023, but will also continue having an effect to 2028 (and beyond)
- Since Claire founded Bridge Watch, the initiative has not only saved lives but also grown, attracting more and more volunteers and diverse sources of funding.
- Ongoing suicide awareness and prevention training coordinated and delivered by Claire to stakeholders across the City (via Business Healthy) has built, and continues to foster a culture of awareness and readiness. Initiatives like the City Family of Schools' mental health programmes and library-based support hubs have embedded suicide prevention into everyday community life since their inception, and will continue to do so for the future.

While Claire has undertaken an enormous amount of work, often singlehandedly, which has been effective, persistent risk for suicide continues to be a challenge in a turbulent and tumultuous world. Claire's work has been undeniably sustained not just in the last two years, but also since 2018. However, she also works hard to ensure that this continues to be the case for the future, too.