



The Mental Health and Wellbeing Awards 2024



Zero Suicide Alliance at Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust

The lifestyle award (evidence of lifestyle change in a population)

Provide a short summary (max 150 words) of the organisation and their contribution for use if you are shortlisted.

Zero Suicide Alliance (ZSA) is a driving force in educating, empowering and equipping the public with the skills and confidence to understand and talk about suicide.

Their recent achievements mark significant strides in this mission, notably with the launch of tailored suicide awareness training for various demographics, including university students, autistic individuals, taxi drivers, prisoners, and probation staff. These courses represent crucial advancements in addressing the heightened risk of suicide among some of the most vulnerable members of our society.

Through collaborative efforts involving individuals, caregivers, and professionals, ZSA has crafted comprehensive training that fill a critical gap in support for these at-risk groups. A recent milestone was the Autism and Suicide training launch, which saw over 1,000 participants signing up, with over 7,000 completing the training within the inaugural month alone. ZSA's impact is undeniably profound. Their commitment to inclusivity, demonstrated through their co-production approach and engagement of individuals with lived experiences, underscores their dedication to saving lives and nurturing a supportive environment for all.

Introduce your organisation or context of the entry in the space below

The Zero Suicide Alliance (ZSA) is a suicide awareness and prevention initiative hosted by Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust. We offer free online training and resources that aim to educate, equip and empower organisations and individuals to take action.

Empower: Challenge stigma, increase awareness and empower others to have confidence around having conversations about suicide through collaborative communication and engagement

Educate: Develop and share accessible research, data and content to raise awareness of suicide and suicide risk factors.

Equip: Provide training, tools and resources that prepare people to feel able to take action to prevent suicide

Please confirm the following for the nominated service (enter n/a if not appropriate):

Is it regulated by appropriate bodies (e.g. CQC or OfSTED)?	N/A
Is it a registered charity or a registered social enterprise?	Yes
Does it have a safeguarding policy/risk assessment/clinical governance policies and procedures (including the protection of staff's wellbeing)?	Yes
It is GDPR compliant?	Yes
Is there any action being taken by a regulator against you?	No

Describe in the space below how do you/they go above and beyond the expectations.

When developing bespoke training programmes vulnerable groups, we go above and beyond expectations to ensure that our approach is inclusive, comprehensive, and effective.

Taking our Autism and Suicide training course as an example; from the outset we prioritised gathering input from a diverse range of stakeholders, including autistic individuals, carers, and clinical professionals who work with autistic people. We established a lived-experience steering group that provided invaluable support and guidance throughout the process, ensuring that our training reflected the authentic experiences and needs of the community.

We didn't stop there; we conducted extensive research, including a literature review which in the process of being peer reviewed for publication. Additionally we conducted our own lived-experience research involving over 200 participants. We chaired focus groups, held one-to-one meetings and analysed hundreds of survey results. This allowed us to identify key themes and areas of focus for the training.

The thorough approach extended to script development, where we reviewed, revised, and finalised content with people with lived-experience to ensure accuracy and relevance. Collaborating with online training developers enabled us to bring our vision to life, with meticulous filming, building, and testing of the course. After the official launch of the training, we are proud to share the culmination of our efforts—a free online training resource that we believe will make a meaningful difference in suicide prevention within the autistic community with over 7,000 . This has now been taken over 7,000 times in the first month, with 1,000 people signing up to the launch event.

We have followed this model of delivery for each of our training courses, always involving lived experience advocates, research and through co-production methods. For other training courses this has involved conducting focus group within prisons, universities and in approved premises for probation workers.

Categories 1 and 2: Describe how the work is innovative (e.g. ground-breaking or different from similar services).

Category 3: Describe how the work has had an impact over time.

Category 4: Describe how the work has had an impact on a large population.

Category 5: Describe how the work has made an impact to people during the pandemic.

Our work in developing the Autism and Suicide training is particularly innovative due to the ground-breaking insights we uncovered during our research phase. Our findings revealed a significant gap in support for autistic individuals, with many reporting feelings of isolation and a lack of understanding from others. Crucially, we discovered that conventional approaches to offering help often fell short, with many autistic individuals feeling that people didn't truly mean it when they asked if they wanted help when they were feeling low.

We were contacted by a number of neurodiversity advocacy organisations eager to learn more about our findings, as they had heard about these challenges anecdotally but lacked concrete data to inform their efforts. This unexpected but welcome interest from external stakeholders served as validation of the importance and relevance of our work. It also presented an opportunity for collaboration and knowledge-sharing, as we exchanged insights and perspectives.

This led us to embark on a mission to redefine suicide prevention training, placing a strong emphasis on inclusivity, authenticity, and empathy. By actively involving autistic individuals in the development process, we ensured that the training addressed these specific challenges head-on. Through our innovative co-production model, we created a training course that not only provides essential knowledge and skills but also fosters genuine understanding and connection.

Furthermore, our collaboration with online training developers allowed us to leverage cutting-edge technology to enhance accessibility and engagement. By incorporating multimedia elements, interactive features, and accessibility considerations, we have created a training course that speaks directly to the needs and experiences of autistic individuals, empowering people to navigate difficult conversations about suicide with confidence and compassion.

In summary, our innovative approach to research and training development has not only identified critical gaps in support for autistic individuals but has also paved the way for a transformative solution that has the potential to save lives and foster a more inclusive society.

How is the impact sustained over at least two consecutive years? This might include data, testimonials, feedback or other types of evidence. (for the pandemic category, please describe how you have found innovative ways of providing or growing services)

Since inception in 2017, ZSA has consistently maintained its commitment to providing accessible and impactful suicide prevention education. Through innovative strategies and a robust online platform, ZSA has managed to extend its reach globally, ensuring that its training courses are readily available to individuals worldwide.

Our training courses have been taken over **2.6 million times**. This includes bespoke training for:

- university students launched January 2022 taken 29,583 times
- taxi driver launched February 2023 taken 2,025 times
- prisoners and probation staff launched September 2023 taken 2,081 times
- autism training launched in April 2024 taken 7,871 times

The purpose of our training is to help people feel more equipped to spot the signs, empowered to have a conversation about suicide and educated about how to signpost to the correct support. The feedback we collect from our courses supports that these aims are being met:

- **93%** felt more confident to **recognise the signs of suicide** after taking our training
- **92%** felt more confident to start a **conversation** about suicide after taking our training
- **94%** would **recommend** the training to a friend or colleague

We constantly receive positive testimonials from our supporters and from people who have taken the training these include:

*"The training has definitely made me feel **more empowered to have a conversation** and help someone with suicidal thoughts"*

*"Made me feel **more confident** in working health and social care"*

*"I will a million percent **recommend** and advertise this course to all of my family, friends and colleagues"*

*"I have **learned** more in this 20 minute session than I have from anything else about suicide prevention"*

*"I feel as if I could keep learning! **Thank you** for this course, it's helped loads"*

In summary, ZSA's enduring impact is evidenced by its widespread reach, positive feedback and ongoing commitment to innovation in suicide prevention education. By fostering a culture of empowerment and awareness, ZSA remains at the forefront of efforts to combat suicide globally.

Please return the entry to awards@rootofit.com before 30th May 2024.