Submissions for the new Framework for Suicide Prevention  
By 3Ts (Turn the Tide of Suicide)

3Ts advocates the establishment of a Suicide Authority along the lines of the Road Safety Authority to address the issue of suicide in Ireland.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY A SUICIDE AUTHORITY?

A Cultural Shift: In the same way that we have seen a cultural shift in attitudes in Ireland to road safety, in everything from seat belts to drink driving, from infrastructural development to technological advances & regulatory changes, so we believe that a similar cultural shift is needed in Ireland to tackle the issue of suicide. A Suicide Authority could drive & co-ordinate such a shift, which starts with education and extends to infrastructural, technological, regulatory, financial and beyond. The RSA has identified shortcomings and worked to improve attitudes to safety, provided the infrastructural development needed and implemented and maintained regulatory and licencing strategies. Similarly, we believe a suicide authority, could adopt a similar model.

The role of a Suicide Authority would be to:

• Be a public sector authority, established in law with statutory functions;
• Be initially funded through the Exchequer but with the intention of being eventually self-funded;
• Create a framework for Suicide & Self Harm prevention in Ireland with increased flexibility & innovation and utilising partnership & collaboration;
• Collaborate across departments – Health, Finance, Education & Skills, Children & Youth, Justice & Equality, Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation etc.
• Identify funding streams e.g. licencing & regulatory, educational training, intellectual property etc;
• Co-ordinate research & evaluation;
• Focus on delinquent & pervasive websites & other online activities and bring court proceedings in its own right;
• Hold politicians to account in respect of pre-electoral suicide prevention promises;
• Join all the dots, so that all services, systems and activities work in collaboration and in tandem providing the necessary back-up and support when needed.

To Inform & Educate: Suicide Prevention & Mental Health Literacy

• A co-ordinated & well developed suicide prevention and mental health literacy education framework and a sustained evidence based public information campaign – advertising, PR & marketing
  o Throughout the education cycle
  o For older age groups
  o For those outside mainstream education
  o For minority & marginalised groups
  o Via a targeted vocational education programme for all frontline workers including teachers, counsellors, GP’s, nurses, Gardai, prison wardens, primary care workers, emergency services, first responders etc.

To Develop Infrastructure, establishing:

• A 24/7 suicide crisis intervention helpline;
• A Centre of Excellence;
• A dedicated Suicide Prevention service in every A&E unit in Ireland;
• A dedicated Suicide Prevention 24/7 GP on-call service in towns & cities nationwide;
• Early Detection Depression screening programme with resourced standardised pathways to care.
• A real-time database of suicides to inform knowledge of patterns of suicide, to greater understand clusters and how best to modify them;
• Funding of effective suicide bereavement services;
• The development of a licencing & regulatory framework including:
  ○ a licencing & regulatory framework for practitioners (e.g. counsellors, psychotherapists etc)
  ○ an accreditation system for practitioners (similar to CPD points)
  ○ a Service Provider Inspectorate;
  ○ Co-ordination & regulation of all charities involved in suicide prevention, mental health & related fields;
• Statutory standards: mandatory up-skilling and monitoring of all workers in statutory authority who interface with young people, to help eliminate bullying / victimisation / humiliation.
  ○ Framework for confidential health/statutory services enquiry in aftermath of any statutory services associated suicide death to gather new knowledge and understanding.
• National Roll-Out of DUMP scheme (Disposal of Unwanted Medicines Properly): to help reduce access to means for suicidal overdose, as well as accidental child poisoning. Further benefits accrue in the analysis of over-prescription patterns to help improve efficiency in prescription practices and reduce exchequer medicines costs. There are environmental benefits in the appropriate disposal of medications.

Research:
A commitment to support & fund dedicated research including:
• Suicide in Irish teens and young adults;
• Age factors in Irish suicides;
• Urban / Rural Divide;
• Disadvantaged & Marginalised groups;
• National Coroners Study and establishment of National Coroners Database for Suicide;
• Psychological impact of violence & muggings on teens, including toxic humiliation and the development and evaluation of effective psychological interventions;
• Alcohol and its role & consumption by teens particularly around “regretted” disclosure of suicidal thoughts to peers;
• Troubled Teens and Teens in Trouble;
• Psycho-Education and Mental Health Literacy Review to inform an intensive & evaluated approach to suicide intervention in early teens in schools and communities;
• Clusters (with the assistance of the proposed real-time database);

Further Comparison between the RSA & Suicide Prevention Authority:
• Prioritise mental illness, depression & suicide prevention and give it the same status as road safety;
• Clear & unequivocal power & right to intervene to help prevent suicide;
• Specific legislation to govern the issue – 3Ts have had requisite legislation drafted by experts.
• Independence, both board & eventually finance, with representatives from world of finance, law, education, health etc;

There is no comparison offered or made on our proposals vis a vis the RSA other than we believe the model under which the RSA operate has proved successful and is adaptable in this forum so as to ensure more lives are not lost in 2015 and beyond.