

## **Campaign to cut suicide by young men**

The government yesterday announced a campaign to reduce the number of young men who kill themselves - the commonest cause of death among those aged 16 to 35 in the UK. Last year 1,300 young men killed themselves. While the rate has begun to fall, it is still much higher than among women. In the peak age group, 30 to 39, three men kill themselves for every woman who takes her life.

The health minister Rosie Winterton told a men's health conference that the government was committed to making men more aware that help was available and more willing to seek it out: "We already have a national suicide strategy that is starting to have an impact, but we need to redouble our efforts in getting young men to look after their mental wellbeing and seek help when they need it."

She announced the launch of Reaching Out, a report of three pilot studies to encourage men to seek help. The studies found a reluctance among young men to go to the GP or engage in projects designed to help them in classroom-type settings - especially those who had literacy problems or were more vulnerable. It was much easier to engage men in non-formal settings such as youth centres.

Young men felt the underlying causes of mental ill-health were unemployment, crime, gang activity, social isolation and poor housing conditions. They did not trust health professionals to keep their problems confidential, they said.

Marcus Roberts of the mental health charity Mind said it was difficult to tackle suicide in isolation "when you have the Respect agenda, the Home Office agenda and the chaos in our schools agenda".

<http://society.guardian.co.uk/socialcare/news/0,,1797948,00.html>