



**3<sup>rd</sup> September 2007**

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **LOCAL EVENT TO MARK WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY**

To mark World Suicide Prevention Day on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> September, the North West 'Bereaved by Suicide' support group, in partnership with the Western Health and Social Care Trust, is holding an information evening in the City Hotel at 7.30pm

Two members of the support group, Ann McGarrigle and Mary Forbes, will talk about their experiences of being bereaved by suicide. Mrs. McGarrigle emphasised the impact of a death by suicide on those left behind:

"When someone dies by suicide many people are affected - families, friends and work colleagues," she said. "But all too often no one gets the opportunity to talk about how they feel. The journey for those left behind after the loss of a loved one can be excruciatingly painful, devastating and traumatic", she added.

Each year approximately one million people die by suicide worldwide. Suicide is a major public health problem in many countries and accounts for nearly 3% of all world deaths.

Suicide and suicide attempts, which are conservatively estimated to be 10 – 20 times more frequent than suicide, especially among young women, have a profound impact on family and friends and are the source of much distress and suffering. All suicides, and suicide attempts, are indications of severe

distress, unhappiness and/or mental illness. For those bereaved by suicide, the emotional impact may last for many years, and for families, the consequences may extend for generations.

The economic costs of suicide to society are substantial, estimated to be in the millions of pounds. This reflects the economic potential of years of life lost, the medical and treatment costs of suicide attempts, and the burden of care and suffering of families and friends of those who die by suicide and those who engage in various forms of suicide behaviour.

Barry McGale, Suicide Awareness Coordinator, in the Western Trust's Health Promotion Department, would encourage anyone affected by suicide to attend the information evening.

"The grief associated with bereavement by suicide is unique," he said. "The coming together of those similarly bereaved, regardless of when the death occurred, can provide the opportunity to be with other people who can really understand. It can also enable people to access much needed information on services. I would encourage anyone interested in learning and understanding more about this tragic issue to take the opportunity to attend this important event," he added.

For further information on the event, contact Barry on 7186 5127.

**ENDS**

Provided by the Communications Department, phone 71611429

### **Notes to Editors**

- In very young adolescents (under age 15) suicide is the leading cause of death in China, Sweden, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand.
- In teenagers and young adults aged 15-24 suicide is a leading cause of death in many countries.
- In adults, suicide is a leading cause of death, accounting for more deaths than all wars and homicides combined.
- In most countries, the risk of suicide increases with increasing age. In many countries suicide rates are highest amongst the very old, aged 85 and older.