



Joint Statement

PIPS Suicide Prevention Charity and
Foyle Search & Rescue Call for Urgent
Action on Mental Health Funding

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seeds of hope.**





PIPS Suicide Prevention Charity and Foyle Search and Rescue are united in calling for urgent action to protect and fully fund mental health services in Northern Ireland.

Every life lost to suicide matters. Every person in crisis deserves timely, compassionate, and properly resourced support. In 2024 alone, 290 registered deaths by suicide were recorded – a 31% increase on the previous year. These deaths come at a time when government decisions to reduce or withdraw funding from elements of mental health provision have intensified concerns across the community sector.

Five years on from the launch of the Mental Health Strategy 2021–2031, only 16% of funding had been allocated by the end of 2024/25 – a fraction of the £1.2 billion promised over ten years. While strategies and frameworks continue to develop, frontline and community-based services remain under intense pressure.

Although our organisations work in different ways, we meet the same people at their most vulnerable moments. Foyle Search and Rescue provides frontline emergency intervention, patrolling waterways and responding when someone is in immediate danger. PIPS Suicide Prevention Charity delivers suicide prevention programmes and direct crisis services, including walk-in support in Belfast, telephone crisis response across our other locations, and a Friday-night crisis helpline when many statutory services are unavailable.

Together, we represent the full pathway of suicide prevention – from urgent rescue and crisis intervention to sustained community support – and our combined experience shows clearly that intervention alone is not enough without properly resourced crisis services.

Between 2013 and 2024, Foyle Search and Rescue responded to 3,576 incidents involving people at risk, with 55 deaths following prolonged searches – meaning that in over 98% of cases, lives were saved. These figures demonstrate what is possible when early intervention and rapid response are available. However, too many people who are brought to safety still encounter unacceptable barriers to accessing ongoing mental health care.

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As Renée Quinn, Chief Executive of PIPS Suicide Prevention Charity, states:

"Every life lost is one too many. Right now, people in crisis are being failed by a system that is underfunded and overstretched. These are not statistics – these are mothers, fathers, sons, and daughters – and we are demanding immediate action to fully fund and protect mental health services before more lives are lost."

Mental health support is not a luxury – it is a fundamental human need. Reducing funding, scaling back services, or prioritising policy frameworks without adequately resourcing frontline delivery places lives in jeopardy.

Together, PIPS Suicide Prevention Charity and Foyle Search and Rescue are calling on government leaders to fully fund the Mental Health Strategy and publish clear delivery timelines with measurable milestones, so communities can see when – and how – lifesaving services will be protected, expanded, and sustained.

Our campaign petition has already gathered over 5,000 signatures, showing the strength of public concern across Northern Ireland. We urge everyone to add their name and demand change by signing. Link is in our bio!

We call on the public to stand with this campaign. Every life is a story. Every statistic is a warning. And every death by suicide is one too many.

Signed,

Renee Quinn

Renee Quinn
Chief Executive Officer
PIPS Suicide Prevention Charity

Christina McKeegan

Christina McKeegan
Charity Manager
Foyle Search and Rescue

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