

About

Shine's Media Programme is Ireland's national programme for responsible reporting and representation of mental illness and suicide. Funded through the National Office for Suicide Prevention, our media monitoring can offer media professionals evidence-based insights to support them in telling important and complex mental health stories. Find out more at www.shine.ie

Introduction

This report analysed 1,407 media items published or broadcast in Ireland between **21 July and 10 August 2025**, across online, print, radio and television. This is **more than double the volume** of suicide-related content monitored during the same period in 2024.

Guideline adherence reached **86.9%** (1,222 items) in Q3 2025, up markedly from 73.2% in Q2. While the adherence rate mirrors Q3 2024 (86.8%), the volume of reporting that followed the guidelines nearly doubled year-on-year, rising from 630 items in Q3 2024 to 1,222 items in Q3 2025. For details of Shine's monitoring methodology, contact media@shine.ie

Key findings

- 86.9% followed the reporting guidelines (1,222 items)
- 13.1% did not follow the guidelines (185 items)
- 1,407 suicide-related media items reviewed, compared to 630 items for the same period in 2024.
- Online media accounted for 73.1% of all coverage

While adherence was high, the absolute number of non-compliant items remains significant, with almost one in seven items containing at least one harmful element.

However, one prominent suspected triple murder-suicide in Co. Fermanagh, reported on 322 times in our 3-week monitoring window, avoided harmful elements in 98% of cases.

Why was there so much suicide-related coverage this quarter?



Q3 2025 recorded **one of the highest volumes of suicide-related coverage in recent years.**

This increase was not driven by a single factor, but by the **convergence of multiple high-risk story types:**

1 Sustained murder-suicide coverage

- **597 items (17.5%)** referenced murder-suicide
- These cases generate:
 - Ongoing court reporting
 - Repeated contextual references to suicide
 - High levels of syndication across online platforms

2 Event-driven and breaking news reporting

- **292 out of 299 breaking news items** related to a murder-suicide case. Encouragingly, 259 (88.7%) of these followed the guidelines.

3 High-profile individuals and court cases

- 160 items involved high-profile individuals
- 148 items were court reports
- These contexts frequently result in:
 - Repeated references to suicide
 - Cumulative detail across multiple articles

High overall adherence — despite high-risk contexts

Overall adherence reached **86.9%**, marking a **sharp recovery from Q2 2025** and indicating that Irish media demonstrated strong guideline awareness even during periods of intense coverage.

This improvement is particularly notable given the dominance of:

- Breaking news
- Court reporting
- Murder-suicide

Framing and context

In 2025, we aimed to build more insights around which 'type' of suicide garnered more coverage, and whether this aligned with priority groups at risk of suicide identified in the national suicide prevention strategy.

Suicide frame

Coverage continued to focus heavily on acute events. **Nearly six in ten items (~59%)** focused on suicide deaths or attempts, while **suicide-prevention-only coverage remained low at 3.9%.**

Contexts associated with higher risk

Within suicide reporting, certain contexts were more strongly associated with containing harmful elements:

- **Murder-suicide:** 50/547 items
- **Court reporting:** 45/103 items
- **Breaking news:** 34/265 items
- **High-profile cases:** 37/123

Court reporting showed the **highest proportional non-compliance**, reinforcing a recurring trend across multiple quarters.

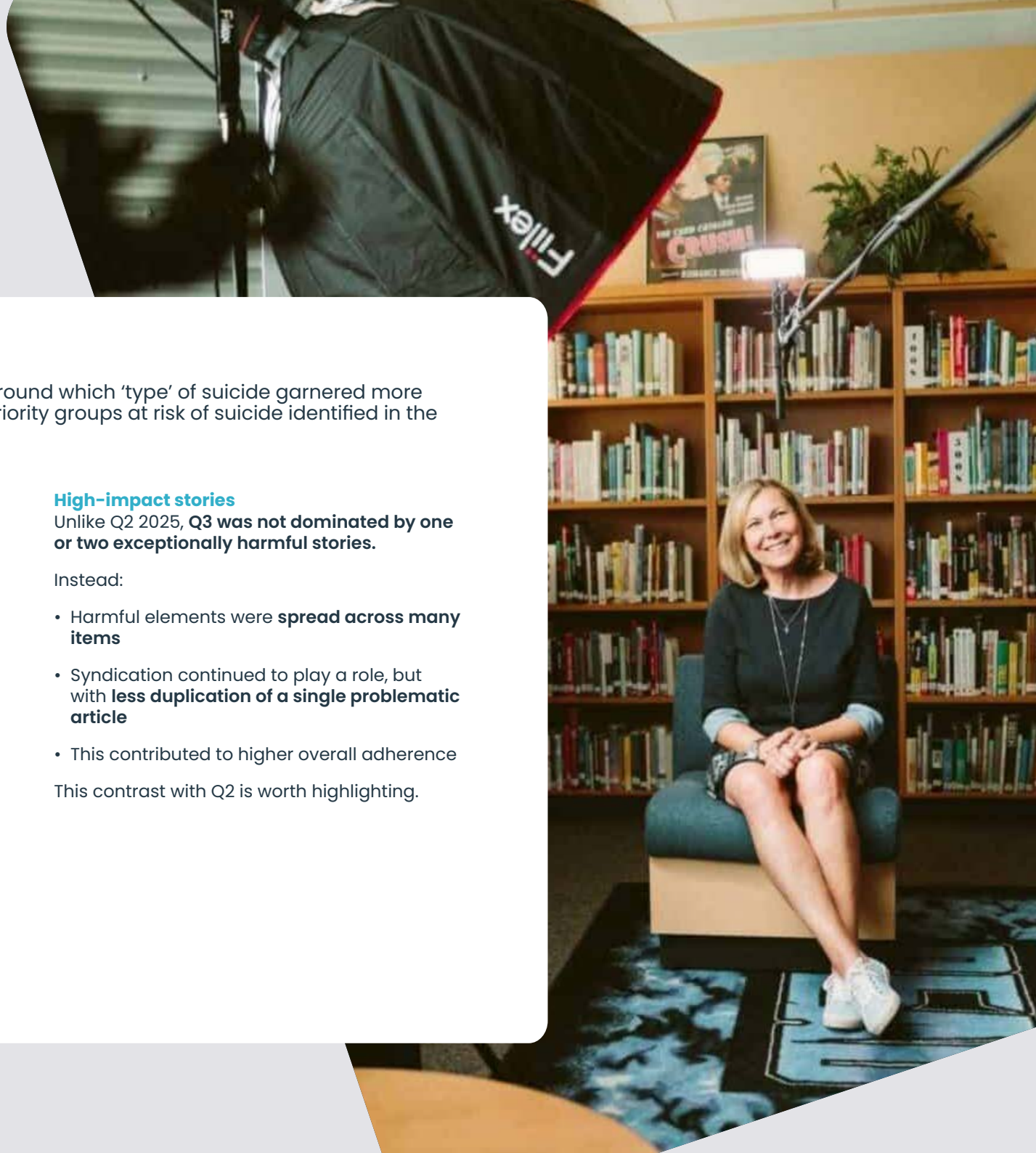
High-impact stories

Unlike Q2 2025, **Q3 was not dominated by one or two exceptionally harmful stories.**

Instead:

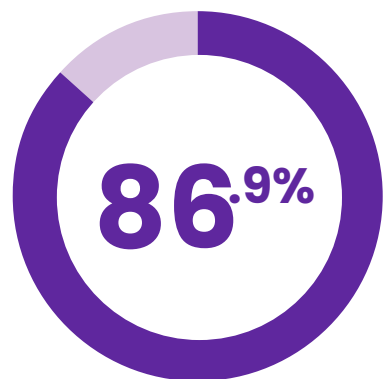
- Harmful elements were **spread across many items**
- Syndication continued to play a role, but with **less duplication of a single problematic article**
- This contributed to higher overall adherence

This contrast with Q2 is worth highlighting.



THE DATA 2025 Q3

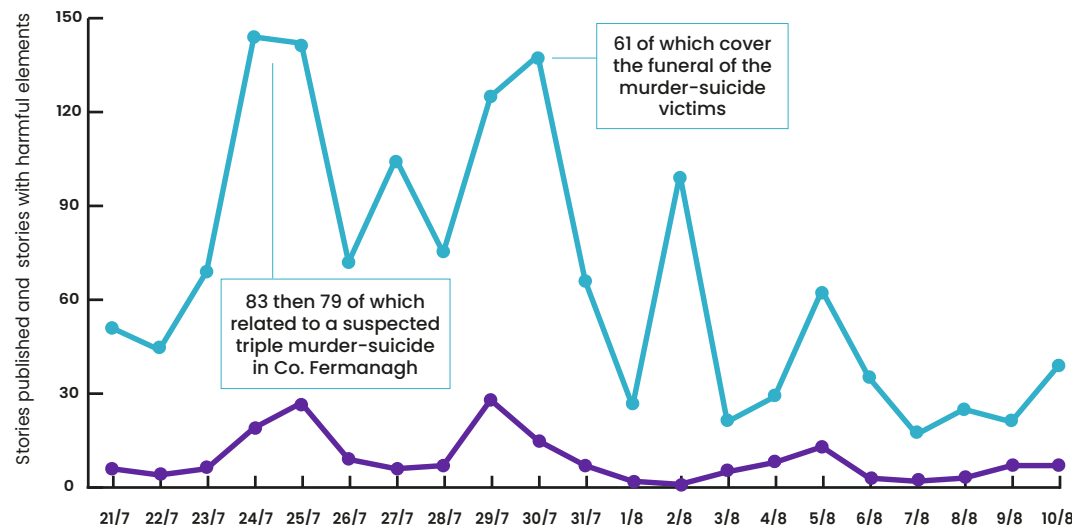
Overview of suicide coverage in Irish media



Of 1407 suicide-related media items across online news, print and broadcast, 1222 contained no harmful elements (86.9%).

Coverage and volume of harmful elements

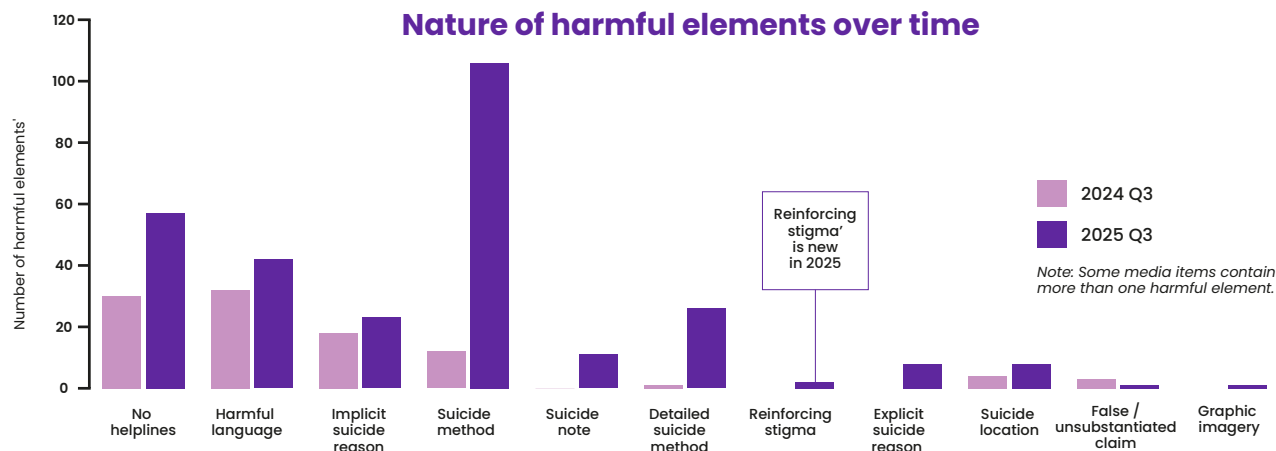
Over monitoring period 20 Jan to 9 Feb inclusive



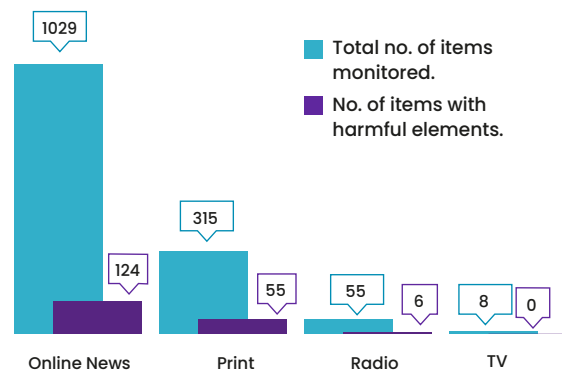
Do peaks in coverage imply peaks in harmful elements?

Not necessarily. It is important to note that across July 24-25, there was substantial reporting of a breaking news event related to a suspected triple murder-suicide (162 reports in total). All reporting of this event in the immediate aftermath of the story followed the reporting guidelines. The 46 harmful elements recorded in those two days are for unrelated stories.

Nature of harmful elements over time

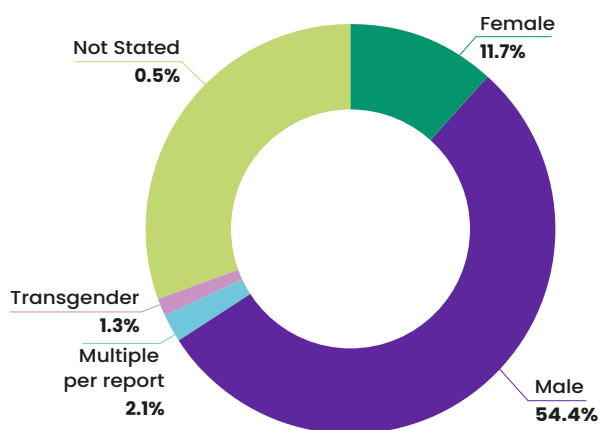


All monitored content and harmful content by platform



Gender Representation

Gender was specified in the majority of suicide-related coverage in Q3 2025, with female subjects referenced in 11.7% of items and male subjects in 54.4%.



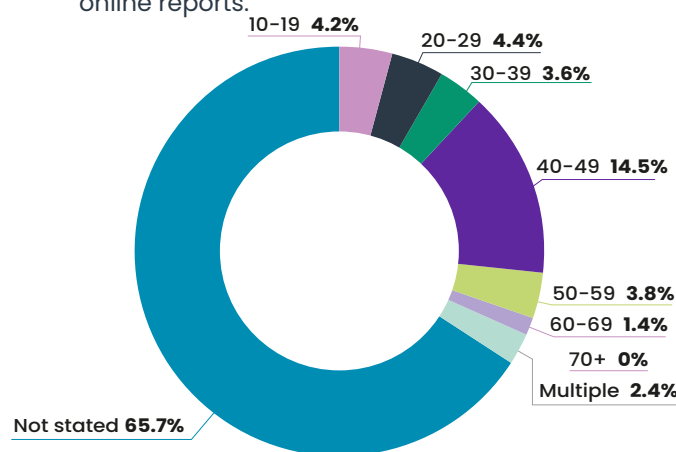
Coverage involving multiple individuals accounted for 2.1%, while transgender people were referenced in 1.3% of items.

In 30.5% of coverage, gender was not stated, reflecting a continued tendency for media reporting to omit key demographic details when discussing suicide-related issues.

A note on national suicide statistics in Ireland: While we report on the demographics present in 2025 media coverage, we are comparing it to the most up to date finalised data available from the [Central Statistics Office which is 2022](#). "Not stated" refers to articles or broadcasts where no information about the gender or age of individuals involved in the story were included.

Age Representation

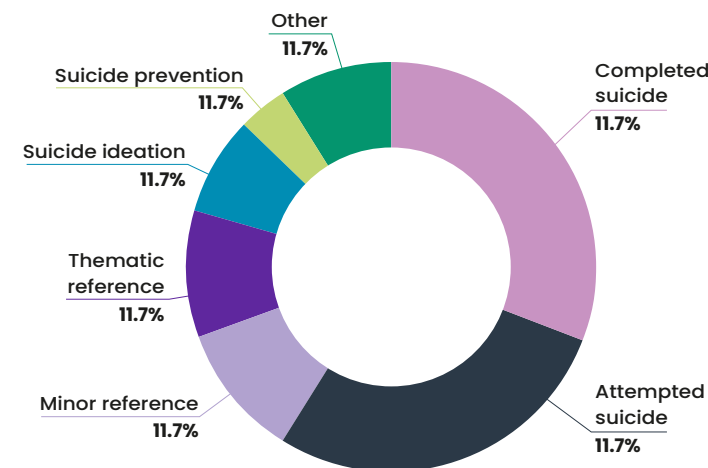
Age was specified in 482 items (34.3%). The highest volume of reports where age was specified was for males aged between 40–49 with 197 items, only 8 of which did not follow the guidelines. 175 of these were online reports.



The majority of suicide-related media coverage in Q3 2025 did not specify age, with 65.7% of items falling into the "not stated" category. Where age was referenced, individuals aged 40–49 accounted for the largest proportion of coverage (14.5%), consistent with national suicide statistics, which show the highest number of deaths by suicide occurring among those in their forties.

Coverage of younger age groups remained relatively low, with 10–19 year olds accounting for 4.2% of items and 20–29 year olds for 4.4%. No items specifically referenced individuals aged 70 or over, which continues a pattern of under-representation of older age groups in suicide-related reporting.

Framing



Suicide-related coverage in Q3 2025 was largely event-driven, with 31.3% of items referencing a completed suicide and 27.8% relating to suicide attempts. Together, these frames accounted for 59% of all coverage.

Coverage focused specifically on suicide prevention remained limited (3.9%), highlighting the continued imbalance between reporting on suicide as an outcome and as a preventable public health issue.

"Other" refers to items that did not fit neatly within standard framing categories but included references to suicide.

Recommendations

01 Explore underrepresented demographics

Many parts of society are underrepresented in media coverage of suicide but overrepresented in actual suicide statistics. We encourage all journalists and those working to improve public health outcomes to share stories highlighting the risks of and recovery from suicide to our marginalised communities.

RECOMMENDATION

- Use national statistics or information on NOSP's priority groups to identify communities who have an increased risk of suicide.
- Include lived experience from marginalised communities or underrepresented demographics to support your stories.
- Your audience includes these groups identified as high risk. Never underestimate the impact of including their voices in your reporting.

02 Apply heightened care in court reporting and breaking news contexts

Court reporting and breaking news continued to show higher rates of non-compliance, reflecting the challenges of fast-paced reporting and legally complex cases.

RECOMMENDATION

- Build in a guideline check for suicide-related content during breaking news
- Provide additional guidance and support for court reporters covering cases involving suicide
- Avoid retrospective inclusion of suicide details that are not essential to public understanding

03 Maintain and normalise helpline inclusion

Helpline inclusion was strong in Q3 2025 and contributed to high overall adherence. This represents a positive shift from previous quarters.

RECOMMENDATION

- Treat helpline information as standard practice, not optional
- Ensure helpline numbers are clearly visible and appropriate to the content
- Include support information numbers even when suicide is mentioned indirectly or as part of a broader story

04 Increase prevention-focused and lived-experience reporting

Only 3.9% of coverage focused specifically on suicide prevention, reinforcing an ongoing imbalance between reporting on suicide as an outcome and as a preventable public health issue.

RECOMMENDATION

- Increase coverage of prevention initiatives, recovery, and help-seeking
- Include lived-experience perspectives where appropriate and safe to do so
- Apply Papageno-informed framing that highlights hope, recovery, support and alternatives to suicide

05 Continued Training

Media professionals at all levels are encouraged to access freely available training on responsible reporting. In these workshops, we cover contemporary case studies, put the guidelines in context across all platforms, as well as explore trauma-informed media practices. To access this training, email media@shine.ie.

Shine's media monitoring is made possible with the support of The National Office for Suicide Prevention and is directly linked with Ireland's national strategy for preventing suicide: Connecting For Life.

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