

Media Monitoring Report

2025



Executive Summary

A key challenge in suicide reporting is how the media can serve the public interest without compromising public safety. Through these insights, we hope to demonstrate that informing the public and reducing harm are not competing goals, but shared responsibilities.

In 2025, Shine monitored 3,648 suicide-related media items across print, online, radio and television. Overall, 79.2% followed the reporting guidelines, down from 84% in 2024. The main pressures came from the growth of online coverage, reduced use of helpline information, and recurring challenges in court and high-profile reporting. Encouragingly, coverage of a major murder-suicide case, showed that high-volume and fast-moving stories can be handled responsibly.

While Ireland performs well by international standards, opportunities exist for Irish media to have an even greater impact on public health and suicide prevention through the sharing of lived experience and access to support. This report first explains the guidelines and methodology, then presents the national findings, examines the contexts and harmful elements driving the results, identifies who is producing the coverage, and concludes with good practice and recommendations for 2026.

This report contains details that readers may find distressing. If you are in crisis, please contact the Samaritans on 116123. Support is available 24/7.



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About

Shine's Media Programme is Ireland's national programme for responsible reporting and representation of mental illness and suicide. Funded through the HSE's National Office for Suicide Prevention, we work collaboratively with media professionals, policymakers, academics and other stakeholders to reduce suicide contagion, improve the media's ability to cover mental health stories, and enhance audiences' understanding of mental health experiences.

The programme delivers quarterly media monitoring reports to assist journalists and media professionals in navigating complex mental health topics, as well as providing insights to those working in the wider suicide prevention sphere. By analysing how the media report on suicide in Ireland, we hope these insights support Irish media in their work to cover an important issue of public health.

Our Media Programme provides free training across the country to newsrooms, production teams, content creators and students of journalism or media on responsible suicide reporting and storytelling. Best practice is highlighted and celebrated at our annual Mental Health Media Awards.

For more information about our programme or other areas of Shine's work, visit www.shine.ie.

How to read this report

Shine monitored print, online, radio and television coverage during a three-week period in each quarter of 2025. Unless otherwise stated, figures refer to the 3,648 items captured during these monitoring periods rather than every suicide-related item published during the calendar year. Each item was coded by platform, ownership, geography, frame, context, representation information, and alignment with the reporting guidelines. Full definitions and coding details are provided in the methodology appendix.



Why Responsible Suicide Reporting Matters

How suicide is reported in the media can influence real-world behaviour. The **Werther Effect** describes how detailed or dramatic coverage of suicide can lead to an increase in similar deaths, particularly when the person involved is famous or the method is described. Decades of research has shown that certain types of reporting can unintentionally contribute to contagion, especially among vulnerable audiences.

The **Papageno Effect**, by contrast, highlights the protective power of media. Named after a character in Mozart's *The Magic Flute* who finds hope in the face of suicidal thoughts, it refers to the protective influence of stories that focus on overcoming crisis.

When stories focus on people finding support, navigating crisis, or choosing life, they can reduce suicidal thoughts in others. It's not just what is reported, but the tone, framing, and emphasis that matter.

Audiences At-Risk

Some groups of people are at higher risk of suicidal behaviour and ideation than others. These groups have been identified in Ireland's national suicide prevention strategy 'Connecting for Life' and are described as "priority groups". For example:

- People with mental health challenges or challenges associated with alcohol and drugs;
- Minority groups (Irish Travellers, LGBTQI+);
- Certain demographic cohorts (young, middle-aged people);
- People bereaved by suicide;
- Certain occupational cohorts (health care workers, farmers);

It's important for media to remember that 'audiences at risk' is a transient group, and people don't need to have a pre-existing mental health condition to fall into it.

Lived Experience

People who have mental health challenges or are a family member, supporter, or carer of someone living with mental health challenges, have important insights into that experience. They are uniquely qualified to talk about those mental health challenges and should be seen as experts in their own experience.

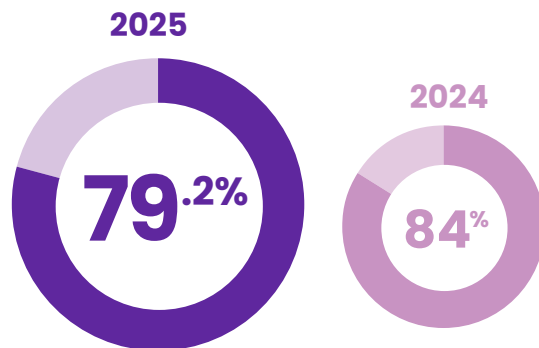
The Guidelines

In Shine, we align our media monitoring to the [Samaritans' Media Guidelines](#) and [The World Health Organization Guidelines](#).

Below is a brief summary:

- Avoid including details of the method or location of a suicide.
- Avoid speculating on or oversimplifying reasons for a suicide, or using sensational language and imagery.
- Suicide should be reported as a complex issue, using non-stigmatising terms like "died by suicide".
- All coverage should include clear helpline information to direct audiences to support.
- When including lived experience, stories should be handled with care, focusing on recovery and hope.

Overview of suicide-related coverage in Irish Media



Of the 3,648 suicide-related media items published across online, print, and broadcast, 2,890 followed the guidelines (79.2%).

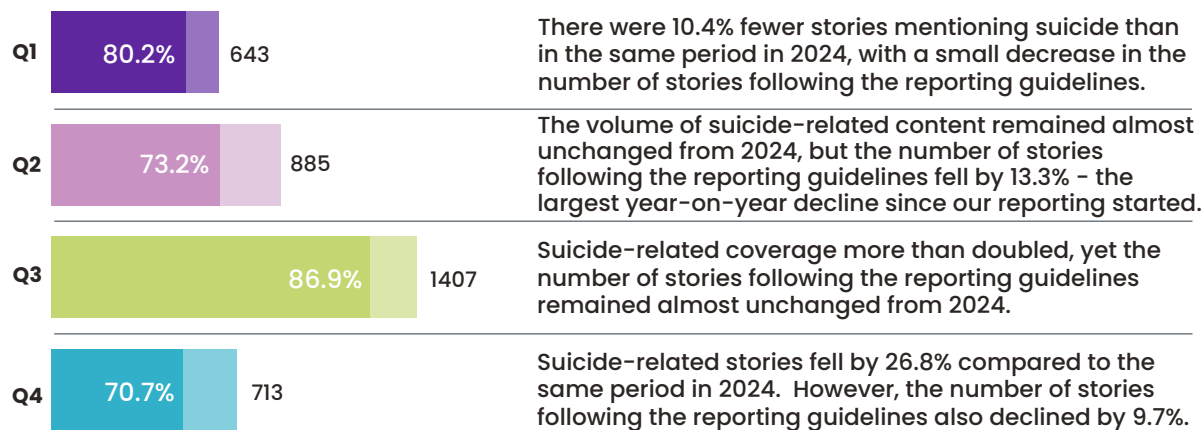
Of the 3,197 suicide-related media items published across online, print, and broadcast, 2,687 followed the guidelines (84%).

How things changed between 2024 and 2025

- The total number of suicide-related media items published increased by 14.1%, from 3,197 in 2024 to 3,648 in 2025 (+451 items).
- The proportion of suicide-related content that followed the reporting guidelines fell from 84.0% in 2024 to 79.2% in 2025.

Summary of Guideline Adherence by Quarter

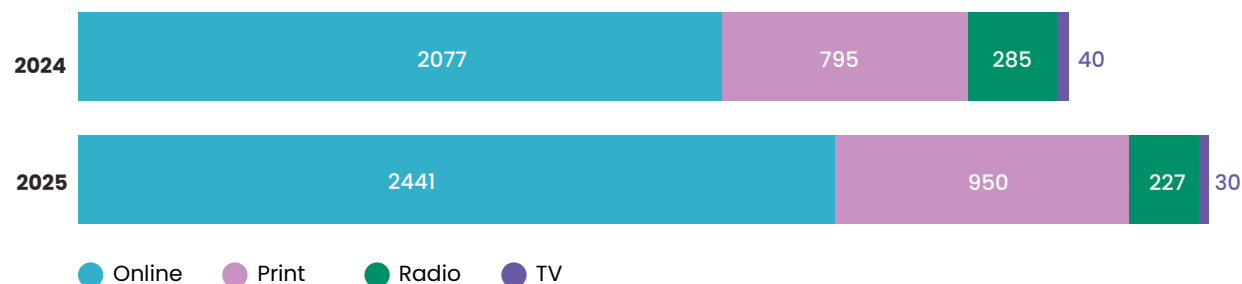
How things changed between 2024 and 2025



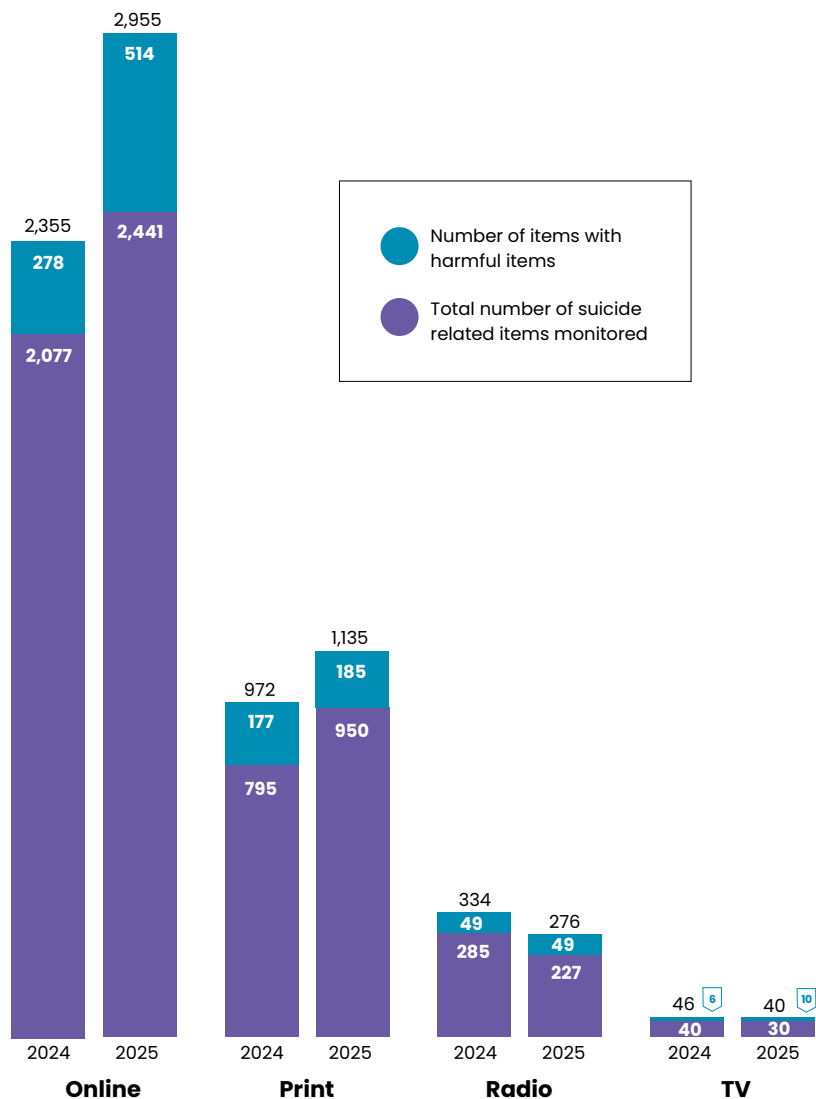
Geographical Coverage



Suicide-related coverage across media platforms



Media platforms and harmful elements (2024 v 2025)



How things changed



Online

While online suicide-related coverage increased by 17.5% between 2024 and 2025, the number of stories containing harmful elements rose from around one in seven (13.4%) to more than one in five (21.1%). This represents a 57.5% relative increase in harmful online reporting.



Print

Irish print media published 19.5% more suicide-related stories in 2025 than in 2024. Although the number of stories containing harmful elements increased slightly, this was offset by the overall growth in coverage. The number of items containing harmful elements fell from 22.3% to 19.5%, a 12.6% relative decrease.



Radio

While suicide-related coverage monitored on Irish radio decreased by 20.4% between 2024 and 2025, the number of reports containing harmful elements remained unchanged at 49. As overall coverage declined, the number of radio items with harmful elements increased from 17.2% to 21.6%. Harmful reporting and programming made up a larger share of monitored radio coverage in 2025.

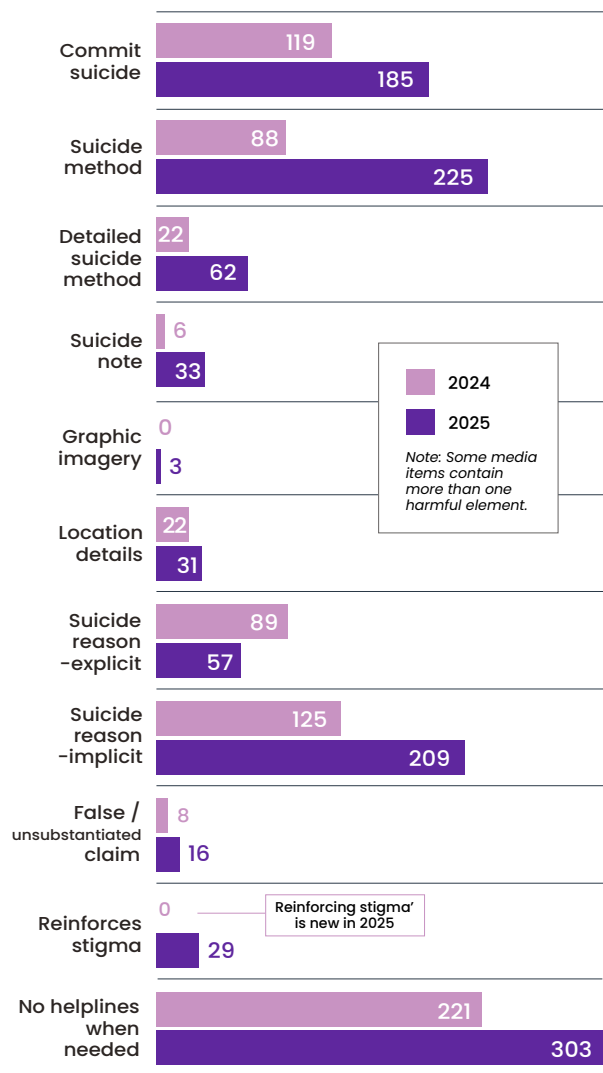


Television

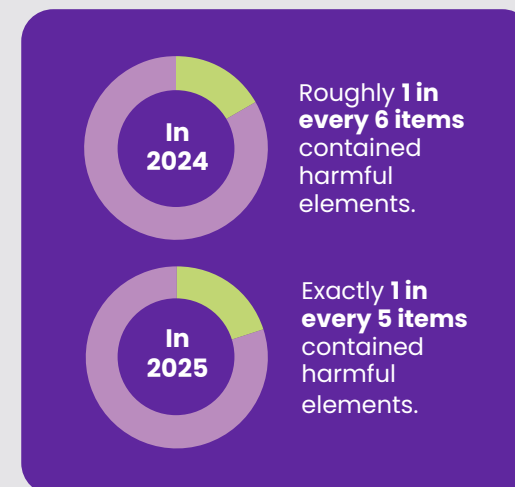
There was a 25% drop in suicide-related television content in 2025, from 40 items to 30. Despite the lower volume, the number containing harmful elements increased from six to ten, raising their share from 15.0% to 33.3%. Because the sample is small, the result should be interpreted cautiously; it indicates a concern within the monitored items rather than a firm sector-wide trend. This is explored in greater detail later in this report.

What drove the 2025 result?

Guidelines in detail: How the reporting of harmful elements changed in 2025



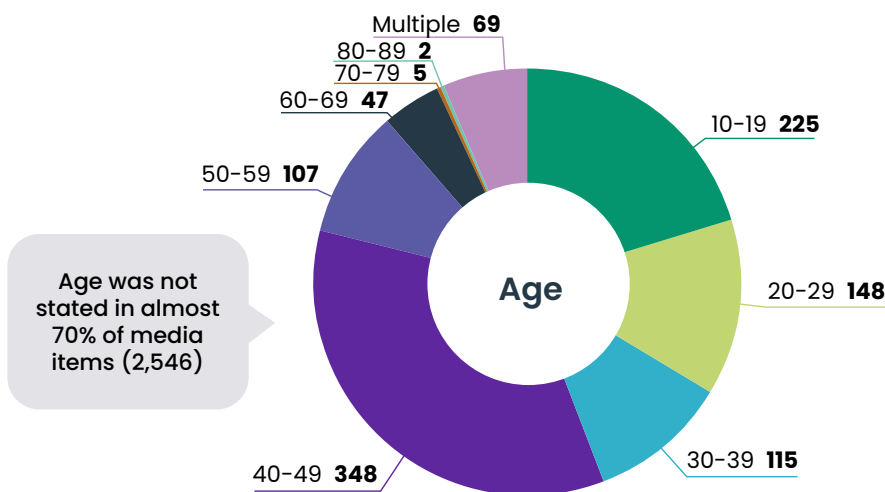
	2024	2025	Trend
Total items monitored	3,197	3,648	Up 14.1%
Items with harmful elements (flagged items)	510 (16.0%)	758 (20.8%)	Up 4.8%
Total harmful elements found	700	1,153	Up 64.7%
Average elements per flagged item	1.37	1.52	Up 10.9%



How things changed

- In 2025, 3,648 suicide-related media items were monitored. Of these, 758 items contained a total of 1,153 harmful elements, with some stories containing more than one. This compares with 510 items in 2024 containing 700 harmful elements.
- While the overall volume of content grew, so too did the intensity of harm. In 2024, flagged items averaged 1.4 harmful elements each. By 2025, that grew to 1.5 elements per item.
- Reporting that included details of suicide methods increased dramatically in 2025, almost tripling. References to less detailed suicide method increased to 225 from 88 in 2024. The inclusion of a detailed description of suicide method also increased to 62 from 22 in 2024.
- An oversimplified reason for suicide continued to feature in media coverage. Direct causal statements on a single reason for a suicide reduced in 2025, however, statements with an implied singular reason rose significantly from 125 incidences in 2024 to 209 in 2025.
- Use of the phrase “commit suicide” also increased during 2025, highlighting an opportunity to continue encouraging the use of more up-to-date and less stigmatising language.
- Missing helpline information in a suicide-related story remained the most common harmful element, increasing from 221 items in 2024 to 303 in 2025.

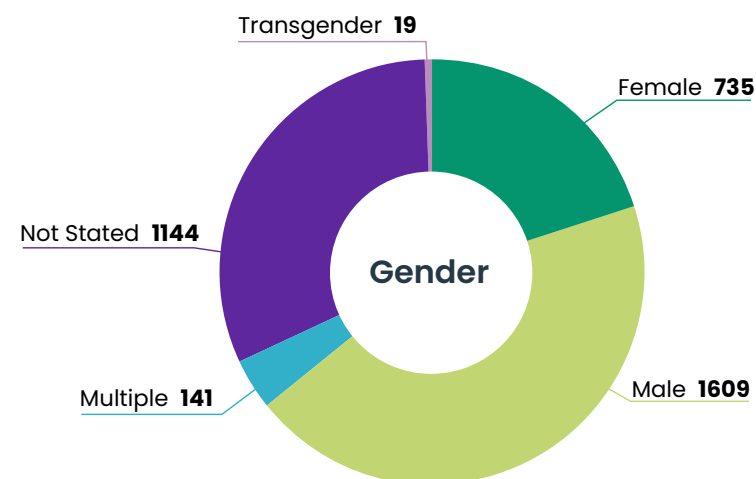
Representation: Who featured in coverage?



In 2025, it was more usual for age not to be specified in suicide-related coverage. Age was absent in around seven in ten media items, meaning age-related findings should be interpreted with caution.

Midlife (40-49) is the most specified band of age covered which, to some degree, mirrors national data on ages with the highest rates of suicide. Over half (54.2%) of these stories were about deaths by suicide, while just one story within the 40-49 age band was about suicide prevention. Where age was specified, younger people (10-19) were the second highest group represented.

Older adults (60+) were present in just 54 stories across all platforms in 2025, despite accounting for almost one in seven deaths by suicide in Ireland. [Recent Irish research](#) highlights that older adults have distinct experiences and risk factors, including physical conditions, loneliness, and greater contact with healthcare services, underlining the importance of age-specific suicide prevention. Given this age band's relationship with [news in Ireland](#), legacy media have an opportunity for impactful suicide prevention coverage. Increasing media representation of older adults could also ensure coverage more accurately reflects the diversity of people affected by suicide.



Gender was identified in around two-thirds of suicide-related media items monitored during 2025. Where gender was reported, men appeared twice as much as women.

When gender was recorded as male or female, 68.6% of the coverage was about men. By comparison, men accounted for 77.8% of suicide deaths in the [CSO data](#). This suggests that men are less dominant in the media coverage than in the national suicide figures, while women make up a higher proportion. However, gender was not stated in 31.3% of all coverage, so this comparison should be treated with caution.

Gender and suicide frame for M/F coverage



When framing of suicide is considered and multiple or transgender are excluded from analysis, specified coverage changes the gender interpretation. Male suicide-related coverage is over three times more likely to be about deaths by suicide than suicide prevention or ideation.

Note: Transgender experiences of suicide or suicidality were almost entirely absent from Irish media during our monitoring periods. The only insight which can be drawn from this is the critical need for more inclusive reporting in 2026.

Context and Framing

How different types of suicide-related coverage were reported

Here we monitor how suicide-related media items were categorised according to the primary focus of the story.

Frame	Share of harmful reporting	Share of all coverage	Interpretation
Suicide completed	49.6%	26.6%	Overrepresented in harmful reporting
Minor reference	20.4%	22.8%	Similar representation
Thematic reference	6.5%	13.4%	Underrepresented
Suicide attempt	7.9%	13.2%	Underrepresented
Other	7.4%	8.9%	Similar
Suicide ideation	4.4%	8.3%	Underrepresented
Suicide prevention	3.8%	6.5%	Underrepresented

- Reports of completed suicides represented just over one-quarter (26.6%) of all coverage, but almost half of all harmful elements (49.6%).
- A story where suicide is mentioned very briefly and is not the focus of the piece is considered a minor reference. In 2025, these items made up almost one-quarter of monitored coverage (22.8%) and they accounted for one in five harmful elements identified (20.4%).
- Suicide prevention and suicide ideation accounted for 539 stories monitored in 2025 (14.8%) with just 8.2% (62 items) containing harmful elements. Responsible reporting in these areas is important as it raises awareness, challenges stigma and encourages people to seek support.

Who covered suicide-related stories?

In this section, we look at which publishers and broadcasters are producing higher volumes of suicide-related content in 2025.

As a major issue of public health, it is important that the media continues to report on suicide and suicide prevention in Ireland. The tables below show which media outlets covered suicide most frequently. **They reflect the volume of coverage only and do not indicate if the outlet followed the suicide reporting guidelines.** An outlet may report on suicide often while consistently following the guidelines, while another may publish fewer stories but include harmful elements more frequently. Online outlets with a .co.uk domain are excluded from this analysis.

National Overview

2025 Producers of the highest volumes of suicide-related content in Ireland



Of the outlets speaking about suicide the most, 6 out of the 10 are online publications. No regional or national broadcasters made the list.



Television

[RTÉ News](#) | [RTÉ](#) | 15

[Ireland AM](#) | [Virgin Media Television](#) | 8

[Virgin News](#) | [Virgin Media Television](#) | 5

[Prime Time](#) | [RTÉ](#) | 1

[The Six O'Clock Show](#) | [Virgin Media Television](#) | 1

Across our monitoring periods in 2025, the volume of television content related to suicide was low, with just five programmes mentioning the subject. Most instances appeared in news and current affairs programming and a magazine-style breakfast programme. TG4 is not monitored.



Radio

[News](#) | [Red FM](#) | 58

[The Neil Prendeville Show](#) | [Red FM](#) | 25

[The Pat Kenny Show](#) | [Newstalk](#) | 13

[Breakfast on Newstalk](#) | [Newstalk](#) | 9

[Drivetime](#) | [RTÉ Radio 1](#) | 9

[The Agenda](#) | [LMFM](#) | 7

[Morning Ireland](#) | [RTÉ Radio 1](#) | 6

[News Bulletin](#) | [2FM](#) | 6

[The Hard Shoulder](#) | [Newstalk](#) | 6

[The Wider View](#) | [Northern Sound](#) | 6

Of the 10 radio programmes speaking most about suicide in our representative sample of stations, the top two were from one regional station. In total, 6 out of 10 were from national radio programmes and the remaining 4 were from regional radio. The top 10 were made up from two news bulletins, one talk show, and 7 current affairs programmes.



Print

[The Times \(Ireland edition\)](#) | 116

[Irish Daily Mail](#) | 100

[The Sun](#) | 85

[Irish Examiner](#) | 84

[Irish Independent](#) | 79

[The Irish Times](#) | 65

[The Herald](#) | 48

[Irish Daily Star](#) | 47

[The Sunday Times \(Ireland edition\)](#) | 31

[Sunday Independent](#) | 24

News organisations publishing both print and online versions of their stories often must make difficult decisions about what can be included in their print edition.

We observed multiple instances of organisations publishing twice or three times as much content about suicide on their online news site as they do in print.

In one organisation, a title published around five times as much suicide-related content online as in print.



Online

[thesun.ie](#) | 333

[Independent.ie](#) | 206

[IrelandLive.ie](#) | 184

[IrishTimes.com](#) | 104

[breakingnews.ie](#) | 85

[SundayWorld.com](#) | 83

[irishexaminer.com](#) | 81

[IrishMirror.ie](#) | 72

[RTE.ie](#) | 64

[Echolive.ie \(Cork\)](#) | 61

Media Groups & Responsible Reporting

For 2025, we also compared the media owners producing the most suicide-related content with those that most consistently followed the reporting guidelines. To be included, media owners had to produce at least 50 suicide-related stories across their titles, programmes and platforms, during 2025, with at least 80% of those stories following the guidelines.



It is worth noting that some media groups producing a smaller volume of content, namely *Midlands Radio Group* and *Wireless Radio Group*, followed the guidelines in 93% of the suicide-related content they produced. Similarly, some individual titles under larger owners, namely *Kilkenny People*, *Longford Leader*, and *Leitrim Observer*, followed the guidelines 97% of the time.

A closer look at platforms

In this section, we take a closer look at the data to illustrate how print, online, radio, and television reported on suicide-related content during our monitoring periods.



Print

During our monitoring periods, print media published a total of **950** articles related to suicide in Ireland. This made up 26% of the total media items monitored in 2025. Of these, 80.5% followed the best practice guidelines when reporting on suicide.

- Nationally printed news media published 717 articles and **followed the guidelines 78.2% of the time**. National print was approximately **11% less likely** to follow the suicide reporting guidelines when compared to regional print.
- **National** coverage of suicide was split between broadsheets (55%) and popular papers (44%), with community papers publishing just 1% of articles related to suicide.
- Regional, printed news media published 221 articles related to suicide in Ireland and, in total, **regional print followed the guidelines 87.8% of the time**.

- Among the 185 print articles that didn't follow the reporting guidelines, the most common harmful element was the omission of helpline information (82 articles), references to suicide method (60), an oversimplified implied reason for a suicide (54), and use of the phrase 'commit suicide' (38). Four of the articles that omitted helpline information included a website link instead.
- Print media generally reported responsibly on suicide in 2025, but more consistent use of helplines, non-stigmatising language, and avoiding unnecessary detail or speculation would continue to improve alignment with the suicide reporting guidelines and help protect readers at-risk of suicide.



Online

- During our monitoring period, online media published **2441 items** relating to suicide. This made up the majority of all media items monitored in 2025 at 66.9%. Of these, 78.9% followed the suicide reporting guidelines.
- The majority of online content relating to suicide from Irish media groups came from national online publications, accounting for 1450 items and 74.2% of these followed the suicide reporting guidelines.
- Regional online publications made up the remaining 40.6% of total online items monitored, and 85.9% of these followed the best practice guidelines.
- Among the 514 online articles that did not follow the reporting guidelines, the most common harmful elements were the omission of helpline information (179 articles), references to suicide method (159), implied singular reason for suicide (149), and use of the phrase “commit suicide” (127). 20 of the articles that omitted helpline information included a website link only. These findings highlight the importance of applying the reporting guidelines consistently across all digital platforms. Providing a telephone helpline number, using non-stigmatising language, and avoiding unnecessary detail about suicide methods or speculation about the reasons for suicide, would help further improve reporting and reduce harm to audiences.



Radio

- Radio items across a representative sample of 36 stations. 78.4% of those items followed the guidelines.
- Of the 49 items (21.6%) that didn't follow the guidelines, 19 items needed helplines which were not included. Of those, 4 broadcasts gave website details only.
- 49 items (21.6%) of radio broadcasts included a lived experience contribution and 23 of these (46.9%) did not follow the guidelines.
- The most common reporting issue related to the use of the phrase “commit suicide”. It was used 18 times and these occurrences were almost evenly split between national (4) and regional (5) stations.
- Where radio broadcasts did not follow the guidelines, journalists and presenters were the most common contributors to harmful elements (17), followed by close relatives or friends (10), professional contributors such as doctors, politicians and mental health experts (6), and members of the public, most commonly callers to programmes (7).



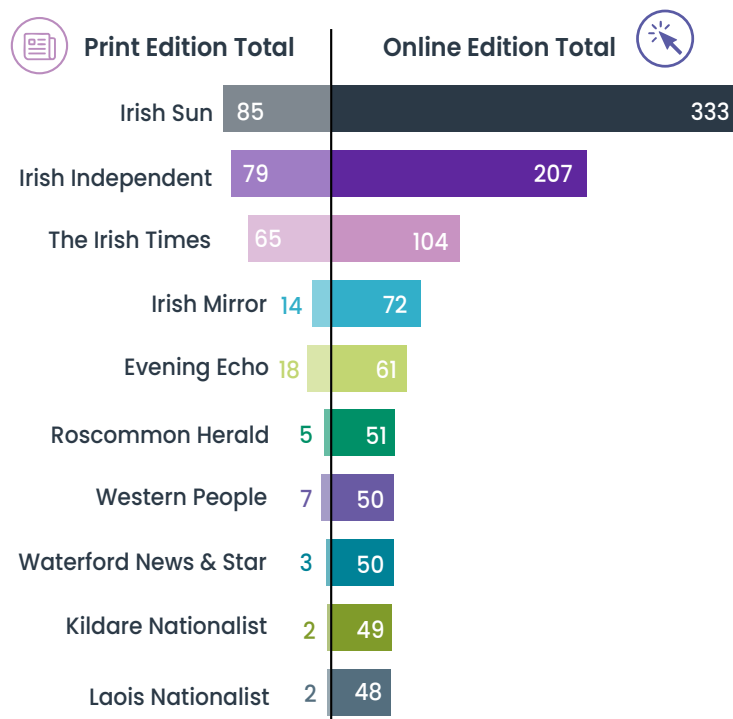
Television

- Across 2025, we monitored 30 television items relating to suicide. Television accounted for the lowest volume of coverage across all monitored content. While there are significantly fewer television stations in Ireland than there are radio stations or newspaper titles, we consider this to be a very low rate of coverage, given the importance of the subject as a major issue of public health. No television pieces monitored during these periods were considered suicide prevention in nature.
- RTÉ accounted for 16 items, while Virgin Media Television accounted for 14. (TG4 is not currently included in the monitoring.)
- Almost all of RTÉ's monitored coverage consisted of news items (15 of 16 items). Virgin Media Television coverage was split into five news items and nine factual entertainment broadcasts, reflecting a broader mix of programming.
- Of the 30 television items monitored, 10 did not follow the reporting guidelines.

Print Publishing v Online Publishing

Many publications have both an online and print version. We see a notable difference in the amount of media content related to suicide depending on which format of the publication is reporting.

This is true irrespective of it being a broadsheet, popular, national, or regional publication. Below is a sample of publications with both print and online editions. There is a notable difference in the number of suicide-related items published in each version in 2025.



Print editions were more likely than online editions to follow best practice guidelines when reporting on suicide, with national print publications having the highest tendency to follow the guidelines (84.0%), followed by regional print (78.4%), regional online (76.7%), and national online publications (74.7%). These findings suggest that the editorial choices in print publication when concerned with suicide differ.

Some publications produce a similar number of stories about suicide in both their print and online versions. Even with a similar volume of stories published, there is a discrepancy in standards when comparing the print and online versions. For example, one title published over 80 suicide-related items in print, with approximately 83% following reporting guidelines.

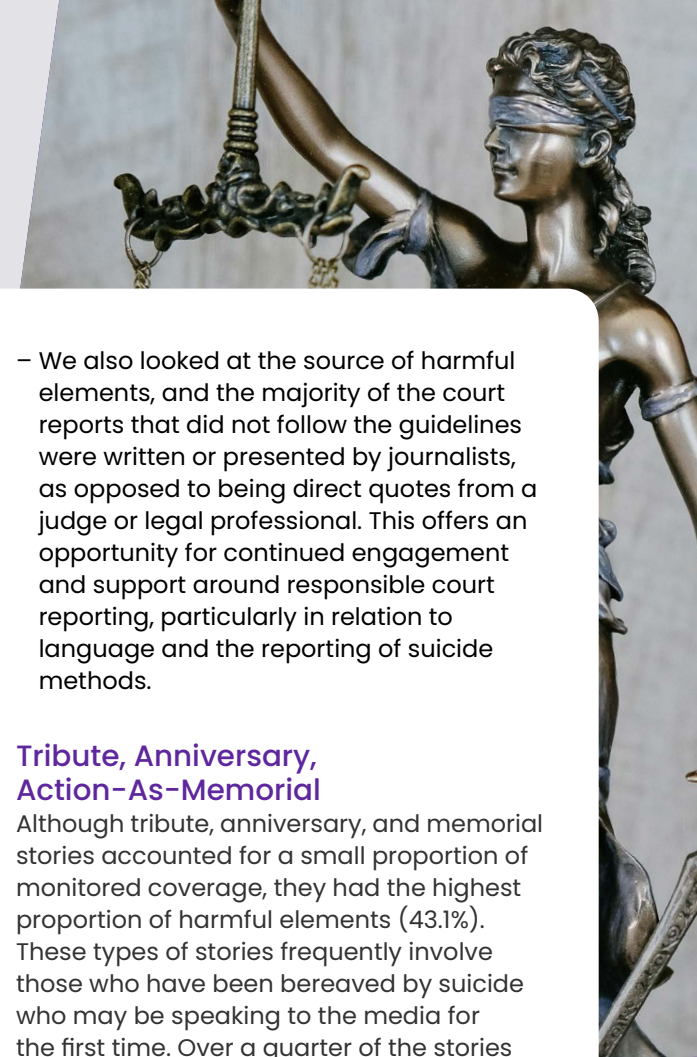
Under their online title, they published a similar volume of stories but with just 77% following the guidelines. Similarly, a separate title had 10 online items which followed the guidelines in just half of the stories. Their print version carried 14 suicide-related stories but 86% followed the guidelines.

These findings suggest that editorial choices around suicide reporting may differ between print and online editions, with print coverage generally showing stronger alignment with best practice guidelines.



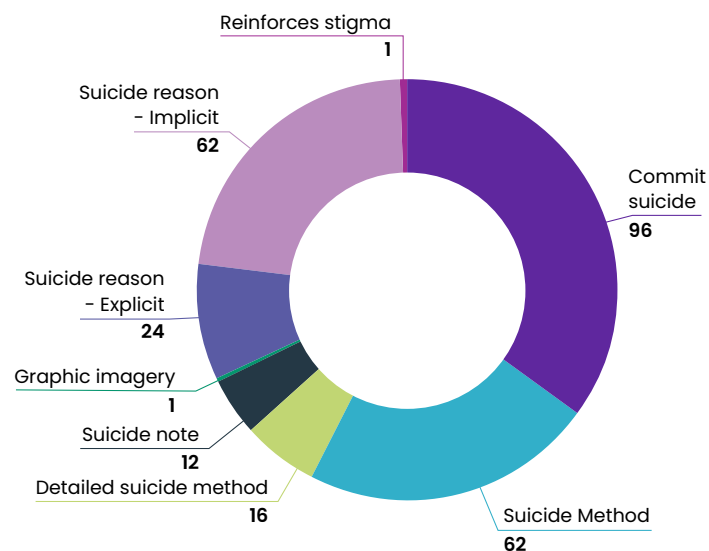
2025 Challenges

In this section, we aim to highlight the challenges media outlets face when reporting on suicide-related stories.



Common Suicide-Reporting scenarios	Stories analysed	Followed guidelines
Murder-suicide	690	88.7%
Awareness day	169	84.6%
Breaking news	419	76.4%
High-profile person	699	71.8%
Court reporting	681	66.8%
Tribute/memorial	72	56.9%

Court Reporting



– Court reporting accounted for 681 of the 3,648 suicide-related items monitored during 2025. Of these, 455 reports (66.8%) followed the reporting guidelines, while 226 (33.2%) contained at least one harmful element.

– The phrase “commit suicide” appeared 96 times. The phrase “commit suicide” is considered stigmatising and factually incorrect as it reinforces outdated associations with criminality. Suicide was decriminalised in Ireland under the Criminal Law (Suicide) Act 1993.

– A total of 86 reports suggested or directly stated that a suicide was caused by a single event or circumstance. Together, these made up almost four in ten harmful elements identified in court reports.

– Information about suicide methods appeared regularly in court reports. There were a total of 78 references to suicide method. 16 of these stories gave a detailed description of a suicide method, providing audiences with enough detail for imitation. A harm-reduction approach to court reporting of suicides is encouraged by limiting detail on methods while continuing to report court proceedings accurately and responsibly.

– We also looked at the source of harmful elements, and the majority of the court reports that did not follow the guidelines were written or presented by journalists, as opposed to being direct quotes from a judge or legal professional. This offers an opportunity for continued engagement and support around responsible court reporting, particularly in relation to language and the reporting of suicide methods.

Tribute, Anniversary, Action-As-Memorial

Although tribute, anniversary, and memorial stories accounted for a small proportion of monitored coverage, they had the highest proportion of harmful elements (43.1%). These types of stories frequently involve those who have been bereaved by suicide who may be speaking to the media for the first time. Over a quarter of the stories with harmful elements were quotes from close relatives or friends. Separately, of the 31 stories requiring helpline information, 29 did not include it, while two included a website link only. Including a telephone helpline number provides a more direct and accessible route to support.

High-Profile People

Reporting on the deaths of high-profile people presents unique challenges for journalists. These stories often receive sustained media attention, attract significant public interest, and are frequently revisited as new developments emerge. Because of their reach and visibility, responsible reporting is particularly important. In 2025, 699 monitored items (19.2% of all suicide-related coverage) featured a high-profile person. The examples below illustrate some of the different reporting challenges identified during the year.

Jeffrey Epstein and Virginia Giuffre

More than one-third of all high-profile coverage (243 items) related to Jeffrey Epstein and the subsequent death by suicide of Virginia Giuffre. Of these, 125 items discussed one or both deaths in detail, while a further 118 included them as minor references. Many reports also focused on Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor's association with Epstein and Giuffre, with references to their deaths appearing as background information.

Coverage remained consistent throughout the year, increasing following the release of files relating to Epstein, Virginia Giuffre's death, and ongoing reporting concerning Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor. This demonstrates how a single high-profile story can generate repeated references to suicide over an extended period, creating multiple opportunities to apply the reporting guidelines consistently.

Caroline Flack

Following Caroline Flack's death in 2020, there were exceptionally high volumes of content, as well as high volumes of content that did not follow the guidelines. Six years later, coverage surrounding a two-part documentary series 'produced similar challenges, albeit in much lower volumes. We monitored 27 items relating to the documentary, of which 25 did not follow the reporting guidelines.

An oversimplified reason for Caroline Flack's death appeared in 19 items. This type of reporting can be harmful, as it does not reflect the complexity of suicide and may resonate with people experiencing similar circumstances. Helpline information was also largely absent, with 23 of

the 27 items failing to include support information despite discussing her death in detail. Given the high-profile nature of the case, consistently signposting audiences to support services is particularly important.

Gene Hackman

The deaths of actor Gene Hackman and his wife Betsy Arakawa occurred outside our routine monitoring period. However, because of the significant media interest, we activated additional monitoring to assess how the story was reported. During the first 48 hours, coverage was largely speculative, with some reports suggesting the deaths may have been a double suicide or murder-suicide.

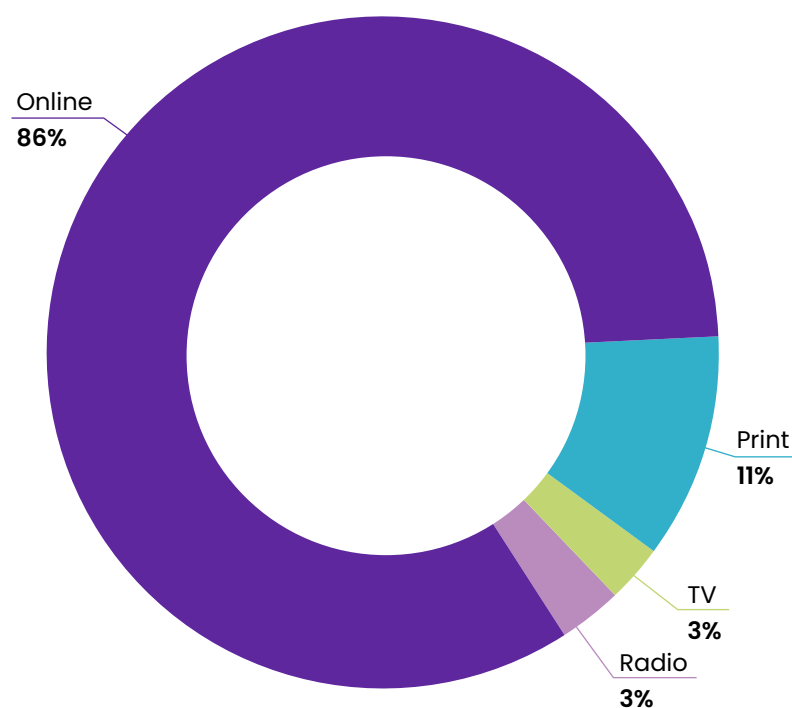
We monitored 18 articles that referred to suicide in relation to the deaths. Although most stopped short of stating suicide as fact, repeated references to "pills found scattered near the body" implied self-harm, while some reports included other unconfirmed details that added to the speculation. 5 of the 18 articles (27.8%) included helpline information even though suicide had not been confirmed, potentially reinforcing speculation that suicide had occurred.

Conversely, two articles that did discuss suicide did not include helpline information. As official statements from police and pathologists emerged between 3rd and 5th of March, reporting became more accurate and references to suicide largely disappeared. This case highlights the importance of avoiding speculation during breaking news events and updating reporting as verified information becomes available.



2025 Good Practice

Coverage of a Murder-Suicide in Co. Fermanagh



In 2025, one major news event which broke during our monitoring period in Q3 2025 was, at the time of reporting, a suspected triple murder-suicide in Fermanagh. **579** total media items were published about this case, making up almost **16%** of suicide-related media items published across online, print, and broadcast in 2025.

86% (500) of this coverage came from online publications and **11% (65)** from print. The remaining **3%** came from **11** radio broadcasts and just **3** TV segments.

292 out of 299 breaking news items in Q3 2025 related to this murder-suicide case. Encouragingly, **259 (88.7%)** of these followed the guidelines and, in total **572 (98%)** of overall coverage avoided harmful elements in this case.

The 2% which did include a harmful element included methodology in their coverage. This indicates that, overall, Irish media demonstrated strong guideline awareness even during periods of intense coverage of an ongoing news story.

Recommendations

01 Always Include Helplines

Helpline inclusion is still the most frequent gap in suicide-related stories and one of the easiest to resolve. In 2025, if helplines had been included in items where this was the only guideline not followed, the overall rate of items following the guidelines would have jumped from 79.2% to 86.3%. Including helpline numbers is essential for audiences at risk of suicide. www.broadcaster.ie/support is not a helpline.

02 Embrace Lived Experience and Recovery Narratives

Stories that show recovery or help-seeking can challenge stigma and foster hope. Including the perspective of those who have first-hand experience of mental health challenges can enrich stories and improve audiences understanding of, and compassion towards those experiences. Editors are encouraged to support the commissioning of stories that centre these experiences as rich and nuanced narratives.

03 Court Reporting Detail

Reporters covering courts and inquests should, where possible, minimise unnecessary detail about a suicide method. This can unintentionally provide audiences with a how-to guide in their descriptions, while also reinforcing common suicide methods or highlighting new ones. Before publishing, weigh the public interest in procedural detail against the potential risk to public health.

04 Consistency across Formats

Publishers with print and online editions should apply the reporting guidelines consistently across both formats. Online stories should receive the same editorial checks for helpline information, non-stigmatising language, method detail, and speculation as print stories, including when articles are updated or republished.

05 Diversity of Contributors

Older people were largely absent from stories related to suicide in 2025. Consider commissioning more stories where older audiences may see themselves reflected in these stories, especially if these stories may have a positive impact on older audiences' experiences of loneliness and isolation. The same can be said of marginalised communities including transgender people.

Training

Mental Health Reporting Guidelines Workshop

Shine offers tailored, evidence-based training and consultations on responsible suicide and mental health reporting. Workshops are free, interactive, and include contemporary case studies.

Trauma-Informed Interviewing Skills Workshop

Shine offers an evidence-based workshop on trauma-informed interviewing of people with lived experience of mental illness and/or trauma. Workshops are free, interactive, and include contemporary case studies.

Workshops for Storytellers and Mental Health Ambassadors

Shine works with ambassadors who represent mental health organisations and participate in media interviews about their lived experience. The training looks at what to expect from the interview process and how to navigate responsible sharing. Workshops are also available for content creators and those who wish to speak publicly about their experiences of suicide or mental health.

For all training queries email:
media@shine.ie

Appendix

Methodology & Definitions

We monitor media coverage of mental health and suicide to identify trends, highlight areas for improvement, and support responsible reporting.

We track news, current affairs and other non-fiction media across print, online, radio and television, ensuring a broad and representative sample of national and regional reporting of suicide. This is captured over a 3-week period every quarter, with the dates selected to avoid most large international suicide prevention awareness days. This is done to capture a baseline of 'normal time' suicide reporting. The four 3-week periods are selected at the beginning of the year to avoid any bias, therefore, any news events occurring during this period are out of the analysts' control. Our source list captures 80 Irish print titles, 144 online news sites, 36 radio stations, and 5 TV stations. Limitations: While both social media and fictional representations of suicide can hugely impact and influence audiences, our monitoring is limited to regulated factual media. Our monitoring is also limited to English-language media only.

Coding & Analysis

The data is coded by analysts on the Media Programme team who use a comprehensive coding sheet identifying a range of relevant variables. Each media item is assessed for both harmful and protective elements, identifying reporting

context, frame, stigmatising language, helpline information, lived experience, and a range of other factors that may help provide insights on areas for improvement.

Harmful Elements

A harmful element is something in a media report about suicide that does not follow recommended reporting guidelines and could potentially cause harm, especially to at-risk audiences.

Commit Suicide

The word 'commit' in the context of suicide is factually incorrect because it is no longer illegal. Suicide has not been a crime in Ireland since 1993. Using the term 'committed' further amplifies the shame and stigma which still surrounds the issue.

Suicide Method

A method is mentioned, but no further details are given. For example, a report may say that someone died by hanging or overdose. We monitor this separately because simply naming the method is different from providing details about how it was carried out.

Detailed Suicide Method

Detailed method is considered highest risk because providing specific details about a suicide method can increase the risk of imitative behaviour, so this level of detail should not be published.

Oversimplified Reason for Suicide

We identify whether coverage links a suicide to a single specific reason or trigger, as suicide is complex and rarely caused by a single event or

circumstance. Oversimplifying the circumstances surrounding suicide may be harmful to audiences at risk.

Suicide Reason – Implied

The media item suggests a link between a specific factor or circumstance and the suicide without directly stating that it was the cause. For example: *"Caroline died by suicide after her relationship ended."* The word "after" creates a strong link between the relationship ending and the suicide, even though the report does not directly say that this was the cause.

Suicide Reason – Explicit

The media item directly states that a specific factor, event or circumstance caused or led to the suicide. For example: *"She died by suicide because she was being bullied."* Words such as "because of," "due to," "as a result of," or "caused by" indicate an explicit reason.

Suicide frame

We identify the focus of the story, choosing the most dominant frame (e.g. minor reference, thematic, attempt, completed suicide, ideation, prevention or self-harm).

Context

We record any relevant context flags, such as breaking news, court reporting, high-profile person, awareness day, tribute/memorial or murder-suicide.

For more information on our Media Monitoring Methodology, please see <https://www.shine.ie/advocacy/media-monitoring-and-information>

Shine's media monitoring is made possible with the support of the HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention, under Ireland's National Strategy to Reduce Suicide and Self-harm, Connecting for Life 2026-2035.

To hear more about Shine's Mental Health Media Awards, Fellowship for Mental Health Journalism, free workshops, our stigma-reduction programmes in the workplace, Green Ribbon campaign, community peer-to-peer support groups and 1-1 work, visit www.Shine.ie

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