

When the television presenter Caroline Flack died through suicide on 14th February 2020, there was broad coverage and comment across many mass media platforms, including newspapers, social networking and television. There was speculation, particularly in the press and on social media, on the circumstances leading to Ms Flack's decision to take her own life, including the possible impact of 'trolling' and negative media reporting. In the weeks prior to her death, Ms Flack stood down from her role as presenter of the television show Love Island, following an alleged assault on her partner for which she was being prosecuted. This is likely to have placed Ms Flack under significant emotional and mental pressure, possibly with feelings of thwarted belongingness which is known to be a contributory factor in suicidal ideation and in actual suicide (Kimberly et al, 2010). However, suicide is a complex, multi-faceted issue which, as Durkheim (1951) points out, is an individual act grounded in social relationships.

For a period following Ms Flack's death, the debate on suicide and its cause in her case were a hot topic, particularly the role of social media. For the purposes of this assignment it was decided to examine the campaigning of an organisation related to suicide prevention. There are a number of suicide prevention campaigns by health authorities, supra-national organisations such as the World Health Organisation, national and devolved governments, but also by a range of charities and voluntary organisations. One particular area of evident concern is the extent of suicide amongst younger people aged 15 to 25, which according to the World Health Organisation (2020) remains the second leading cause of death in this group. In fact, the UK Office of National Statistics (2019) reports that suicide is the leading cause of death in the UK among young people, male and female, aged 10 to 24 years. Therefore, the organisation chosen to be the focus of this assignment is a charitable organisation which campaigns to end the suicide of young people; PAPYRUS.

PAPYRUS (the organisation) is a charitable company (Company number 3555482; charity registration number 1070896) which was established in 1997 as the Parents' Association for the Prevention of Young Suicide. It is now registered simply as PAPYRUS. The charitable aim of the organisation is established by a Memorandum of Association "To advance the education of the public into the causes and effects of suicide, especially, but not exclusively, concerning young people", and "To contribute to the prevention of suicide by young people, and where possible to offer assistance to them, their families, and/or their carers." (PAPYRUS, 2019). The organisation was founded by two parents bereaved through youth suicide, and although the organisation is not a bereavement organisation, it does provide support in this area (PAPYRUS, 2019). One area of concern for PAPYRUS and an area on which it campaigned for change is the under reporting of suicide by younger people due the restrictions on the way Coroners record their findings. PAPYRUS believes that many cases of death by young people which are recorded as 'open' should be included in official statistics. (PAPYRUS, 2017). The campaign has had some success, since in England and Wales the standard of proof used to determine the cause of death by suicide was lowered to civil standard from criminal standard in 2018 (Office of National Statistics, 2019). PAPYRUS continues to campaign to extend this change to Scotland and Northern Ireland. In addition, the organisation campaigns for a change in the way suicide is described in reports, in media coverage and in everyday language arguing that the 'language of suicide', both formal and informal, creates stigma for those contemplating suicide, having suicidal ideations and those bereaved through suicide. Keller et al (2019) found that stigma against suicidal ideation was a significant barrier to prevention. Note the opening sentence to this assignment which uses the term 'died through suicide' rather than 'committed suicide' which takes account of this advice, since commit confers association with crime and sin (Beaton, Maple and Foster, 2012).

Charitable companies are corporate bodies which are subject to both the Charities Acts and Companies Acts (Charity Commission, 2020; Companies Act 2006). In charitable companies the Trustees which controls and manage the charity and employs any staff are also the Company Directors. There are some benefits and disadvantages to this type of corporate structure, The principle advantage is that any financial liability on individual Trustees/Directors can be limited by the governing document and in the case of PAPYRUS this is £20 (Charity Commission, 2020; PAPYRUS, 2019). However, administratively charitable companies are complex organisation, requiring for example the preparation of a statutory annual return for the Charities Commission including annual audited accounts complying with the Statement of Recommended Practice for Charities Accounts (SORP), and also an annual return and accounts which comply with the Companies Acts 2006 as amended. Charitable companies are unable to act like commercial companies in that any profits (surpluses) must be utilised in pursuit of the charity's aims and cannot be distributed amongst members (Charity Commission, 2020). In addition, other than in certain exceptional circumstances, Trustees cannot be paid for their role, although they are able to receive reasonable expenses; Trustees are therefore, effectively, volunteers. (Charity Commission, 2020).

According to its annual returns, and other documents available online, through the publicly available information held by the Charity Commission, Companies House and on the organisation's website (www.papyrus-uk.org) PAPYRUS runs a number of campaigns running in parallel. The organisation's principal activity is running a telephone helpline named Hopeline which is intended to support those considering suicide and 'concerned others' who are those worried about someone who may be contemplating suicide. In addition, the organisation provides training and suicide awareness-raising courses which vary in length, aimed primarily at schools and college through a campaign called 'Save the Class' which commenced in 2018 as a stand-alone campaign but which has been repeated in 2019 and is planned as a campaign in 2020. There is also a campaign aimed at young people called 'Be Your Kind of Brave' which is intended to provide advice and promote resilience and bolster self-esteem. In addition, the organisation has a number of volunteer individuals it terms as 'Champions' to promote its work and which also assist in the delivery of training.

An examination of the organisation's 2019 Annual Review demonstrates the number of training courses provided, the number of calls taken on its helpline and various testimonials from those that have benefited from the training and awareness raising service which demonstrates a high degree of satisfaction. In terms of growth, the organisation has made significant progress since its foundation, and specifically in the past three years. At 31st March 2019 the organisation had income of £2,835,691, compared to £1,347,375 in the previous year, representing an increase of 110.46%, and a significant improvement on 2017/2018 where there was also an increase in income, but of a more modest £323,439 or 31.58%. This makes PAPYRUS a substantial charity; Childline, for example had income of £876,000 in 2018-2019, though it is fully funded as a subsidiary of the NSPCC (Childline, 2019), PAPYRUS showed a significant increase in grant income during the period examined with 32 grants, totalling £571,680 in 2019 compared to 8 grants of £171,855 in 2018 (+300% and +233% respectively). PAPYRUS also reports a 'significant increase on the hits' to its website in 2019. However, since PAPYRUS, in common with other helplines, does not maintain a record of callers it is not possible to determine outcomes. Similarly, although training and advice may have a demonstrable outcome in the satisfaction of those trained it is difficult to evaluate the success in terms of preventing suicide in young people,

The reason for these performance improvements in the areas mentioned above are not clear, however one cause may be a response to the statistical report of the Office for National Statistics (2019) on suicides in the UK in 2018. One concerning aspect is that in 2018 the overall rate of suicide increased for the first time since 2013, reversing a trend of continuous decline. This appears to be driven by an increase in suicide amongst men who continue to be at highest risk, but also in an increase in death by suicide of younger people. In Wales there was a marked increase in rate of suicide by younger females. However, it is not known how the change in Coroners' rules has affected the statistical evidence of increased rates of suicide in England and Wales (Office for National Statistics, 2019).

In conclusion, therefore, PAPYRUS is a charitable company which has a range of campaigns intended to prevent suicide by young people, including a website, telephone helpline, training resource and youth support programmes. The charity has shown significant growth in recent years, possibly in response to growing concerns about the mental health of young people and an evidential increase in recorded numbers of young people dying by suicide. The charity has shown success in changing the 'language of suicide' in the media, and in the way cases of probable suicide are determined by Coroners Courts. Whilst the campaigns of the organisation have received positive endorsements it is difficult to correlate the impact on the aim to prevent suicide in younger people.

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