

# The assessment of clinical risk in mental health services

The National Confidential Inquiry into Suicide and Safety in Mental Health



## Key findings



We collected data from **all** NHS mental health services in the UK

Risk tools used varied between services

## Characteristics of tools

56%



Categorised risk into high, medium or low

94%



Used risk categorisation to inform care

85%



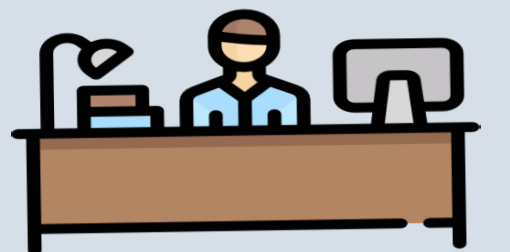
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42%



No accompanying guidance

19%



Suggested liaising with GPs

90%

of clinicians used a risk assessment tool

**but**

29%

had not received training in their use

## Staff and patient views



Survey and interviews with staff and patients suggested better training on understanding the nature of risk

"We can't predict human behaviour. Likelihood is an opinion, a professional judgement"

"Training keeps risk at the forefront, it keeps it fresh"

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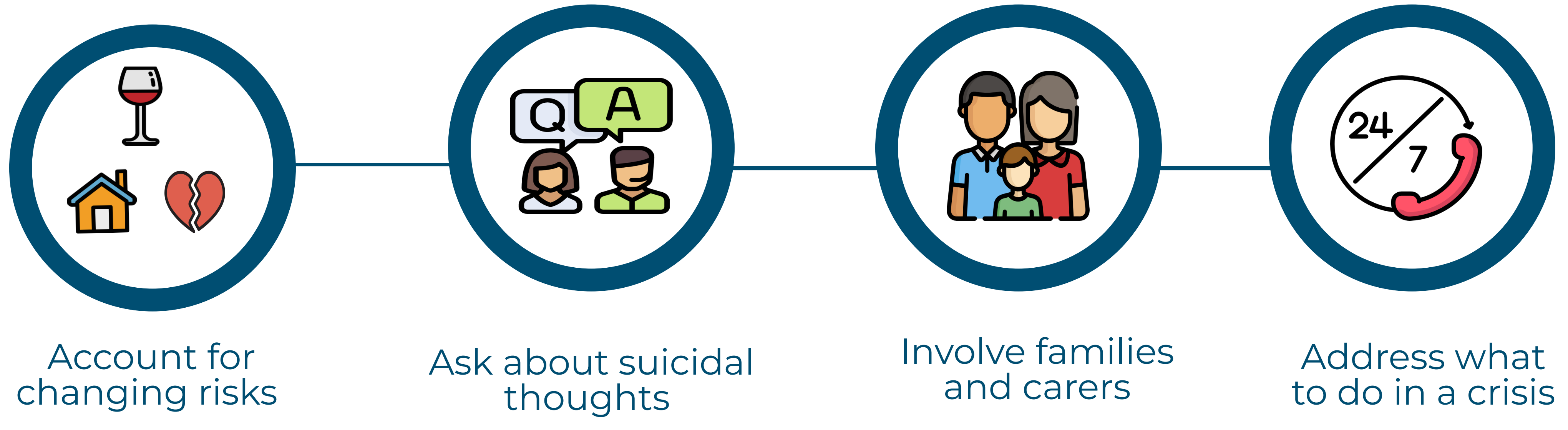
## Clinical messages

Risk assessment tools should not focus on prediction



Risk is **not** a number  
Risk assessment is **not** a checklist

## Essential elements of assessing clinical risk



## Suggestions for improvements

