

Suspected Suicides Age and Gender Q2 Update

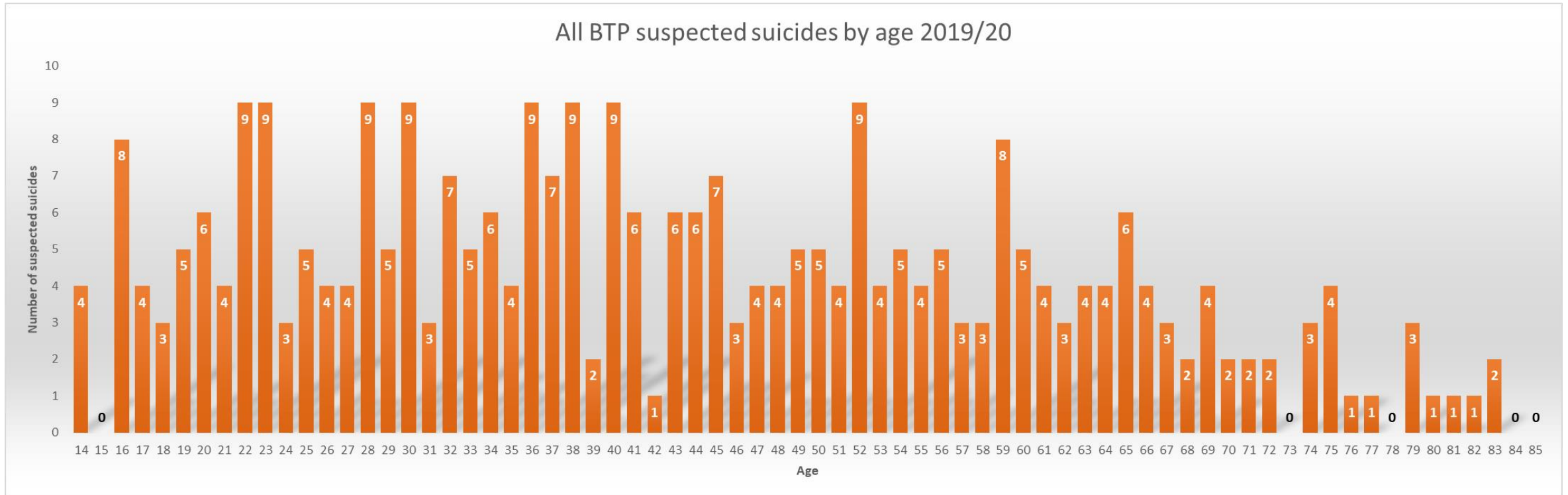
Eleanor Page, Vulnerability Analyst | 6th October 2020

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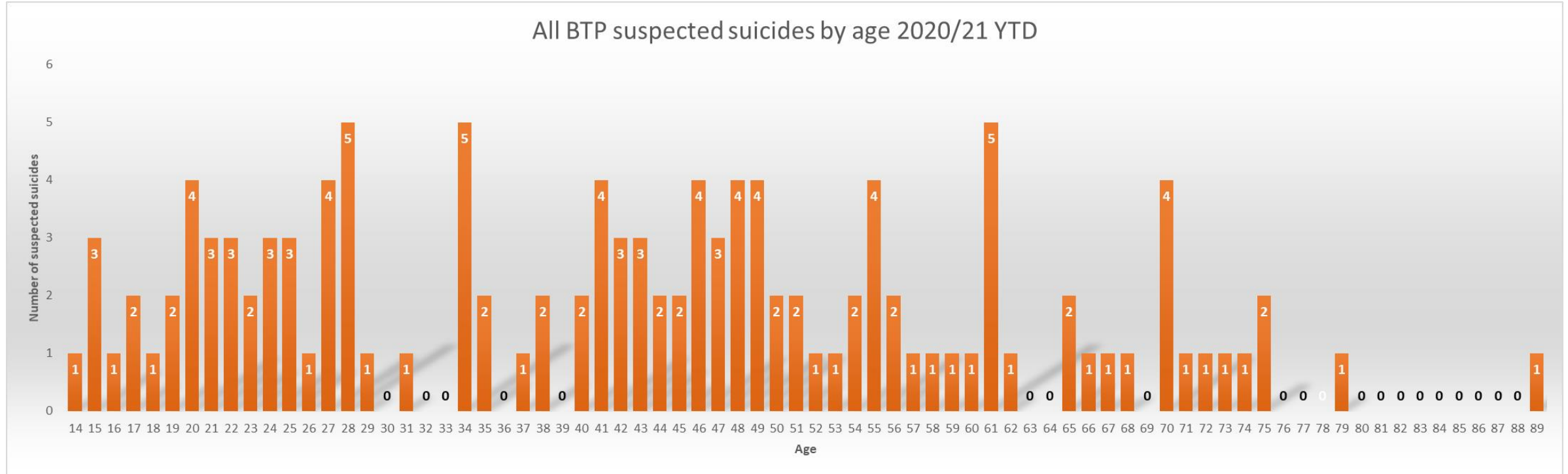
BTP suspected suicides – age profile 2019/20



There were a total of 306 suspected suicides on BTP jurisdiction in the 2019/20 performance year with peaks identified in multiple age groupings.

Eight sixteen year olds completed suicides, twice as many as the next highest child age. Very early twenties, late twenties and late thirties were other ages where peaks in suicide rates on BTP have been identified, as well as notable peaks in 52 and 59 year olds.

BTP suspected suicides – age profile 2020/21 YTD

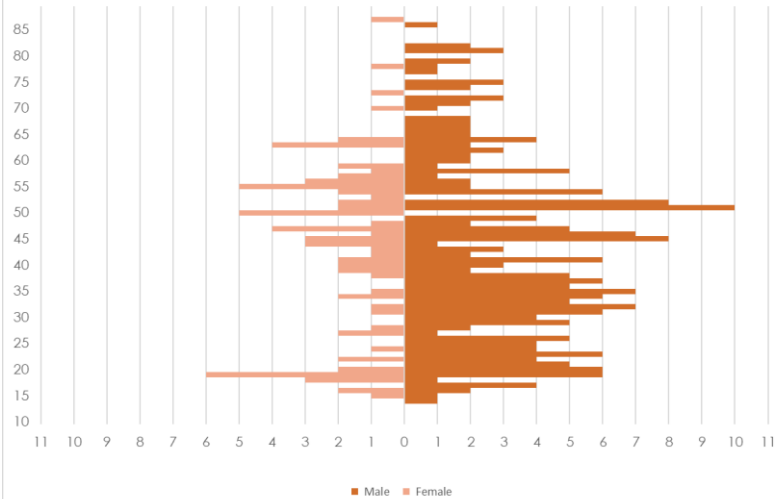


There were a total of 122 suspected suicides on BTP jurisdiction in the first half of the 2020/21 performance year. This is 18% lower than in the same period last year where there were 149 suspected suicides.

The most significant difference in the age profile is in those aged in their 30's. This age group accounted for almost 20% of suspected suicides in 2019/20 but in the current performance year the same age group has accounted for 9% of all suicides to date. Conversely, suspected suicides of those in their 20's and 40's represent a greater proportion of all fatalities of this nature compared to 2019/20.

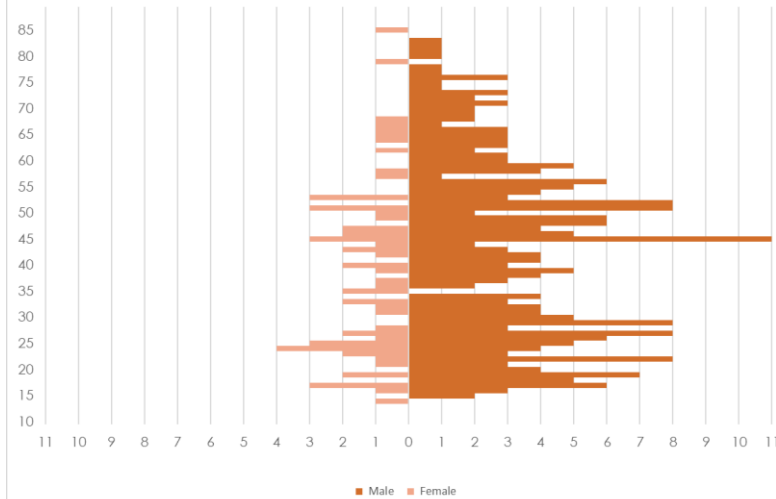
BTP suspected suicides – age and gender changes over time

BTP suspected suicides by age and gender 2017/18



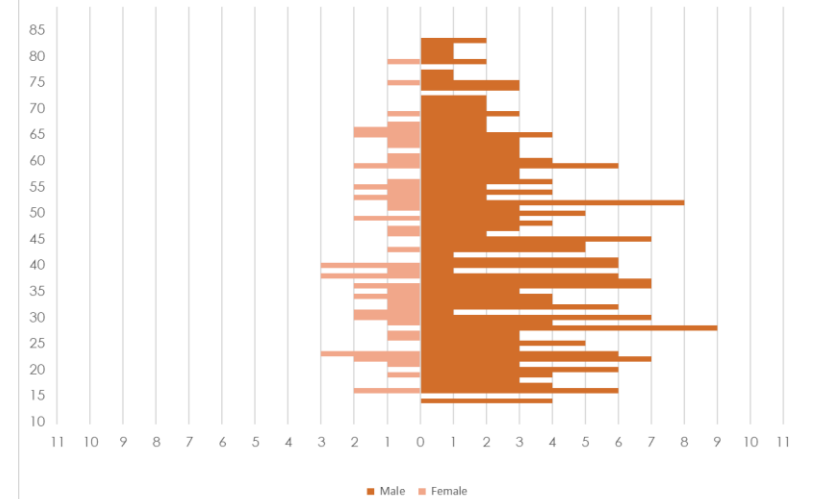
- 73.8% of all suspected suicides on BTP in 2017/18 were male.
- ONS data indicates that males accounted for 75.0% of all suicides in England and Wales in 2017.

BTP suspected suicides by age and gender 2018/19



- 80% of all suspected suicides on BTP in 2018/19 were male, a significant increase on the previous year, up to 249 from 228.
- ONS data indicates that males accounted for 75.6% of all suicides in England and Wales in 2018.
- Female suicides reduced from 81 to 62 and represented 20% of all incidents of this type.

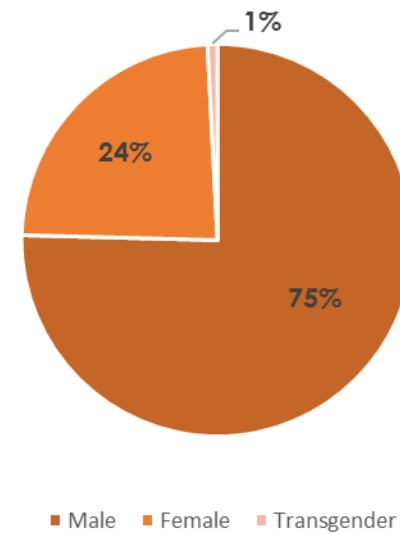
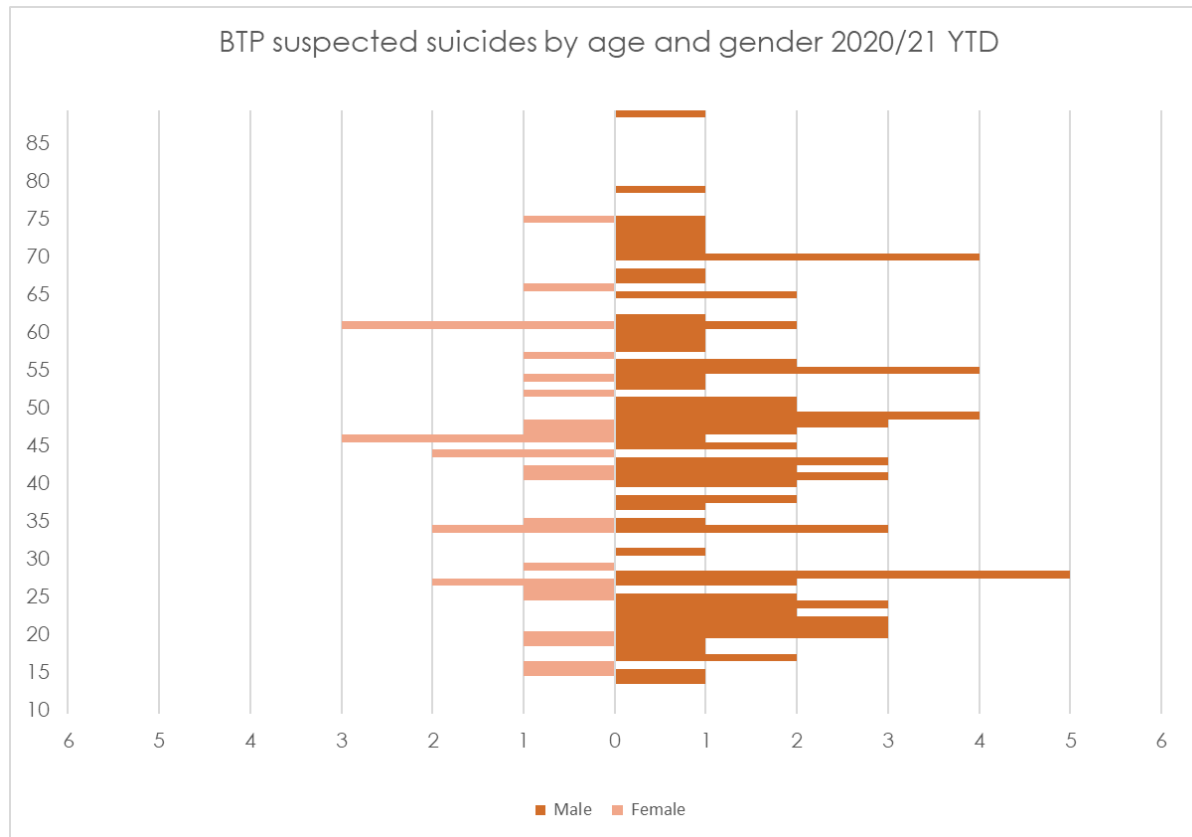
BTP suspected suicides by age and gender 2019/20



- 81% of all suspected suicides on BTP in 2019/20 were male, with the absolute number down by one compared with 2018/19.
- ONS data indicates that males accounted for 75.6% of all suicides in England and Wales in 2019.
- There was a continued reduction in suspected suicides in females with a total of 57 ending their lives on the railway.

- The average age of female suspected suicides on BTP jurisdiction has moved within the 40-44 range and is currently 40 for 2020/21 YTD, with a median age of 43
- The average age of male suspected suicides on BTP jurisdiction has remained static at 43, with the median age changing moving down slightly from 41 in 2017/18 to 40 in 2020/21 to date

BTP suspected suicides – 2020/21 age and gender splits YTD

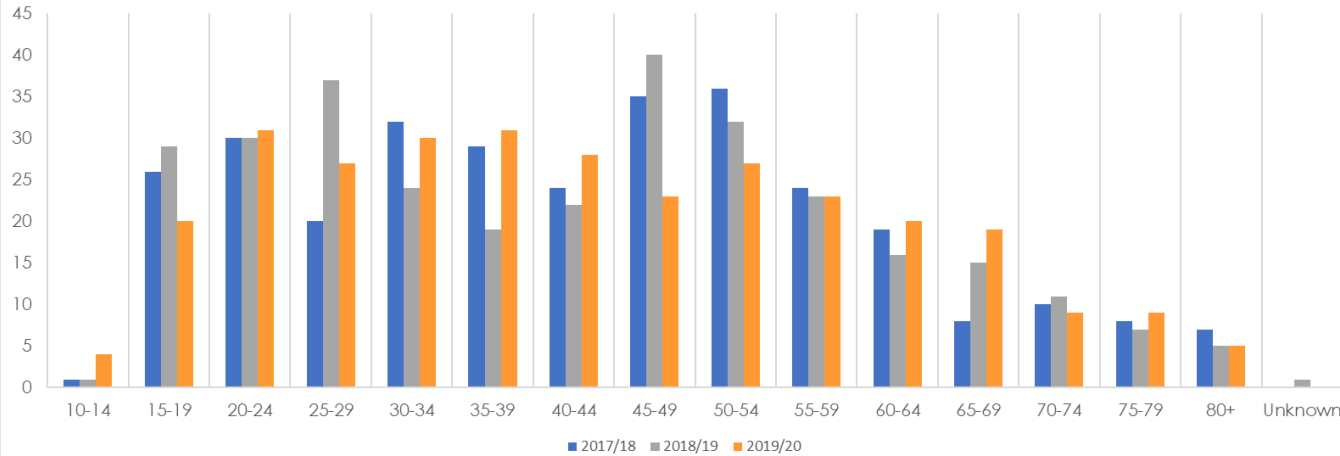


- 23.8% of all suspected suicides in the first half of 2020/21 were females, this is a greater proportion than in the previous two years. However, the absolute number of females completing suicide on the rail network is the same as during the same period in 2019/20 (29).
- The average age for males completing suicide was 43-44 compared with 41 for females. This may be slightly skewed by the 89 year old male who completed suicide earlier in the year.
- The distribution of ages is fairly even across the age groups for women in comparison with males who appear to have peaks in the late teens and early twenties as well as the late forties.

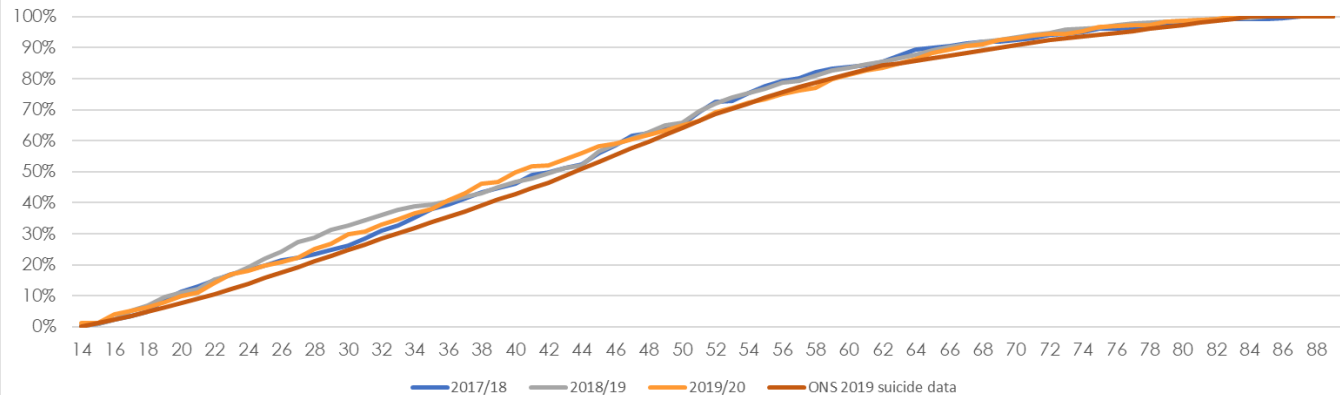
The following slides will focus on the changes in age profile of those who completed suicide between April 2017 and March 2020, split into five year age groupings
There will firstly be a yearly comparison for all genders followed by quarterly comparisons split by gender

BTP suspected suicides – age and gender full year comparison

BTP suspected suicides -- comparison by age group - all genders



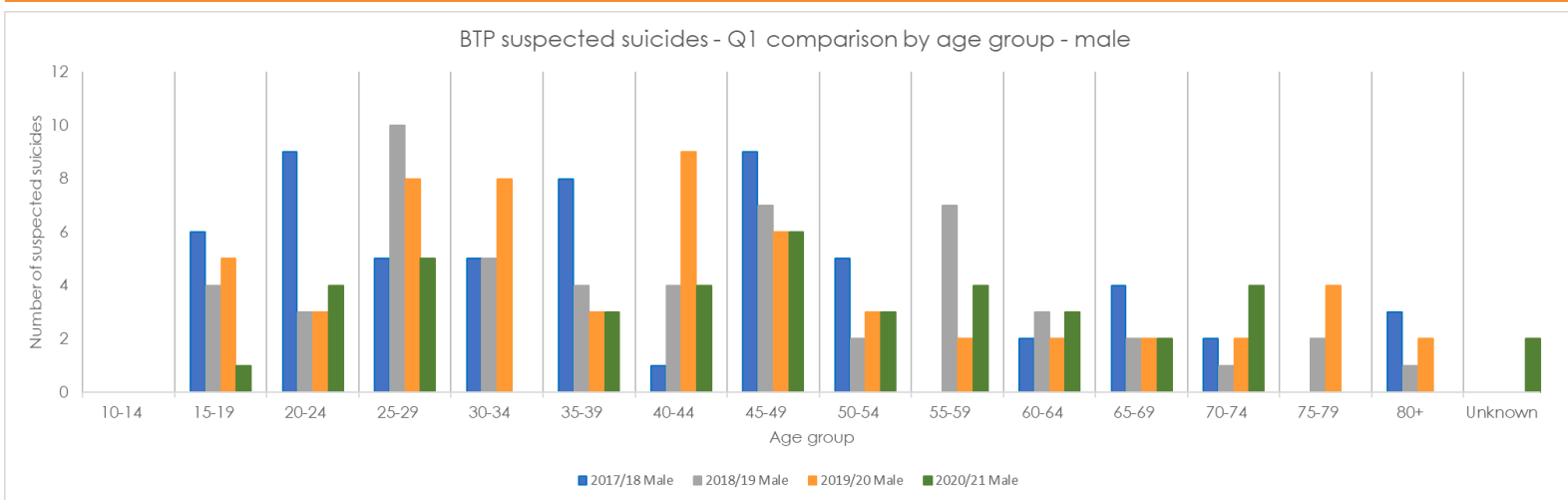
BTP suspected suicides - age distribution - all genders



- The two charts to the left show that, whilst there has been some movement in the numbers of individuals in each age group completing suicide on the rail network, the distribution of ages has generally remained fairly consistent over the three years reviewed.
- In 2017/18, 50% of individuals were aged 42 or under. This remained the same in 2018/19 but by 2020/21 reduced to aged 40 or below.
- 2018/19 saw an increase in the number of people aged 25-29 completing suicide but this reduced again in 2019/20, albeit to a slightly higher level than seen previously.
- When compared to the ONS data it is clear to see that the age demographic of individuals completing suicide on the railways is generally younger than what can be seen in the age distribution of all suicides completed in England and Wales in 2019. Prior to age 50, all three BTP lines lie above the 2019 ONS line which indicates that a greater proportion of people under 50 completed suicide on the rail network at these ages than the older ages.
- The number of people aged 60-70 involved in suspected suicide incidents has generally increased, although the number of people over 70 has remained fairly consistent or reduced slightly over the years.
- The peak in suspected suicides in people aged 45 to 55 in the two years prior to 2019/20 appears to have faded slightly and there was more of an even distribution (indicated by the straighter orange line on the second chart) of incidents across the ages in 2019/20. The reduction in ages 45 to 55 appears to have transferred to increases in suicides in 30 to 45 year olds.

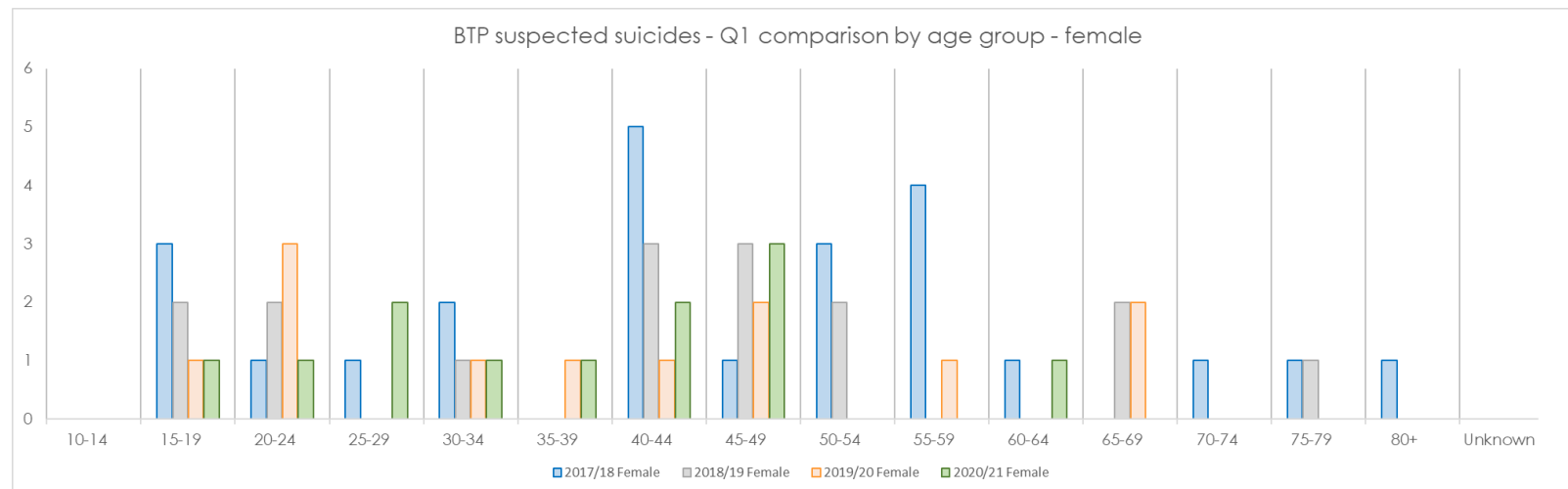
BTP suspected suicides – age and gender

Q1 Apr – Jun yearly comparison



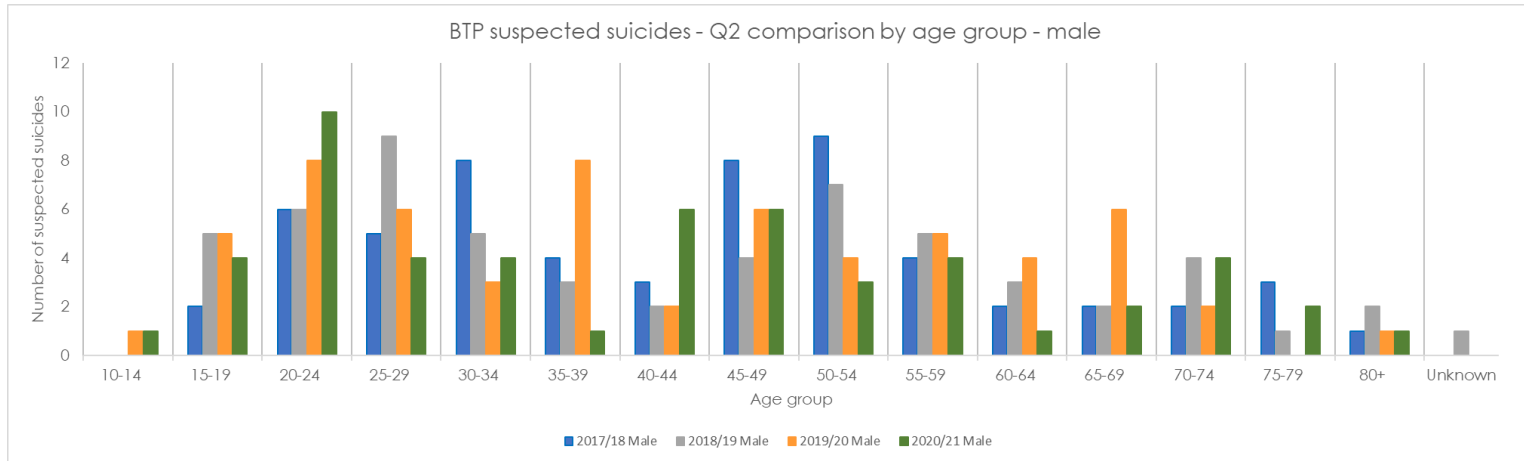
- Suspected suicides in males aged 25 to 35 during Q1 each has increased whilst there appears to have been a transfer from the 35-39 age group up to the 40-44 age group
- With the exception of some minor fluctuations, suspected suicides amongst males aged over 50 has remained fairly steady when comparing Q1 figures for the three years
- The number of suspected suicides of males in Q1 of 2020/21 was 41. This is around 70% of the volumes seen in previous years and is likely to be due to the restrictions in place during the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as the reduced number of train services operating during this period.
- The most notable changes in the 2020/21 Q1 figures are that only one person aged under 20 and none over 75 completed suicide, perhaps due to the aforementioned restrictions.
- Seven of the suicides in Q1 2020/21 were thought to be indirectly linked to Covid-19 whilst one was directly linked.

- The number of suspected suicides of females in Q1 of 2020/21 was 12. This is the same as the previous year and half the number seen in the same period in 2017/18.
- The reduction appears to have been realised in a reduction in the numbers of 40-59 year olds and those in their late teens. However, prior to this year, the number of females aged 20-24 completing suicide in Q1 was increasing each year.
- None of the suspected suicides in females during Q1 of 2020/21 were thought to be linked either directly or indirectly to Covid-19
- The restrictions in place due to Covid-19 may have contributed to the lower numbers of older females (only one aged over 50) completing suicide in Q1 of the current performance year. However, low incidences of suicide were also experienced in females in this age group in 2019/20 with a total of three aged over 50.



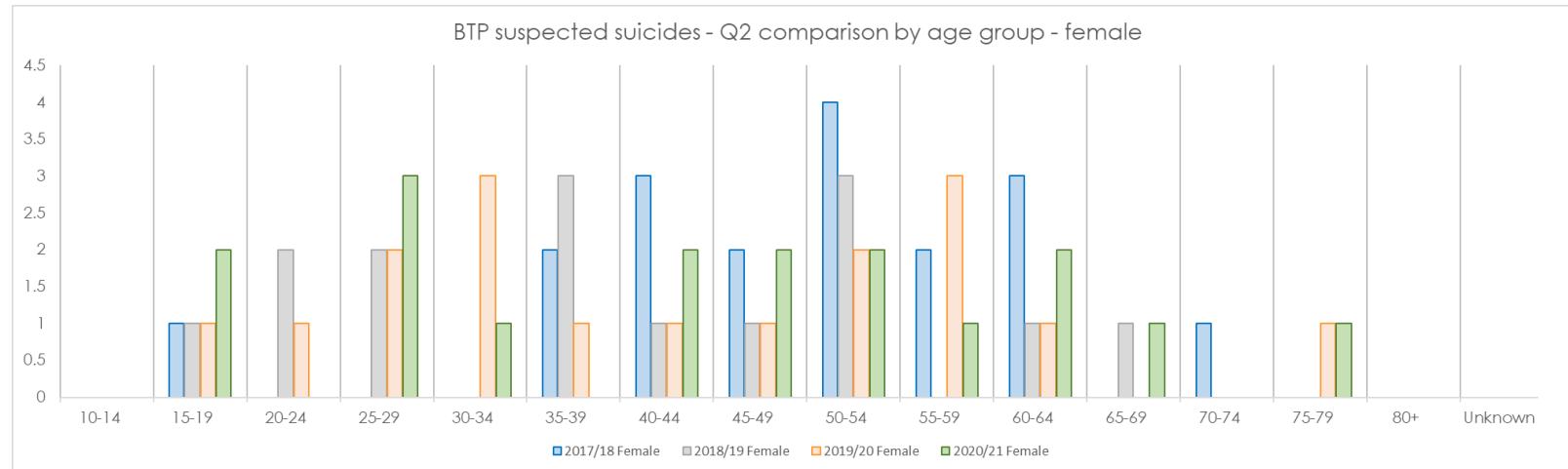
BTP suspected suicides – age and gender

Q2 July – Sept yearly comparison



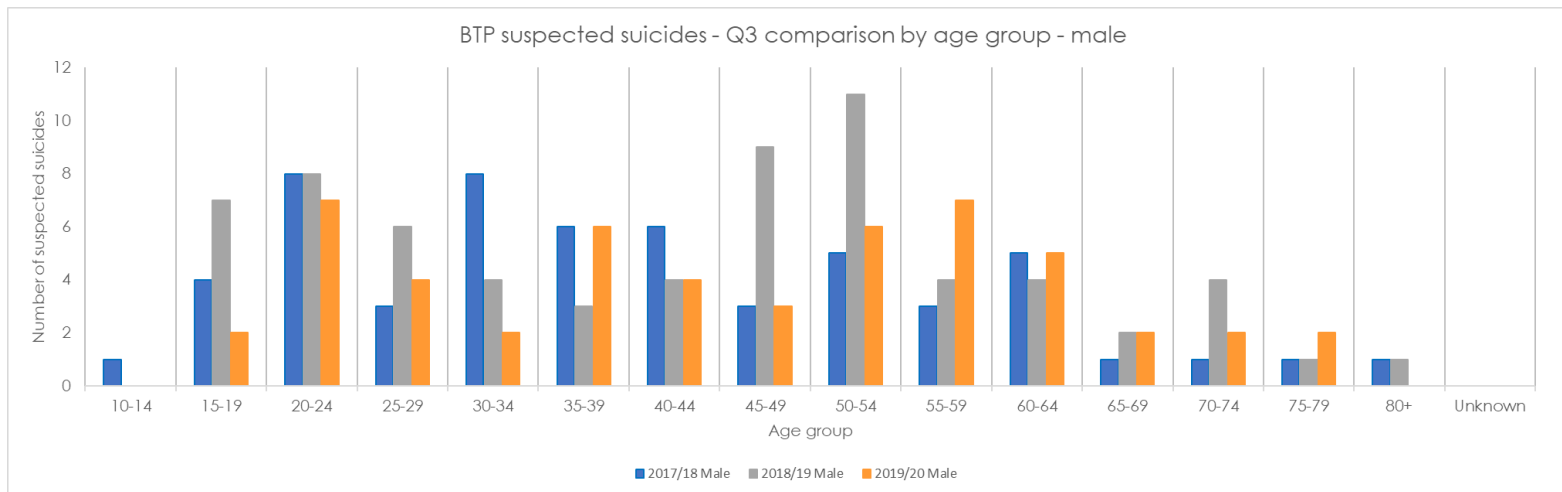
- Suspected suicides in males aged under 25 during Q2 has been increasing year on year whilst those aged 45 to 55 have reduced in number.
- There has been a shift from a peak within the 30-34 age group in 2017/18 to the 35-39 age group during Q2 of 2019/20, although this has not been replicated in the current performance year.
- Whilst the number of older males (aged 70+) completing suicides appears to have reduced, we are experiencing a greater number of those aged 55 to 70 using the rail network as a means of completing suicide.
- The number of suspected suicides of males in Q2 of 2020/21 was 53, around 90% of the volumes seen in previous years.
- Nine of the male suicides in Q2 2020/21 were thought to be indirectly attributable to Covid-19.

- The number of females of each age group completing suicide in this quarter is subject to minor fluctuations but historically tended to peak between the ages of 35 and 60.
- There appears to have been a significant shift towards younger females (aged 15 to 35) since 2017/18
- Since 2017/18 the overall numbers of females completing suicide in Q2 have changed by one or two each year.
- Work issues were cited as a risk factor in two of the three 25 to 29 year olds. One of the teenage females was experiencing relationship and family issues and had previously been the victim of an alleged sexual assault, as well as experiencing cyber bullying.
- Around 80% of the females who completed suicide between 2017/18 and September 2020 were known to have MH issues compared with 62% of males



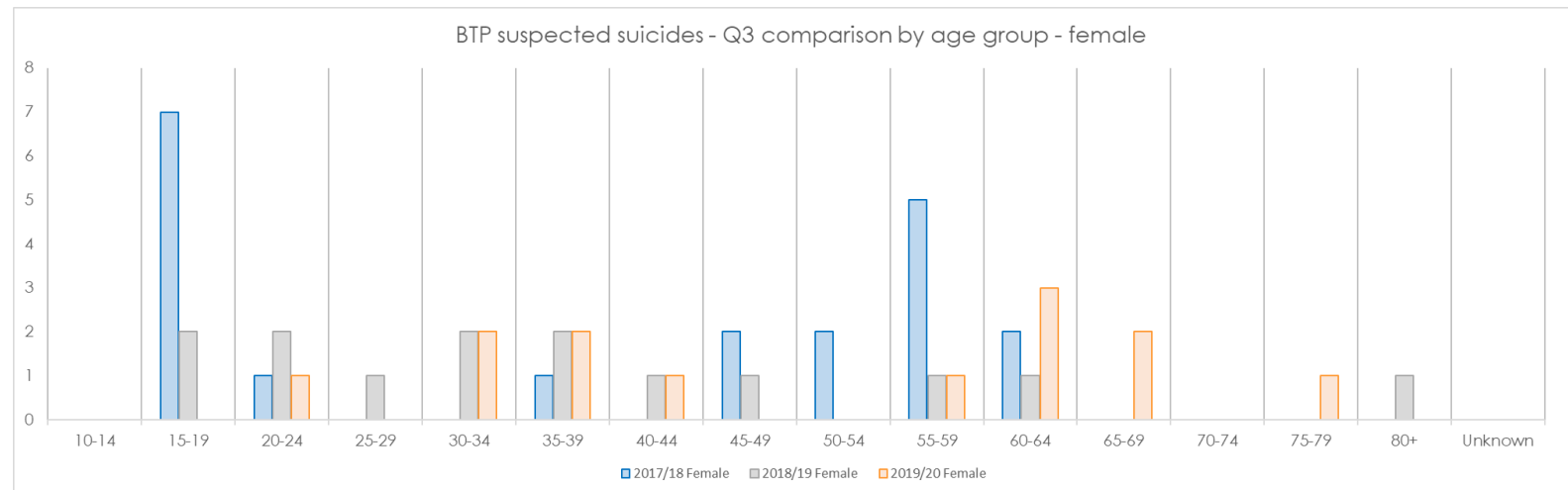
BTP suspected suicides – age and gender

Q3 Oct – Dec yearly comparison



- 2018/19 saw a significant increase in suspected suicides amongst males, particularly those aged 45 to 55 in Q3. This reduced back to previous levels in 2019/20.
- The 2019/20 Q3 peaks were experienced in younger males aged 20 to 24 and those aged 50 to 65, and there were fewer in the 30 to 34 age group who completed suicide.
- Fewer teenage males were the subjects of suspected suicide incidents in Q3 of 2019/20 compared with previous years.

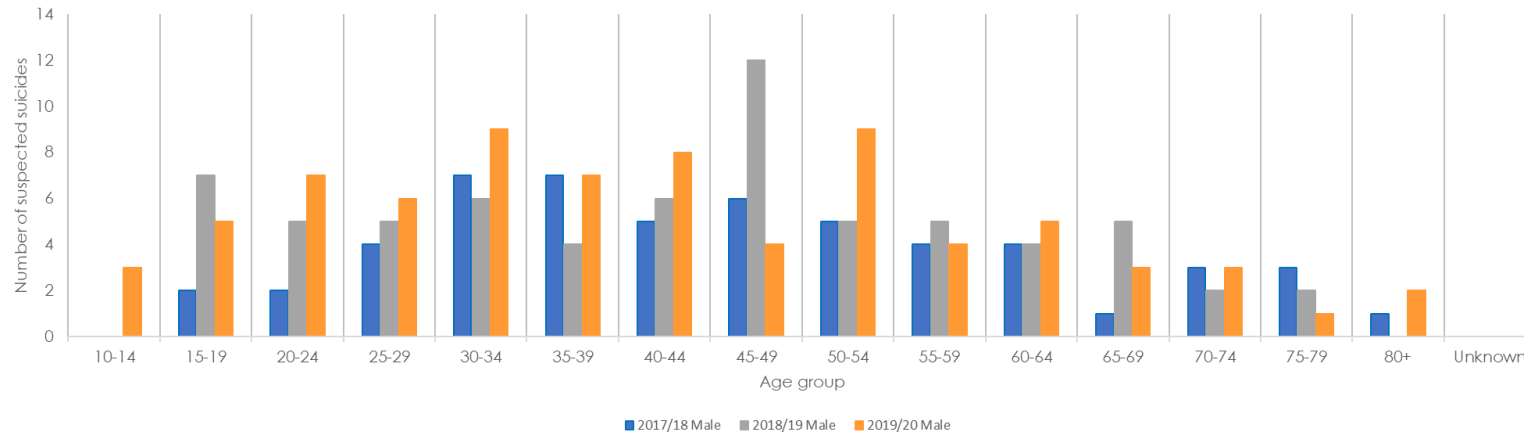
- Recent data shows that there is a relatively even spread of suspected suicide incidents across all female age categories compared with peaks in the late teens and mid-50s in Q3 2017/18
- The number of older females completing suicide in this quarter has increased, although the numbers are very small and may just be outliers rather than a trend.
- Since 2017/18 the overall numbers of females completing suicide in Q3 have been reducing, with the most significant reduction experienced in the 15-19 age category, specifically with 18 and 19 year olds.



BTP suspected suicides – age and gender

Q4 Jan - Mar yearly comparison

BTP suspected suicides - Q4 comparison by age group - male



- Q4 of 2019/20 saw an increased number of males involved in suspected suicides on the rail network, up to 76 from 54 in 2017/18 (41%). This is particularly evident in the younger age categories. Most significantly, three males aged 14 and three aged 16 completed suicide in this period.
- One third of all male suicides in the 2019/20 performance year occurred in Q4. This is not in line with previous years which were more evenly spread and didn't display significant seasonality differences.
- Just 55% of males in Q4 of 2019/20 were known to have had MH issues. This is lower than the average amongst males in the year of 58%.
- Common risk factors amongst the younger population with no known MH history included substance abuse and victims and suspects of sexual assault.

- Females in their thirties have more frequently completed suicide on the rail network in Q4 of 2019/20 than in the same period in previous years. There appears to have been movement away from the younger age categories in this period.
- There have been two females aged 65 to 69 who completed suicide in this quarter in 2019/20, after only one in the previous two years combined. The low numbers involved do not make this significant but is something to monitor in the coming months.
- Since 2017/18 the overall numbers of females completing suicide in Q4 have been reducing by two each year.
- One transfemale aged 40 to 44 completed suicide in Q4 2019/20.

BTP suspected suicides - Q4 comparison by age group - female

