

Celebrities appeal to media to change how suicide is reported

<p>Notes &amp; Cues:</p>	<p>Article:</p> <p>Public figures including politicians, authors and actors are appealing for change in the way the country talks about suicide.</p> <p>Author Ian Rankin, London mayor Sadiq Khan, broadcaster Stephen Fry and DJ Lauren Laverne are among 130 signatories to a letter calling on the nation’s media to lead the way in transforming how suicide is covered.</p> <p>The letter, which has been backed by cross-party MPs and mental health organisations Samaritans and Mind, states there should be an end to the use of the phrase “commit suicide”, which suggests suicide is a crime and suicidal thoughts are a sin, even though it has not been a crime in the UK since 1961.</p> <p>This outdated form of words can imply suicide is a “selfish, cowardly, criminal or irreligious act rather than the manifestation of extreme mental distress and unbearable pain”, the letter states, and proposes the alternative description “died by suicide”.</p> <p>The letter says: “We should not describe a suicide as ‘easy’, ‘painless’, ‘quick’ or ‘effective’ and we should remember to look at the long-term consequences of failed suicide attempts, not forgetting the significant life-long pain for those left behind when someone does take their own life.”</p> <p>It adds that reports of celebrity deaths carry greater risk of encouraging others due to over-identification by vulnerable people. Citing the suicide of US actor Robin Williams, it said a recent study identified a 10% increase in people killing themselves after his death. “This emphasises the responsibility that we all have when it comes to talking about suicide, ” it said.</p>
<p>Summary:</p>	