

Somerset County Council
Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee –
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Self-harm Update

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Cabinet Member: Christine Lawrence

Division and Local Member: All

1. Summary

- 1.1.** At the December 2018 Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee members considered the Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2018 – Emotional Health and Wellbeing - Looking through the Lens of Self-Harm. The Report looked at the issue of emotional resilience, through the lens of self-harm. It investigated emergency hospital admissions for self-harm and found the increase in admissions is particularly driven by rising rates for girls and young women aged between 10 and 24. Rates were found to particularly peak at around the age of 15 and were made up predominately of single admissions.

The more important message was that the pattern of self-harm seen in Somerset tells us something about the emotional distress which young people are experiencing. There is far more to be done to understand the level of emotional resilience, particularly that of our children and young people. There is a need to develop a greater understanding of self-harming behaviour, and what support is needed to help young people, their parents, teachers and others to better promote positive emotional health and wellbeing and resilience.

A series of eight recommendations were made.

The report was accepted, and it was requested that a further update be considered at the June meeting.

- 1.2.** This project links to the County Vision in the following ways:

- The work will be focussed on improving people's lives.
- The work will encourage resilient, well-connected and compassionate communities working to reduce inequalities.
- The work will collaborate with partners to ensure they actively work together for the benefit of our residents, communities and businesses and the environment in which we all live.

The service will provide the right information, advice and guidance to help service users help themselves and target support to those who need it most.

2. Issues for consideration / Recommendations

- 2.1.** A multi-agency self-harm steering group has been set up and led by Public Health and Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) mental health commissioners. The group has Terms of Reference and an emerging action

plan. It reports to the Children and Young People (CYP) emotional wellbeing and mental health Collaborative Group as part of the Children's Trust Plan (objective 3) and the Suicide Prevention Partnership Board.

The Steering group is leading the self-harm specific aspects of the recommendations from the report and Members are asked to consider and comment on the progress made.

An update relating to each of the 8 recommendations follows.

Recommendation 1

We need to bring the issue of emotional resilience and self-harm into the open to help reduce the stigma associated with it. Talking openly about the issue will help people to access the right support when they need it.

Update:

In June 2018 Somerset County Council launched the Somerset Wellbeing Framework which provides schools with the guidance and support to develop a 'whole school approach to mental health. This means that schools look at every aspect of school life in relation to wellbeing including the curriculum, the environment, pupils, staff and parents too.

The Somerset Wellbeing Framework will support schools to continue the good work they are already doing to promote the wellbeing of children and young people but with the added support of online tools to record and monitor progress, support from the Public Health Team and a process that largely focuses on building resilient and mentally healthy young adults who, if they need it, can access the right support at the right time. Since the launch of the framework over sixty-seven schools are using the whole school approach

The CCG commission the SHARE (Schools, Health and Resilience Education) service. 8256 students, 388 parents have been involved.

Public Health are funding a series of self-harm awareness sessions to schools and allied professionals being delivered by the Educational Psychology service

Public Health have developed a Mental Health Toolkit which provides information and support about mental health and emotion wellbeing. It is designed to support staff in schools and colleges but also offers advice and information for anyone who has responsibility for children and young people, including parents. It includes information about:

- Mental Health Services in Somerset
- Self-harm guidance – to be upgraded and re-launched in the autumn
- Dealing with traumatic incidents
- Websites and support organisations. Go to:

www.cypsomersethealth.org/mental_health_toolkit

Recommendation 2

There is a need to develop more accessible guidance and information about self-harm. This needs to be supported by increased knowledge, confidence and skills in responding to a situation of self-harm both for families, schools and health and care services.

Update:

Through funding from NHS England and Somerset CCG a Schools Self-harm project has launched. There is one worker in place, Kate Rufus, to be joined by a second worker.

Part of their brief is to develop more accessible guidance and information. The first phase is to develop a shared protocol which is in draft format together with a new early intervention pathway. Copies of drafts available on request. Once completed it is proposed all key stakeholders will sign up to the protocol and then will be launched and promoted.

Recommendation 3

All schools should adopt the Somerset Wellbeing Framework to support and promote positive emotional health and wellbeing and, where appropriate, could consider developing school based self-harm policies.

Update: See response to recommendation one.

As part of the Schools self-harm project it is part of their role to promote the development of a school's self-harm policy. A draft policy is part of the protocol package. To date the worker has been into thirty-four schools to introduce the project and hear more about the needs of the schools. All the schools have asked for training.

Four schools have signed up to pilot some new training devised by the self-harm project

Five schools have booked the project for their September INSET days

Recommendation 4

Health and care services need to ensure that the mental health of children and young people is given greater prominence, ensuring that prevention and early intervention is addressed as well as treatment.

Update:

Through the CYP Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Collaborative Group, partners have been fully engaged in developing a whole system-wide programme to improving the social, emotional and mental health of CYP, entitled 'Resilient Young People'

Recommendation 5

The importance of developing stronger individuals, families and communities has to be at the heart of developing resilience. A joined-up approach to this would provide a far greater impact than organisations operating independently. A more proportional approach will be needed, focusing particularly on addressing the needs of individuals, families and communities living in more challenging circumstances.

Update:

The Improving Lives Strategy (2018-2029) embraces the spirit of this recommendation. Under the Future in Mind Strategy there is a Stronger Communities theme to help deliver this recommendation.

Recommendation 6

Given increased national investment in mental health, Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group has a significant opportunity to invest in improving the emotional health and wellbeing. Working closely with local authorities and schools, investment in developing emotional resilience and early intervention is paramount.

Update:

The CYP emotional wellbeing and mental collaborative group has been working with the CCG and submitted last week a bid to be a trailblazer sight for increased early intervention services based around education, with additional resources to fund Education Wellbeing Practitioners and a designated lead in 44 schools across the County.

Recommendation 7

There is a need for us to deepen our understanding of self-harm practices and understand more about the emotional resilience of children and young people in Somerset and what can be done to improve it.

Update:

A bid has been submitted to NHS England to fund the setting up of a self-harm register to improve the data we have to understand self-harming behaviour in children and young people.

The Self-harm steering group are working on a baseline data set including monitoring which schools young people attend who are admitted for self-harm.

The work of the Schools Self-Harm Project is talking and listening to a range of stakeholders to help develop our understanding.

Recommendation 8

Finally, and above all, we need to continue to listen to what children and young

people are telling us about their experiences and to work with them in designing the solutions.

Update:

The CAMHS Participation Group have been engaged with the self-harm schools project and continue to share their experiences and ideas with the Project Workers.