

Health and Wellbeing Board

23 July 2015



Children & Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Review of Self Harm by Young People

Report of Ann Whitton, Overview & Scrutiny Officer (CYP), Assistant Chief Executive, Durham County Council

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to present the key messages and recommendations of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee working group review report on Self Harm by Young People attached at Appendix 2. A copy of the full report is attached at Appendix 3.

Background

2. The Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee added Self-harm by Young People to its work programme following its refresh at their meeting in June 2014. This was because the committee were concerned about the number of young people in County Durham who self-harm, especially those who do not come into contact with any support services. The committee wanted to raise awareness and understanding of self-harm among young people and adults.
3. The terms of reference for the review were agreed by the Committee at its meeting held on 25th September 2014. The objective of the review is to raise awareness of self-harm by young people to young people and adults involved in their lives and to investigate how early intervention and support can be increased following five key lines of inquiry:
 - What policies and practices does Durham County Council have in place to help, support, prevent and intervene early where looked after children and young people self-harm?
 - How reliable/accurate performance data is and what does it tell us about self-harm in this area compared to regional and national data.
 - What services are available in the community for young people with anxieties or mental health problems to talk to people and how accessible are these services?
 - How are schools addressing students' issues that may lead them to self-harm? What prevention and early intervention methods do they use?
 - How can awareness of self-harm be increased among young people, parents and carers and what are the signs to look out for?

4. The committee set up a working group of 14 members and gathered evidence over six meetings from key parties including:
 - Public Health.
 - Children & Adult Services.
 - North of England Commissioning Support Unit.
 - Durham Dales, Easington and Sedgefield Clinical Commissioning Group.
 - North Durham Clinical Commissioning Group.
 - Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services.
 - School Nurses.
 - Investing in Children.
 - Disc Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Young People's Group.
 - Representative from Framwellgate School Durham.
 - Representative from Educational Psychologists Team.
 - Representatives from Sunderland pact Support Group.
 - Representative from Mental Health North East.
 - Youth Leader and Young People from Bowburn Youth Club.
5. The review makes seven recommendations. They relate to:
 - Internet safety.
 - Development of information pages for parents/carers.
 - Update and refresh of school policies on emotional health and wellbeing; and a reminder to governors of services that can be bought in which address emotional health and wellbeing.
 - Consideration of how to engage with parents and carers to advise on the importance of good mental health and the warning signs.
 - Consideration to a single multi-agency pathway and registry of self-harm.
 - Consideration to the role youth workers/leaders can play in providing emotional and wellbeing support to young people in schools.
 - Consideration to providing basic mental health and emotional wellbeing awareness training to all staff who regularly come into contact with young people.
6. The report was presented to Cabinet at their meeting on 15 April 2015 and a systematic review that will give detail of progress made on the report's recommendations will come back to Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their November meeting.

Recommendation

7 The Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to:

- Receive the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee review report on Self harm by Young People.
- Note the key messages and recommendations.

Contact: Tom Gorman, Corporate Scrutiny & Performance Manager, Durham County Council

Tel: 03000 268027

Ann Whitton, Overview & Scrutiny Officer, Durham County Council

Tel: 03000 268143

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance

No implications

Staffing

No implications

Risk

No implications

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

The review focuses specifically on age as a protected characteristic looking at self-harm in children and young people. The review also looked at lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people as a group who are proportionately more predisposed to self-harm than compared with peers of the same age. The review report takes into consideration Equality and Diversity; an Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and is available on request.

Accommodation

No implications

Crime and Disorder

The review report received information on the impact of alcohol on young people's offending.

Human Rights

No implications

Consultation

No implications

Procurement

No implications

Disability Issues

The report addresses the mental health and emotional wellbeing of young people

Legal Implications

No implications

APPENDIX 2 - KEY MESSAGES

- Performance data relates to a very small number of young people who self-harm. This data is limited in County Durham which is the same regionally and nationally.
- DCC and partners do have plans, policies and strategies in place which address mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- Looked after children in County Durham are well served and have access to lots of services
- Identified vulnerable groups are more likely to self-harm
- Some adults over react to self-harm which places a barrier between them and the young person
- Young people look for support online before speaking to trusted adults but online sites are not always helpful.
- There are lots of services that provide support to young people with mental health and emotional wellbeing problems but there is no single multi agency pathway or registry of self-harm.
- Lots of services are commissioned to support young people who self-harm but most of these services are targeted or specialist services that require a referral.
- CAMHS Primary Mental Health Workers work in schools, GP surgeries and the wider children's workforce to provide prevention and early intervention services.
- A single point of contact for mental health services would ensure that all incidents are logged and picked up by the appropriate service in a timely manner.
- From 2015 health visiting and school nursing services will become part of Public Health function of the Council.
- Currently all schools receive relatively the same service from School Nursing Service but different schools have different needs and therefore the service should be tailored to fit the needs within the school.
- Each school's response to self-harm is different
- Best practice suggests a whole school approach to good mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- Not all schools have the capacity or resources to offer the same package of emotional wellbeing to students.
- Young people need to be aware of e-safety
- Governing bodies should be encouraged to refresh and update their policies and procedures on emotional wellbeing
- Internet safety is a major concern and should be addressed at all levels in school, in the community and at home.
- All adults who come into contact with young people should have mental health and emotional wellbeing training.
- Parents and schools need to have a mutual level of communication in relation to their children's mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- It is important to listen to what young people are saying and not trivialise or minimise what they are saying
- Young people prefer to talk to other young people
- Self-harm needs to be talked about to dispel myths and break stigma.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. That in relation to internet safety, Cabinet place restrictions to limit internet access on personal computers in Council run buildings including libraries to ensure that sites which glorify self-harm and relevant social chat sites are prohibited access. In addition that Cabinet write to the Mental Health Minister to ask for search engine sites to recognise their moral social duty to filter search results.
- B. That the Cabinet give consideration to developing specific pages for parents/carers giving information on preventing self-harm and how to support their children. Also that the pages are designed by or with direct involvement of young people who have knowledge of self-harm and emotional health and wellbeing such as help4teens.co.uk.
- C. That the Cabinet highlight to school governing bodies:
 - i. The necessity to refresh and update all emotional health and wellbeing policies on a regular basis specifically those that relate to self-harm.
 - ii. The range of emotional health and wellbeing services that can be bought in to support children and young people especially those provided for free by Public Health.
- D. That Cabinet request the Corporate Director of Children and Adult Services, the Director of Public Health, the Local Safeguarding Children Board, the Joint Health and Wellbeing Board and the Children and Families Partnership give consideration as to how to engage with parents of children to advise on the importance of good mental health and the warning signs to look out for in relation to risk taking behaviours.
- E. That through discussions at the Health and Wellbeing Board, appropriate commissioners and providers give consideration to the establishment of a single point of contact for services that offer mental health service and support which would ensure that all incidents are logged and picked up by the appropriate service in a timely manner and in doing so create a single multi-agency pathway and registry of self-harm.
- F. That Cabinet give consideration to how youth services leaders/workers, school nurses and health visitors can have a role in schools in relation to emotional health and wellbeing support to young people.
- G. That Cabinet give consideration to providing all adults (School Staff, Children's Home Staff, Youth Services Staff) who come into contact with young people on a regular basis receive basic mental health and emotional wellbeing awareness training.