

# **Self-harm workforce development project for the children and young people's workforce.**

**Thinking together more critically and  
carefully about self-harm in children and  
young people.**

Executive Summary

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Children and young people's mental health has been identified as a key strategic priority (The NHS Long Term Plan, 2019). In response to new National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance around self-harm (NICE, 2022) as well as local challenges, work to scope the local landscape was commissioned across Bracknell Forest to think carefully and critically, in conjunction with the workforce, about self-harm in children and young people.

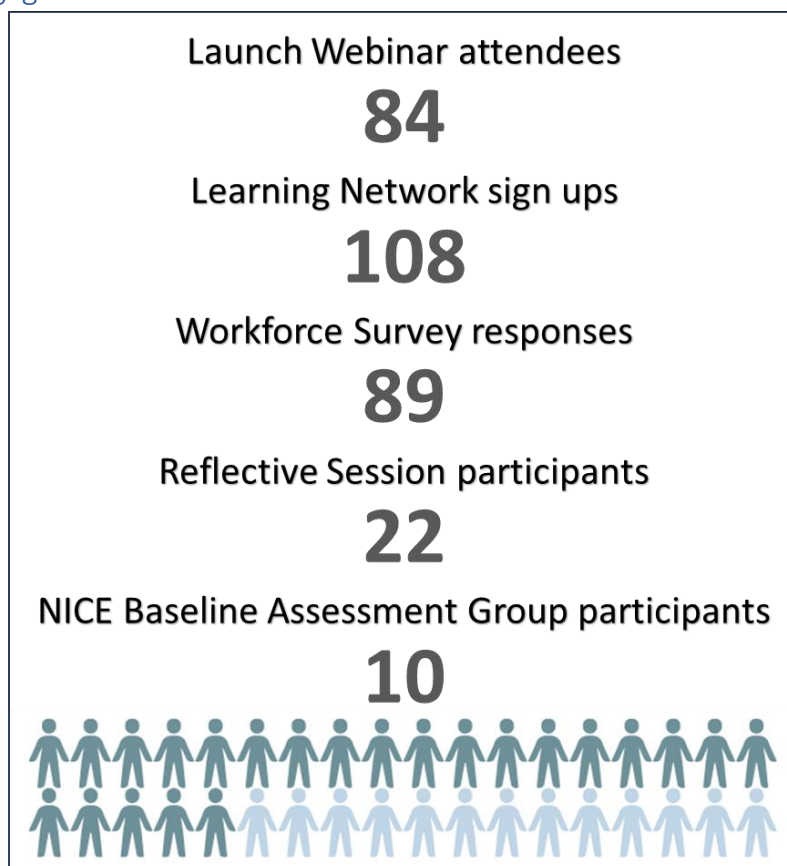
The project was funded and supported by Bracknell Forest public health as part of the Health and Wellbeing strategy 2022-2026 ([Bracknell Forest Health and Wellbeing Strategy \(bracknell-forest.gov.uk\)](https://bracknell-forest.gov.uk)). The Oxford Academic Health Science Network (Oxford AHSN) in partnership with the University of Oxford aimed to build an understanding of self-harm amongst the workforce using a multi-agency approach.

### What We Did

Between February and June 2023, the following phases of work were conducted:

- Phase 1 – Bringing the workforce together via introductory webinar for the project launch on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2023
- Phase 2 – Workforce survey
- Phase 3 – Review of existing data specific to Bracknell Forest
- Phase 4 – Cross sector reflective sessions
- Phase 5 – Rapid review of grey literature
- Phase 6 – Review and completion of the NICE baseline assessment tool for self-harm with clinical and professional leads across sectors in Bracknell Forest

### Workforce Engagement



## Emerging Themes

After the phases of the project were complete, information was aggregated for review and the following themes were identified across the project phases.

- The need for reliable, consistent and relevant training appropriate to sector and role
- Shared understanding of psychosocial assessment
- Support for parents in responding to and understanding of self-harm
- Risk factors
- Hidden harm
- Thresholds and expectations
- Bespoke vs recommended resources

## Recommendations

### Training

- A review of training across all sectors to ensure self-harm training is a mandatory requirement and tailored to the sector and role people work in.

### Resources – staffing

- Further understanding of the gap and perceived need in schools where there is an absence of Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) in educational settings and how a space for mental health advice can be facilitated.
- Consideration of the sustainability, training and remit of Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) roles in schools.
- A need for better communication and liaison between services and across sectors.
- A shared understanding of when a psychosocial assessment should be conducted based on NICE guidance for self-harm (2022) and insight from CAMHS service leads.

### Supervision, process and policy

- A need to ensure consistency in supervision arrangements across educational settings to support those who regularly work with children and young people who self-harm and therefore fully meet NICE guidance (2022) for supervising those in non-specialist settings.
- Consider participant feedback from reflective sessions and NICE baseline group regarding the value of cross sector reflective space and whether this experience can be replicated for workforce development.
- Support for process and policy development for those in education to feel equipped to meaningfully apply mental health policy.

### Resources – information giving

- A need for locally agreed signposting resources, including digital tools, that have been reviewed as age and clinically appropriate.
- Consideration of specific resources for young people with disability and for friends of young people who self-harm.
- Consideration of specific resources for parents and carers
- Recommended resources should be regularly checked for accessibility, including active weblinks.
- Parents, teachers and professionals should be provided with relevant guidance on social media platforms.

## Conclusion

This project has highlighted some tangible recommendations for consideration to improve provision for the workforce in supporting children and young people who self-harm, which are informed by direct workforce engagement alongside review of the NICE guidance for self-harm and Baseline Assessment tool (NICE, 2022). There is significant overlap within the recommendations and therefore a continued multi-agency collaboration will be necessary when considering implementation of any changes within the current landscape, including those who were not represented within the project.