

Scotland's Mental Health First Aid – Young People

Year 3 Final Report

Rationale

The Scottish Government's 'Mental Health Strategy for Scotland 2012 – 2015' details the main challenges facing Scotland around preventing mental illness and promoting mental wellbeing, and sets out a range of mental health improvement commitments. A number of these commitments relate specifically to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/Services/Mental-Health/Strategy>). Scottish Government is currently reviewing its mental health strategy, but within their vision is a recognition of the need to support young people's mental health particularly in terms of prevention.

Furthermore, in November 2014 the Scottish Government pledged a £15 million spending boost over the next three years for mental health services. This investment will see the establishment of a Mental Health Innovation fund which will "look at better ways to deliver services, particularly at primary care level, and ensure services are working together to help people who are in distress, or experiencing trauma. It will help people get better help at an early stage of their illness and also improve quality through training and development".

Schools have an important role to play in promoting mental wellbeing and in identifying and providing initial support for children and young people who are experiencing mental ill-health.

Education Scotland, in partnership with NHS Health Scotland, funded two years of training in Scotland's Mental Health First Aid: Young People nationally in secondary school communities. It is acknowledged that local authorities have a range of initiatives and approaches to support mental health and mental wellbeing already in place. Therefore, it is intended that the support provided through the strategy and project will complement this.

During this third year of training, NHS Scotland was unable to commit funding towards the project meaning a reduced number of local authorities could participate.

Curriculum for Excellence

Curriculum for Excellence identifies some aspects of Health and wellbeing as responsibilities of all that should be developed across learning and as part of the whole school ethos:

"The responsibilities of all include each practitioner's role in establishing open, positive, supportive relationships across the school community, where children and young people will feel that they are listened to, and where they feel secure in their ability to discuss sensitive aspects of their lives; in promoting a climate in which children and young people feel safe and secure;... and by being sensitive and responsive to the wellbeing of each child and young person." (Curriculum for Excellence: Principles and Practices: Health and wellbeing across learning paper, p. 2).

It goes on to state that "members of staff are often best placed to identify even minor changes of mood in a child or young person which could reflect an important emotional, social or mental health issue with which that child or young person needs help or support. It is important that children and young people feel that they can share their anxieties with an appropriate individual who has the skills, rapport, responsibility and the time to listen and to help, or can identify appropriate sources of support." (Curriculum for Excellence: Principles and Practices: Health and wellbeing across learning paper, p. 2).

This project embraces the above philosophy and encourages local authorities and schools to identify members of the school community who are best placed to identify that a pupil might be struggling with a mental health issue. School community members might include the school's

management team, the teaching staff, the support staff (including administration and janitorial staff) or others working to support the school community, e.g. after school care workers or youth workers.

Getting It Right For Every Child

As with Curriculum for Excellence, Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) has the wellbeing of children and young people at its heart. The values and principles of GIRFEC reflect the necessity of effective partnerships amongst professionals and with families, and call for “**a competent workforce to promote children and young people’s wellbeing**”.

(<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright/background>)

Scotland’s Mental Health First Aid: Young People is placed within Tier 1 of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/12/20383/48321>

It “offers basic general information about mental health problems. The knowledge presented and understanding developed in the course helps to remove stigma and fear and to give confidence in approaching a young person in distress.” (<http://youngpeople.smhfa.com>)

Year 1; The Pilot Project

Five Local Authorities were identified as being in most need of immediate support, based on the Scottish Index Of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) and on figures provided by NHS on the number of professionals trained in ‘Scotland’s Mental Health First Aid: Young People’ within the Authority:

- West Dunbartonshire
- North Ayrshire
- Renfrewshire
- Clackmannanshire
- North Lanarkshire

This was successfully evaluated in January 2016.

Year 2

In Year 2 a further 5 local authorities were identified to take part in the next phase of funding. They were identified as being in most need of immediate support, based on the Scottish Index Of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), suicide rates and on figures provided by NHS on the number of professionals trained in ‘Scotland’s Mental Health First Aid: Young People’ within the Authority;

- Shetland
- Highland
- Argyll & Bute
- Dumfries & Galloway
- Scottish Borders

This was successfully evaluated in November 2016

In Year 3, a further 3 local authorities were identified to take part in the next phase of funding. Again, they were identified as being in most need of immediate support, based on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) and suicide rates.

- Dundee City Council
- South Lanarkshire Council
- Inverclyde Council

Each Local Authority was awarded a grant of £2000 to target support and training to school communities in most need, thus improving outcomes for learners in the most deprived areas or from particular vulnerable groups. Spending was as follows:

Authority	Spending
Dundee	2 Staff to attend training on the mainland Flights, accommodation and cover Planning day for roll out £2000
South Lanarkshire	Training for Trainers by Health Scotland Staff (Training, travel and subsistence for trainers and team) Implementation Plan Created by Team Initial Training completed by ASG (Travel and subsistence for team and pilot group) On going training targeted monthly £2000
Inverclyde	Unfortunately, Inverclyde were unable to secure a training provider within the timescale of the project £0

Those undertaking the training experience a 14 hour course, split into three sections:

- Part 1: 1-2 hours online session, covering relevant policies and procedures
- Part 2: 7 hours as a modular course, delivered face to face - a skills practice intervention training day (this can be delivered in 1.5 hour sessions, 2 half days or 1 full day)
- Part 3: 2-3 hours online session, using DVD clips with a reflective log to be completed

The main objectives were as follows

- those undertaking the training (identified members of secondary school staff and partners) will develop the knowledge, skills and confidence required to approach and give initial help to children and young people experiencing mental health problems
- a greater number of pupils experiencing mental health problems will receive initial support when needed
- support for learners from the most deprived areas and from particular vulnerable groups as local authorities will be able to target support to the school communities that need it most (support will be organised in such a way as to complement existing mental health and mental wellbeing training and initiatives within the local authority)

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