

School age children and young people Self-Harm Awareness Pathway

A Guide to help you decide who to ask for help to choose the right support and service:

Self care

Self care is the most effective way to support children, young people and their families:



Many emotional health difficulties can be improved within the home with parent/carer involvement:

- Teaching emotional regulation
- Mindfulness
- kooth.com
- Use of Decider Skills
- Promotion of apps (see end of document)
- Information on padlet (see end of document)
- Mental Health Support Team (MHST) promotional information where available
- Cumberland (inc Eden) Neurodiversity and Emotional Wellbeing (NDEW) Service website cumberlandfamilyhubs.org.uk/neurodiversity-and-emotional-wellbeing
- Westmorland and Furness Family Hubs website: wandffamilyhelp.org.uk/homepage-1
- Information and learning for children, young people and parents/carer's on emotional wellbeing at Togetherness (previously Solihull) - free code: WORDSWORTH togetherness.co.uk/pathway-library/

Getting advice

There is a lot of advice and support available for when needs are emerging:



Self harm type behaviours i.e. scratching, nail biting, changes in behaviour, acting out or withdrawing from activities:

- Primary Mental Health Worker 01539 742626 or via email: pmhw.mytime@barnardos.org.uk
- 0-19 Growing Healthy Services (including e-school nurse): Westmorland and Furness Tel: 03003 049039 or via email: hdf.spoc0-19waf@nhs.net Cumberland Tel: 03003 049029 or via email: hdf.spoc0-19cumberland@nhs.net For both areas you can arrange to speak to someone via the website hdfchildrenshealthservice.co.uk/our-services
- Mental Health Support Team (MHST) where available
- Cumberland (inc Eden) NDEW Service Single Point of Contact for parents, carers, children (aged 0-19, or young people up to aged 25 with SEND), and professionals for early intervention and prevention advice and support for families related to neurodivergence or emotional wellbeing: cumberlandfamilyhubs.org.uk/ndew
- kooth.com
- Contact or signpost to child/young person's GP

Getting help

Getting help is to prevent the need for more help in the future:



More consistent and intensive self harm behaviours i.e. pulling out of hair, concealment, physical injury/ signs of pain/discomfort - wincing, cuts that are not healing and/or frequent wounds requiring first aid and actively bleeding:

- My Time: MyTimeNorthCumbria@barnardos.org.uk (including Eden) MyTimeSouthCumbria@barnardos.org.uk
- kooth.com
- Contact or signpost to child/young person's GP

Getting more help

Getting more help is to prevent admission to hospital and stabilisation to access getting help advice and self-care:



Self-harm is persistent, severe enough that treatment is needed i.e. stitches, glueing Self-Harm is interfering /impacting severely on daily life:

- Specialist support is needed due to enduring emotional difficulties and possible mental health disorder
- Specialist CAMHS Teams: West 01900 705800 East 01228 603017 South 01225 408660
- Where physical treatment is needed for stitches etc, please go to nearest Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC) or A&E or alternatively call 111 for advice.

Crisis Response

Expression of imminent risk to own life:



If anything is swallowed or inserted anywhere, immediate medical help from hospital is needed:

- Where a CYP's life or health is in immediate danger e.g. if they are a danger to themselves or have serious wound/s that won't stop bleeding. CALL 999 or take CYP to nearest Accident & Emergency Department
- Crisis Team: North 0800 6522865 South 0800 9530110
- For emergency situations contact 999 or take direct to A&E

Further advice, help and support for each column further in document

Keep encouraging parent/carer involvement and self-care when getting advice or more help from professionals where needed

Think Family: consider Early/Family Help to support wider needs of the family that may be impacting the child's emotional wellbeing and mental health:

Cumberland Children Advice & Support Service (CCASS): 0333 240 1727

Westmorland and Furness Multi Agency Children's Hub: 0300 373 2724



Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust



Lancashire & South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust



Westmorland & Furness Council

Working for Cumberland Council and Westmorland & Furness Council

Self-Harm comes in many different forms and often is part of a larger more complex picture of need. Sometimes it is really difficult to work out where a child or young person is on the pathway, and what support they may need. This guidance aims to help identify some of the indicators that you might see and what help and support they and you might need.

What is Self-Harm?

In its broadest sense, self-harm is any act carried out which causes harm to the “self”. Self-harm is any behaviour that results in physical harm, causing injuries or pain to your own body. It is not linked with suicidal intent. This behaviour is usually carried out in a deliberate and often hidden way. Self-harm is often a coping mechanism for some children and young people who have a need for emotional help and support.

How do people Self-Harm?

People self-harm in a variety of ways and sometimes do not even recognise they are doing harm to themselves. Self-harm is hurting yourself on purpose by:

- Alcohol misuse/ binge drinking
- Body hitting/ knocking/ punching
- Cutting
- Driving fast/ recklessly
- Drug misuse: illicit or prescription
- Disordered eating
- Overdoses
- Over exercising
- Pulling hair out
- Risky sexual behaviour
- Self-neglect
- Skin burning/ picking
- Deliberately throwing themselves downstairs or hitting themselves with heavy or sharp objects.

What can I do to help and what are the key things I should consider? What is the purpose of their self-harm?

It may be to:

- Help the young person cope or feel some sense of control
- Help them feel better? Are they trying to communicate something? Emotional distress?

It may be the young person wants something to happen and the level of intent and risk attached their behaviour is important to consider.

What do we mean by intent or risk of their self-harm?

A young person may be self-harming and often, this is to help them cope and so may only need advice or help to keep them safe. However, a young person may only hurt themselves once a month, but when they do, they are intending to seriously hurt themselves to end their life or to hospitalise themselves.

Have they plans to increase harm to themselves? Think about a Safety Plan and who else needs to know to help keep the young person safe as possible.

Key points to remember

- Where there is immediate physical risk to the young person that requires a medical intervention, the first priority is to secure that intervention (A&E attendance)
- Consider ‘Self-harm safety kits’ – we cannot ask a young person to stop as they may not have other ways of coping and may do something riskier. Self-harm and safety kits training can be found here: [every-life-matters.org.uk/training/](https://www.every-life-matters.org.uk/training/).



Remember: Communication and sharing of concerns are essential in keeping young people safe.

Professional Curiosity – What are you seeing in your role? What else can you think about? Who else can you ask? Who do you raise the concern with?

- Trust your instincts and ensure support is available for yourself and for those working with the child and the family as well as for the child themselves, whatever the level of need and stage you and the young person are at
- Check why the young person is self-harming – what is the end result they want?
- Ask the young person what the cause of their distress might be
- Ask your Family/Early Help officer for support, request a Team around the setting or school meeting, consult e-school nurse, speak to the Primary Mental Health Worker or discuss with your MHST if applicable
- What are the young person's networks, who do they feel safe with, who can they talk to, safe adults.

When should I/we be worried? What does escalation look like?

If the intent changes, for example by increasing in severity and/or the young person continues to or suddenly withdraws from support or peers.

Other things to think about:

- Start the conversation, reassure that there is help and support
- You and/or the young person may not understand why someone self-harms
- What else is going on to cause the behaviour?
- Is it a trend? What are they looking at – you tube, internet browsing, tik tok?
- Is it a group/peer issue?
- What might be impacting the young person for example LGBTQ or identity concerns?
- Who else is involved with the Family – Social Care, Targeted Youth Support, other health practitioners? Is there another plan already in place for that child or family?
- Look after yourself: be aware of your own feelings and responses.

Safeguarding: Help and protection: Family Help

There is a duty of care to ensure that whoever this child or young person is going home to is aware of the self-harming behaviour.

This will help to share the risk and make sure everyone is supported.

It is also a good idea to have a self harm support/safety plan in place to help identify what helps and who can help.

You can find out more about these at [mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/self-harm/helping-yourself-if-you-self-harm/](https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/self-harm/helping-yourself-if-you-self-harm/)

Please make sure you also:

- Follow your own Safeguarding procedures and let the DSL or Safeguarding Lead know about the situation
- Check if there is another plan already in place for that child or family - early help, safety plan, EHCP
- Think about who else is involved with the Family – Targeted Youth Support, Social Care, Educational Psychology CAMHS, other health practitioners
- Think about other people who need to be involved. For example if issues with disordered eating, make a referral to the GP so that physical health needs can be monitored
- What support does the family need to keep their child safe?
- Think about how have they managed to harm themselves. Is there a safeguarding risk if a younger child?
- Think about who else needs to be aware of, be part of, be responsible for any Safety Plan.

Further guidance can be found here: [cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk/](https://www.cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk/).

Remember: Communication and sharing of concerns are essential in keeping young people safe.

What do we mean when we use these words or phrases?

Assumptions

Children and young people have unique insights and information to offer. They are experts in their own lives. Listening to them can challenge assumptions, provide insights into their capabilities and raise expectations.

Capacity

Capacity or mental capacity is the ability to make decisions for oneself, including being able to make decisions about support. Sometimes people may 'lack capacity' because of certain illnesses, injuries, learning disabilities or mental health problems.

Confidence building

Children and young people need time and support to feel they matter. Their confidence grows when their ideas, feelings and abilities are treated with respect.

Confidentiality

Any information a young person provides must be kept private unless they consent to it being shared with other people.

If there are concerns about a young person's safety or the safety of someone else, confidentiality may not be possible or appropriate. Always try to tell the young person if you need to share their information with anyone else and why.

Consent

The young person must have the opportunity to say 'yes' to something that affects them. 'Informed consent' which means that the young person is fully informed and understands what they are saying yes to. If they are unable to consent because of their age or because they do not fully understand, you may need to ask family/carers to consent on the young person's behalf.

Crisis

A crisis in mental health is a situation requiring change. A crisis in this context often relates to suicidal urges or thoughts of seriously harm to oneself or someone else. Crises can be very unpleasant but can be an opportunity for real, positive change.

If you or someone you know is going through a crisis it's important to talk to someone and get urgent help.

Emotional wellbeing

This is about having the ability to understand the value of your emotions and use them to move forward in positive directions. It is about doing everything we can to effectively manage our thoughts, feelings and actions in a way that helps us function in our day to day lives.

Empowerment

Helping people to develop the skills, knowledge, belief and power to take charge of their lives, including being able to manage their own mental health and knowing when to seek support if they need it.

Information Sharing

At the earliest suitable time, there should be a discussion with the young person about who needs to know and why. The discussion should be explained in terms of seeking help from other professionals and agencies, and in making sure that those who need to know, for example parents, carers, other staff and professionals involved in their care, can be understanding and supportive.

Mental Health

Mental Health describes our emotional, psychological and social wellbeing. It affects our thinking, moods and behaviours. Everyone has mental health, and it is normal for mental health to change during times of stress. Positive mental health does not mean always being happy, but feeling empowered to talk about, cope with and overcome the things we might encounter in life. That way, we recover from our downturns and learn to take care of our minds in the same way we do our bodies.

Mental Health Problems

A mental health problem is when the way you're thinking, feeling or acting becomes difficult for you to cope with. Mental health problems can affect the way you think, feel and behave. They can affect anyone regardless of age, race, religion or income.

Protective factors

Protective factors are things in a person's life which can protect them from risks that can increase the chances of mental illness, or worsening mental health. Protective factors can be things like having good relationships with friends and family and being involved positively with the school and community.

Resilience

Resilience is the ability to cope with any difficult events and situations that happen in life, and how to go about recovering from them. We all have a certain amount of resilience and this can vary for all sorts of reasons. The good news is there are lots of resources to help young people take steps to increase their emotional and mental resilience.

Recovery

The process of helping you feel better or mentally well after a period of illness or experienced difficulties. However, in mental health recovery means different things to different people, and recovery is personal. What's important is building a life that is meaningful to the individual.

Risk assessment

Is an assessment to identify and highlight if there are any risks that may impact a young person or others. A risk assessment can identify if further support is needed, what the level of need and urgency is, and how these needs might be met.

Risk assessments can be immediate, and/or considered over time. It is important that risk assessments are shared and that a Safety Plan for the young person can be agreed and shared.

Risk factors

Risk factors are things that can increase the chances of mental health difficulties developing or worsening. These can be as a results of harmful experiences or current challenging circumstance.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding refers to protecting the right to live safely and to be free from abuse or neglect. Local authorities and schools have a legal duty to protect people who are experiencing or at risk of experiencing abuse or neglect.

Sign-posting

Sign-posting is when information regarding a service or services which may be helpful is given.

Trauma

Trauma can happen when a person has gone through a very stressful, frightening or distressing event. Traumatic events can happen at any age and have a lasting impact. Sometimes people are impacted quickly following a traumatic event, whereas others aren't affected for a long time.

Wellbeing

A state of being happy, healthy and comfortable. This involves both physical and mental wellbeing, both are equally important.



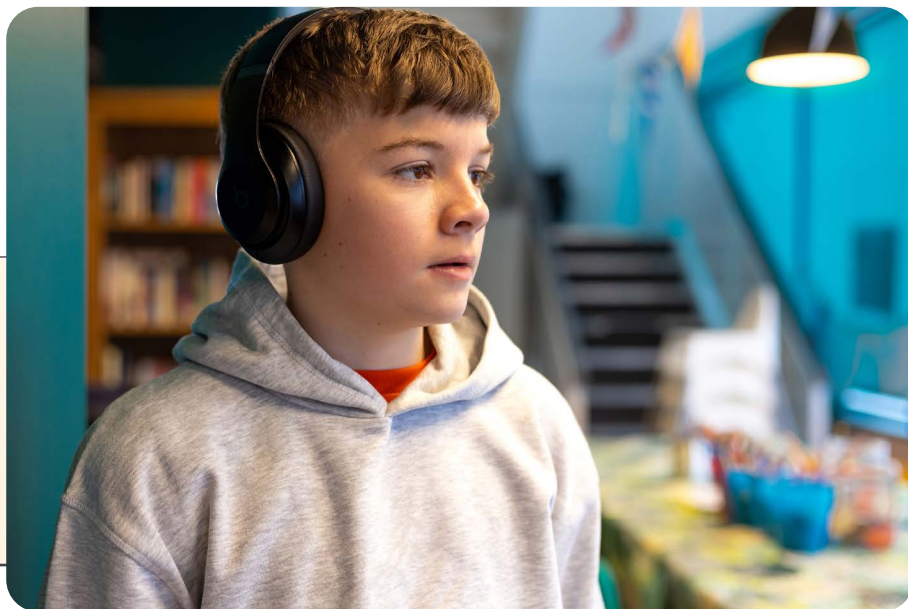
Remember: Communication and sharing of concerns are essential in keeping young people safe.

The following should be considered comprehensively rather than within each separate table to build a picture of the young person and their behaviours:



Self Care

What are we seeing?	What next?
<p>Behaviour/signs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Tired – not sleeping well. 👉 Might see weight loss or gain – poor diet/plus food intake. 👉 Poor personal hygiene – unwashed hair/clothes. 👉 Uncharacteristic changes to presentation/behaviour – withdrawal/challenging behaviour. 👉 Any changes at home? Separation/bereavement/family illness/changes with parental contact with school. 👉 Lateness/absence. 👉 Signs of anxiety – fidgeting, attention difficulties, irritable, quiet or confrontational. 👉 Disengagement in class/groups/sport etc. 👉 Dependency on mobile phone. 👉 Not maintaining learning progress. 👉 Changes in friendship groups. 👉 Clothing changes – long sleeves., refusing PE. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔️ Make time to talk/listen to child or young person (active listening, appropriate place/ environment). ✔️ Listen without interruption or judgement, reflect back what they are saying to ensure you understand correctly. ✔️ Be honest about how you will take this forward – and if that needs to be another member of staff. ✔️ Agree a short term plan based on their needs – in relation to self-care needs. ✔️ Follow up meeting/chat if they want – with you/other member of staff (potentially including parent/carer if wanted). ✔️ Use preferred point of contact – staff member young person relates to best. ✔️ Children and young people can help themselves – look at sleep routine, diet, exercise. ✔️ Think about what calms them – music/art/green spaces/writing. <p>Support: (See padlet for links at end of document)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔️ Discuss with Mental Health Support Team (MHST) where available, your Senior Mental Health Lead or other relevant person for further advice and support. ✔️ Identify who can the young person go to – family/friendship – for support? ✔️ Help them identify another adult in school for support - include them in the plan. ✔️ Signpost to CALM meditation apps to download and kooth.com. ✔️ Whole school – look at PSHE and what could be included or added in – sessions/ assemblies.





Getting Advice

What are we seeing?

Behaviour/signs:

- 👉 Nail biting, scratching, early signs of emotional distress and potential for self-harm.
- 👉 Possible self-harm history.
- 👉 Peers making comments.
- 👉 Changes in visual behaviour.
- 👉 No improvement after earlier self-care advice.
- 👉 Early withdrawal signs/acting out.
- 👉 If peers or family/community members self-harm themselves.
- 👉 Anxiety symptoms, avoidance, low motivation.
- 👉 Change of clothing (more covered up etc), avoiding PE etc.
- 👉 Change of sleep patterns.
- 👉 The presence of traumatic event.
- 👉 School refusal – Primary/Secondary.

Potential escalation concerns:

- 👉 Increase in frequency and/or severity.
- 👉 Bedwetting - Primary/Secondary.
- 👉 Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) (early stages).



What can I do?

- ✓ Listen to child/young person – try to understand their needs, thoughts etc.
- ✓ Open a Family Help assessment to help understand wider needs.
- ✓ Talk to parents/carers (where appropriate and with consent of child/young person if not safeguarding).
- ✓ Ask if any other support being provided and check/liase with relevant person/service.
- ✓ Providing resilience advice and tools to parents/CYP – See Padlet at the end of document.

Signpost child/parent to other information (See Padlet):

- Online support: Kooth.com, Young Minds
- Apps: CALM meditation apps to download.

Support: (See padlet for links at end of document)

- ✓ Speak with your Mental Health Support Team (MHST) – secondary school only.
- ✓ Speak to your Senior Mental Health Lead in school, Head of Year and/or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for advice and support.
- ✓ Contact E- school nurse for advice and information .
- ✓ Speak to MyTime for advice and information.
- ✓ Ensure good communication with team/staff so they are able to recognise any changes.





Getting Help

What are we seeing?

Behaviour/signs:

- 👉 Behaviour out of the ordinary – withdrawn, aggressive, avoidance, choosing to isolate.
- 👉 Negatively effecting life.
- 👉 Cuts that are not healing and/or frequent. This may raise different levels of risk and concern depending on Primary and Secondary age.
- 👉 Impact at school - changes in behavior, attendance, attainment, attitude, willingness to engage, change in friendships etc.
- 👉 Inappropriate dressing - Primary/Secondary.
- 👉 Repeated and emphatic self harm behaviour.
- 👉 Neglecting personal hygiene to an unusual degree for that young person.
- 👉 Frequent headbanging - applicable for both Primary and Secondary age.
- 👉 Sleep issues - Primary/Secondary.
- 👉 Restricted/change in eating - applicable for both Primary and Secondary age.
- 👉 Staying out after curfew, not checking in.
- 👉 Experimenting with drugs (usually been going on for some time).



What next?

- ✓ Make a safe space for them.
- ✓ Ask.
- ✓ Listen.
- ✓ Get help.
- ✓ Discuss with Mental Health Lead or other relevant person for further advice and support.
- ✓ Speak to school or setting designated safeguarding lead (DSL).

Support: (See padlet for links at end of document)

- ✓ Contact or signpost to GP for further support or referral.
- ✓ Contact E-School nurse.
- ✓ MyTime Barnardo's referral or can contact for advice.
- ✓ Speak to Educational Psychologist if appropriate.
- ✓ Contact Every Life Matters for Self-harm Safe kits.

Think third sector: (See padlet for links at end of document):

- SAFA
- Kooth
- Papyrus
- Young Minds
- The mix
- Shout.





Getting More Help

What are we seeing?

Behaviour/signs:

- 👉 Behaviour/signs not usually seen or beginning to increase.
- 👉 Initial support did not resolve the situation and there may be escalation in presentation.
- 👉 Sudden onset.
- 👉 Suicidal thoughts alongside self-harm.
- 👉 Deterioration in mental health.
- 👉 Identification of a previously unknown situation or key event.
- 👉 Increased self-harm/changes in self-harm e.g. severity and change of method.
- 👉 Not able to attend school or not accessing the curriculum.
- 👉 Expressions of hopelessness, being a burden, wanting to die.
- 👉 Restricted eating.
- 👉 Isolation with little or no social interaction, could include not engaging on social media.
- 👉 Feedback or concern from those who know the child/young person.
- 👉 Affects others; disruption, unreliability, increasing concern.
- 👉 Situation is getting worse despite support/intervention.
- 👉 Physical/SH affecting attendance at school.

What next?

- ✓ Reassure and listen compassionately – don't judge, thank them for sharing, tell them what will happen next, including who needs to know.
- ✓ Speak to School or setting designated safeguarding lead (DSL).
- ✓ Assessment of whether they are safe/including about asking about suicide – be kind, be brave and give hope – **Every Life Matters**.

Support: (See padlet for links at end of document)

- ✓ Seek CAMHS/MyTime advice as to minimising risk by 'safer self-harm approaches'.
- ✓ Make a referral to MyTime/CAMHS if not already in contact.
- ✓ Speak to Educational Psychologist if appropriate.
- ✓ Contact Every Life Matters for Self-harm Safe kits.

Think third sector: (See padlet for links at end of document):

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- Kooth
- Papyrus
- Young Minds
- The mix
- Shout.





Crisis Response

What are we seeing?

Behaviour/signs:

- 👉 Threat to own life.
- 👉 Overdose.
- 👉 Cutting – does it need medical attention? If yes, seek it.
- 👉 Self-Harm with increased intensity, frequency, duration = *what's the intent of the self harm?*
- 👉 Psychotic symptoms: hearing voices, hallucinations, paranoia.
- 👉 Fast onset of mood disorder – manic behaviour.
- 👉 Thoughts of self-harming others driven by mental illness - Depression/anxiety – If severe impact on daily life.



What next?

- ✓ Seek medical help promptly via A&E or GP as appropriate to the immediate concern.
- ✓ Dial 999 if an immediate threat to life.
- ✓ CAMHS referral can be made alongside the above (initial contact will be made whilst child on the ward if admitted).
- ✓ Where appropriate, safeguarding referral can be made alongside the above.

Support:

North Cumbria:

Crisis Resolution and Home Treatment Team (CRHT) - North Cumbria.

The service is for adults of all ages and young people, who are needing to speak to someone urgently about their mental health. Carers can also contact the service with urgent concerns. There is a single referral line.

The service can be contacted on **0300 123 9015** or freephone **0800 652 2865**.

The Universal Crisis Resolution and Home Treatment Team (CRHT) is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week to support you if someone is experiencing a mental health crisis. They can also provide advice and support to your family.

South Cumbria:

If a child or young person needs urgent help as they are in mental health distress, they can contact the **Initial Response Service (Mental Health Crisis Line)**. The service, which is for adults and young people, is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The service can be contacted by calling **0800 953 0110**.

It is staffed by trained mental health professionals who are able to provide assessment and referrals to appropriate services. Ring it if you need to access services or for advice about someone who needs treatment or support.

mindlinecumbria.org/resources/emergency-crisis-support.

Resources

Please scan QR code or use links below:



Remember: Communication and sharing of concerns are essential in keeping young people safe.

- Self-Harm, Suicide Awareness and Bereavement (padlet.com) - tinyurl.com/3a49vmz7
- Cumbria Year of Well-Being - A Schools Guide (padlet.com) - tinyurl.com/4ebzjm42
- Cumbria Service Providers EWMH Padlet
- School Staff Health and Wellbeing (padlet.com) - tinyurl.com/3d85uuy8
- Every Life Matters - tinyurl.com/3j2sbha4
- Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership - tinyurl.com/mr4a58mx

And:

- Samaritans - 116123 or visit - samaritans.org
- Young Minds - tinyurl.com/bdz3f9y6
- Childline - 0800 1111 or visit - childline.org.uk
- HOPELINE247 - 0800 068 4141 or visit - papyrus-uk.org
- KOOTH on-line counselling support - kooth.com
- Text SHOUT to 85258 (24/7) for text support.
- SAFA -Self Harm Awareness for All - safa-selfharm.com
- ALUMINA-Free online Self-harm support for 10-17 year olds - selfharm.co.uk
- In an emergency, please call 999 or attend A&E.

Further resources:

- Kooth Resources for Education Staff
- NSPCC Mental Health Learning Resources - tinyurl.com/44t8jr4s
- Children's Society Wellbeing and Mental Resilience Resources - tinyurl.com/yec9unxd
- Anna Freud Schools and Colleges - tinyurl.com/4vm44cbh
- Anna Freud Children and Young People Wellbeing Resources - tinyurl.com/dasfbt56
- Anna Freud Children and Young People Wellbeing-Know Your Rights - tinyurl.com/3uppv2a



A huge thank you to all those that have helped developed this pathway

For further information please contact:

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On behalf of Cumbria Suicide Prevention Leadership Group