

**A Whole Establishment Approach to Self-harm Awareness  
and Training for Early Years and Schools**

**A Knowledge and Skills Framework**

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# INTRODUCTION

**Scotland's self-harm strategy and action plan (2023-2027)** aims for anyone affected by self-harm to receive compassionate support, without fear of stigma or discrimination. The strategy highlights the need to continue to expand and deepen self-harm knowledge, provision of core training and continuous professional development for key professional groups including schools.

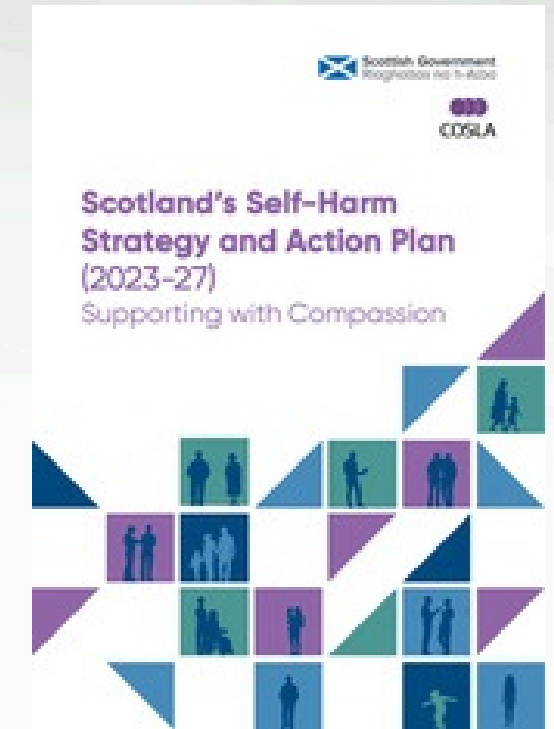
**The Knowledge and Skills Framework: a whole establishment approach to self-harm awareness and training for early years and schools** has been structured to reflect national training frameworks such as the **NHS Education for Scotland Perinatal Mental Health Curricular** and **Transforming Psychological Trauma Knowledge Frameworks**. It has been developed to support Education Authorities, Early Years, Primary and Secondary Schools to consider a whole organisation approach to self-harm awareness and training. The document refers to self-harm when used as a coping strategy, a response to distress where the individual has no intention to take their own life. Organisations should implement their appropriate safe guarding protocols if they feel a child or young person (C&YP), parent or care giver is in distress or immediate danger.

Self-harm is a growing public concern. Self-harm is complex and it can be difficult to understand both for the individual involved and for those around them who want to provide support. Stigma, discrimination and fear of being judged can stop people from disclosing their self-harm, making it difficult to keep records and have an accurate idea of scale. It is almost impossible to say how many individuals are using self-harm as a coping strategy, although data estimates that 1 in 6 people aged 16-24 have self-harmed at some point in their lives(i). The majority of those who self-harm do not go on to take their own life but a minority do and a small proportion of people who deliberately self-harm themselves are at increased risk of subsequently completing suicide.

Early years, primary and secondary staff do not have to be experts, however by encouraging everyone to have a baseline understanding of self-harm it can help eliminate stigma and discrimination, develop understanding of why it happens, how it happens and ensure that parents, care givers and C&YP get the help and support appropriate to their needs. The framework aims to encourage education establishments to take a planned and progressive approach to help equip staff with the self-harm knowledge and skills appropriate to their role. This can help target resources appropriately and make best use of staff time.

The completed framework included gives an example of a whole establishment approach to self-harm awareness and training in action, however content, resource allocation, staffing and needs will vary for each establishment. This approach to self-harm awareness and skills training involves all parts of the education community working together and being committed. It needs partnership working between senior management, all staff, as well as parents, care givers and the wider community.

Self-harm should not stand alone but form part of a whole establishment approach to mental health and wellbeing and staff should refer to the **Scottish Government's Mental health and wellbeing: whole school approach framework**, **Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing: a professional resource for all school staff**, **Trauma Informed Practice Toolkit** to support them evaluate their own mental health and wellbeing approaches and develop plans to identify areas for improvement within their establishment.



(i) Samaritans (2020) Hidden Too Long- Uncovering Self-harm in Scotland: [https://media.samaritans.org/documents/HiddenTooLong\\_uncoveringself-harminScotland.pdf](https://media.samaritans.org/documents/HiddenTooLong_uncoveringself-harminScotland.pdf)

# Knowledge and Skills Framework: Self-Harm Awareness and Training

## Target Group

Psychological Services and Trained Education Staff

Early Years staff, Pastoral Care staff, HWB co-ordinators, Principal Teachers, or identified staff

All early years, primary and secondary staff

Parents and care givers

## Knowledge and Skills

Training for Trainers (WTH)

Delivery of WTH 1 day training course

What's the Harm: Self-harm Awareness and Skills Training

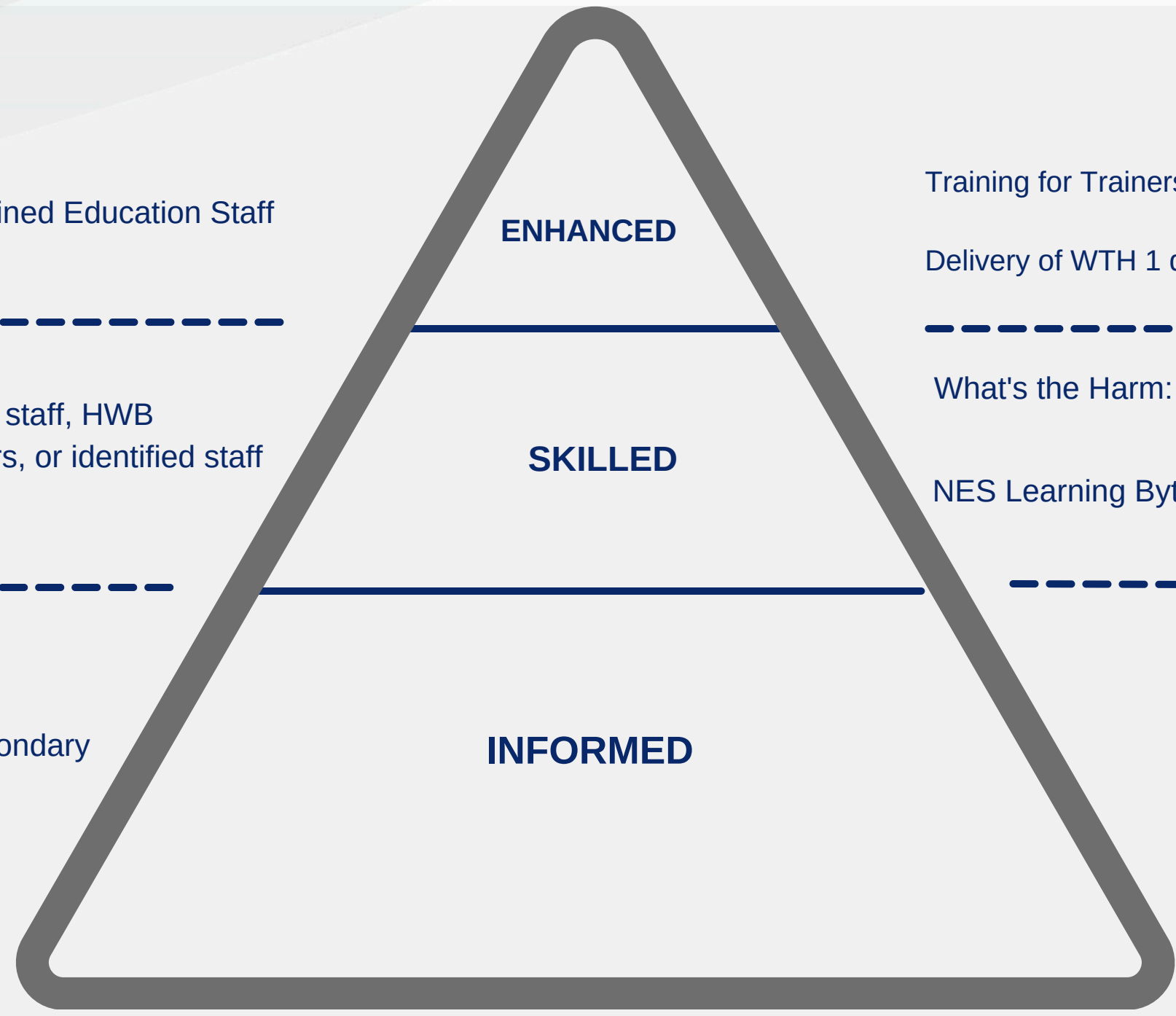
NES Learning Byte: Supporting People at Risk of Self-harm

Self-harm e learning opportunities

Self-harm Awareness: An Introduction

Self-harm Authority/school guidance

Early Years/School Mental Health Policy



# The Framework in Action: Exemplar

Level	Staff Group	Expectation	Rationale	Outcome	Good Practice
<p><b>INFORMED</b></p> <p>Baseline knowledge and skills required by all staff working in early years and schools.</p>	<p><b>Early Years, Primary and Secondary</b></p> <p>All staff, can include admin, catering and facilities staff.</p>	<p>All staff should complete at least biennial update training in self-harm: MindEd offer a range of e learning opportunities, access <a href="#">here</a> and/or alternatively staff complete the Introduction to Self-harm 1 hour session delivered by WTH trainers. Contact your Psychological Services team for information on WTH trainers.</p> <p>All staff should familiarise themselves with their self-harm establishment/authority/ guidance.</p>	<p>A universal approach creates a culture where everyone has a basic awareness of self-harm which helps eliminate stigma and discrimination, develop a more understanding community and encourages parents, care givers and C&amp;YP to seek support and help appropriate to their needs.</p>	<p>All staff have a basic awareness and understanding of self-harm.</p> <p>All staff know how to respond and what action to take if a C&amp;YP/parent/care giver discloses they are self-harming.</p>	<p>All primary and secondary staff participate in a One Good Adult awareness session. This can be delivered in house by management staff, no training required to deliver. Access the session (12) <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>Schools and youth organisations deliver One Good Adult activity to C&amp;YP. Access via Resilience Toolkit <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>WTH trainers deliver self-harm 1 hour awareness session to parents and care givers.</p> <p>Share self-harm resources document with staff. Download <a href="#">here</a>.</p>

# The Framework in Action: Exemplar

Level	Staff Group	Expectation	Rationale	Outcome	Good Practice
<p><b>SKILLED</b></p> <p>Knowledge and skills required by staff who have direct and/or substantial contact with C&amp;YP and parent/care givers.</p>	<p><b>Early Years</b> Head Teacher, Depute Head, Team Leader.</p> <p><b>Primary</b> Principal Teachers and Health and wellbeing (HWB) co-ordinators.</p> <p><b>Secondary</b> Pastoral Care Staff, HWB co-ordinators.</p> <p><b>Early years and schools may opt to identify other staff to undertake training who can play a key role in supporting implementation of the framework.</b></p>	<p>Identified staff should complete the one day What's the Harm Self-harm Awareness and Skills Training course. Staff are encouraged to complete the 1-hour Introduction Session prior to attending the one day training (delivered by WTH trainer).</p> <p>Staff unable to access or commit to the one day training course can access the self directed learning resource <a href="#">NHS Education Scotland Learning Byte 4: Supporting People at Risk of Self-Harm</a>. This is directed at the wider public health work force who have substantial contact with those at risk of self-harm and/or using self-harm as a coping strategy. There are a five learning bytes and learners are encouraged to complete all five. Access <a href="#">here</a>.</p>	<p>Health and wellbeing is the responsibility of all, however targeting training at staff dealing with the pastoral care needs of C&amp;YP and parents/care givers or those who have a lead role in HWB or other roles provides them with a wider understanding of self-harm when used as a coping strategy.</p>	<p>All identified staff are trained in WTH or have completed the NES Learning Byte and can provide support and understanding to C&amp;YP, parents and care givers. They can also act as a key point of contact to support staff who are dealing with the C&amp;YP/parents/care givers using self-harm as a coping strategy.</p>	<p>Early years and schools have 1-2 members of staff trained in WTH.</p> <p>Upper Primary and Secondary schools include <b><u>On Edge: Learning About Self-harm</u></b> (under CYP MH section, resources for schools) as part of HWB curriculum. Use with other mental health and wellbeing resources as part of a whole school approach to MHWB. Access Mental Health Improvement Resources for Early Years and Schools <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p><b><u>NHS Education Scotland Learning Byte 4: Supporting People at Risk of Self-Harm</u></b>. WTH trainers can facilitate bespoke learning byte sessions if there are challenges with releasing staff to attend the WTH one day training course.</p>

# The Framework in Action: Exemplar

Level	Staff Group	Expectation	Rationale	Outcome	Good Practice
<p><b>ENHANCED</b></p> <p>Knowledge and skills required by staff who have direct contact with staff working with C&amp;YP.</p>	<p>Psychological Services.</p> <p>Education staff who are trainers in WTH and have capacity to deliver training.</p>	<p>Educational Psychologists deliver What's the Harm: Self-Harm Awareness and Skills training to all staff identified in the skilled level.</p> <p>Educational Psychologists deliver WTH Training for Trainers (T4T) course to staff identified across early years, primary and secondary schools.</p>	<p>Enables Local Authority areas to build self-harm capacity across the system and ensure all early years and schools have staff trained in WTH.</p> <p>Through training and collaborative working, Psychological services can help staff have a wider understanding of self-harm.</p>	<p>Psychological services in partnership with education staff trainers run a rolling WTH training programme to include new staff and to ensure early years and schools maintain their quota of staff trained in WTH.</p> <p>Database of staff trained in WTH.</p> <p>Training data shared with NHSGGC Self-harm Forum to support wider training data collection across GGC.</p>	<p>Reserve 3-4 training places for partners working with early years and schools.</p> <p>WTH trainers attend yearly Self-harm forums facilitated by Psychological services (1.5 hours) to share practice, discuss challenges and update on policy developments and progress.</p> <p>Biennial review and update of self harm school/authority guidance.</p>

# Supporting Resources

Resource	Descriptor	Access
Self-harm Resources and Supports	A comprehensive resource sharing self-harm information under the headings of learning, resources, websites, helplines, APPS and keeping safe.	<a href="https://www.nhsggc.scot/downloads/self-harm-resources-supports-july-2023/">https://www.nhsggc.scot/downloads/self-harm-resources-supports-july-2023/</a>
Mental Health Improvement, Self-harm and Suicide Prevention Training Pathway	The pathway is a tool to encourage staff to progressively build their knowledge and skills relevant to their role and responsibilities in the area of mental health. The resource is a reference and guidance document to help individuals, teams and organisations explore potential training opportunities that are available, and whilst not exhaustive it can support navigation through the relevant and appropriate levels according to roles.	<a href="https://www.nhsggc.scot/downloads/mental-health-improvement-self-harm-and-suicide-prevention-training-pathway-nhsggc-v-2/">https://www.nhsggc.scot/downloads/mental-health-improvement-self-harm-and-suicide-prevention-training-pathway-nhsggc-v-2/</a>

All queries regarding this document should be directed to [ggc.mhead@ggc.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:ggc.mhead@ggc.scot.nhs.uk)

Produced by Michelle Guthrie Health Improvement Senior on behalf of NHSGGC Mental Health Improvement Team revised August 2024