

Self-harm in Stockton-on-Tees

People Select Committee
16 January 2017

What is self-harm?

- Any type of self-poisoning or self-injury
- Can take many forms including:
 - Cutting/scratching
 - Burning
 - Scalding
 - Hair pulling
 - Ingesting toxic substances or objects

Why might young people self-harm?

- Young people often say they want to escape or get relief from:
 - Unbearable feelings
 - An unbearable state of mind or situation
- There can be many reasons and often multiple triggers...

Why might young people self-harm?

- These triggers can include:
 - Feeling isolated
 - Academic pressures
 - Self-harm by someone close to them
 - Low self-esteem or poor body image
 - Bullying
 - Difficult personal relationships including family issues

Why is self-harm important?

- Can be a clue to underlying difficulties
- Can be a predictor of future problems
- Often repeated (about 1 in 5 of those who self-harm)
- Higher risks of future serious harm
- Important to tackle to reduce future risk

How big a problem is it in our country?

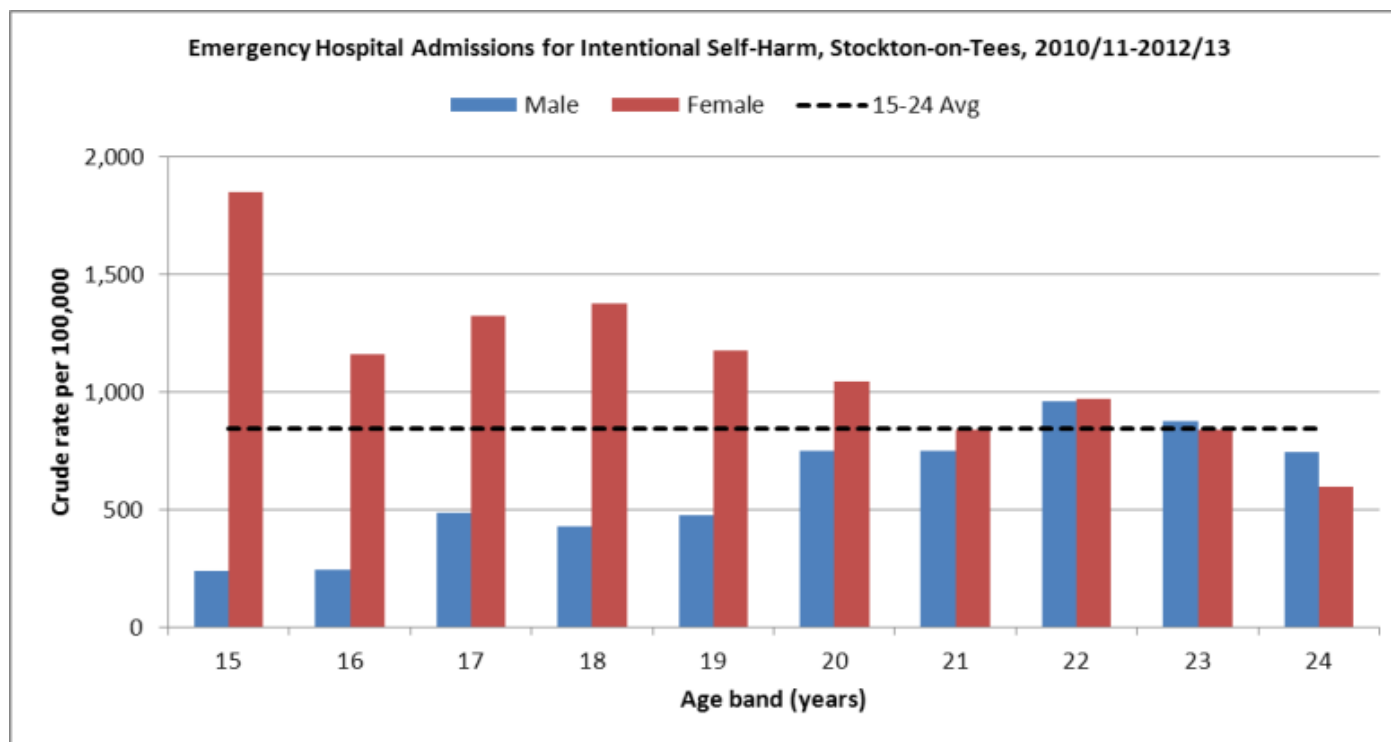
- Estimates for this vary, with studies and reports suggesting various figures
- Some results suggest as many as 10% of young people have self-harmed at some point
- A survey of 15-16 year olds showed 6.9% had self-harmed in the past year (11.2% of girls and 3.2% of boys)
- So overall, it is a common problem

How big a problem is it in our Borough?

- Hospital admissions for self-harm in Stockton-on-Tees are considerably higher than the average for England
- We also know that these are just the most ‘serious’ cases and many more self-harm without going to hospital

How big a problem is it in our Borough?

- The hospital admission rates for self-harm are much higher in the teenage years and especially for girls:



What help is available?

- Talk to friends/family – don't bottle it up
- GPs
- Teachers or school/college counsellor
- School nurses
- Mental Health Services such as CAMHS
- Voluntary sector services

What works for self-harm?

- Prevention - school-based work
- Young people often turn to other young people for support and wish to talk to someone who will listen to and respect them
- Reduce social isolation
- Reaction to first disclosure is very important
- School staff and all others who work with young people need a good awareness and understanding of self-harm

What works for self-harm?

- Peer support schemes, self-help (including distraction techniques) and help for carers/parents too
- Tackle the underlying cause
- Address within wider strategies to improve young people's mental and emotional wellbeing
- Offer comprehensive assessments to those who have self-harmed

What might we need to do?

- A range of suggestions including:
 - Training on self-harm issues for frontline workers
 - Support for 'low level' self-harm
 - Support for families and friends of those who self-harm
 - Views of young people and use of technology
 - Proper assessments for those who self-harm
 - Improving collection of numbers on self-harm locally

THANK YOU



Stockton-on-Tees
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Health and Wellbeing