

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1. Meeting:	Cabinet
2. Date:	9th April 2014
3. Title:	Outcomes from Youth Cabinet review on improving access for young people seeking help and support around self-harm
4. Directorate:	Resources All wards

5. Summary

This report outlines the process, findings and recommendations on the work undertaken by the Youth Cabinet to improve access for young people seeking help and support around self-harm (attached as Appendix 1). The recommendations from the review were endorsed by OSMB at its Children's Commissioner Day meeting of February 27, 2014 and agreed to forward these to Cabinet for its consideration. Cabinet is asked to receive the report and recommendations.

6. Recommendations

That Cabinet:

- a. receives the report and recommendations (attached as Appendix 1);**
- b. reports back its decision on the recommendations to OSMB within two months of this meeting;**
- c. agrees to meet with OSMB and members of Youth Cabinet six months after this point to discuss progress.**

7. Proposals and details

- 7.1 The Council has an impressive track record of involving children and young people through its 'Voice and Influence' work and is committed to extending this across all service areas. In line with this, OSMB (and the former PSOC) has supported "Children's Commissioner's Day" since its inception in November 2007. The idea behind the day is to give "children and young people the chance to be involved in decision-making... while adults and organisations gain a fresh perspective on what they do" (Children's Commissioner for England, 2013).
- 7.2 For this year's Children's Commissioner's Day, the Youth Cabinet identified that they wanted to explore the issue of self-harm. This theme is one of its current Manifesto Aims: "To help develop information for young people around self harm and a strategy to disseminate this. Also to work with services to improve access for young people seeking help and support around self harm" (Youth Cabinet, 2013).

The process undertaken by the Youth Cabinet replicated a scrutiny review. The Youth Cabinet collected case studies from young people to identify issues around accessing information and support services relating to self-harm. The work was supported by relevant professionals from Public Health and mental health services. These case studies formed the basis of questioning for providers and commissioners.

The process was supported by three Scrutiny Members, with young people leading on discussions and questioning. There were two evidence gathering sessions, with the Youth Cabinet undertaking its own planning and preparation outside of the meetings. Assistance with report writing and forming recommendations was provided by Scrutiny Services.

Their findings were presented to Elected Members at a special OSMB meeting to celebrate Children's Commissioner's Day on February 27, 2014. The review established that whilst there are several pockets of good practice in Rotherham, there is not a consistent approach to referrals, advice or information sharing across all agencies.

Since the presentation to OSMB, the Youth Cabinet have been invited to present the outcomes and recommendations from this review to a borough wide conference on suicide prevention on April 3, 2014.

The recommendations from the review are as follows:

- 1) That a consistent, concise and simple message is developed and disseminated for use by ALL organisations (including schools, health and social care, youth services, vol-comm sector);
- 2) That agencies work together to develop clear, consistent referral routes that are shared with ALL relevant organisations;
- 3) In line with recommendations 1) and 2), ensure that resources/training/support are available for schools, colleges, parents, young people etc.;
- 4) That young people are involved in developing user-friendly information/media messages (including new technology/social media);

- 5) That young people are involved in service design e.g. commissioning of school nurses;
- 6) That advice to young people on self-harm is available through drop-ins, one-to-one sessions as well as web-based materials;
- 7) That consideration is given to ways in which the service can 'fit' around the young person and that appropriate 'out-of-hours' advice/support is available;
- 8) That the provision of information on self-harm to all schools and colleges is improved and standardised;
- 9) That schools and colleges are encouraged to establish a forum to share best practice around support and advice (for example work around peer support and strategies to address stress and exam pressure);
- 10) Examine ways in which student access to school nurses can be improved.

8. Finance

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However, recommendations arising from this meeting may have financial implications if adopted. This would require further exploration by the Strategic Leadership Team and partners on the cost, risks and benefits of their implementation.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

The Council has many positive examples of extending the voice and influence of young people in its structures. In order to continue this success, it is important that consideration is given to the recommendations and the response is fed back to the young people in a timely manner.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The Children and Young People's Plan gives a commitment to extending the voice and influence of children and young people, to ensure that it is used positively to change the design and delivery of services that affect their lives.

The outcomes from this meeting link to the following Corporate Plan priorities:

Priority 2: Protecting our most vulnerable people and families, enabling them to maximise their independence

Priority 4: Helping people to improve their health and wellbeing and reducing inequalities within the borough

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Rotherham Youth Cabinet - Scrutiny review: improving access for young people seeking help and support around self-harm (2014)

12. Contact

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