



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

Health Department

Public Health Division

**Preventing Suicide and Deliberate Self
Harm**

**Laying the Foundations: Identifying
Practice Examples**

Summary of Project Report

July 2002

*Prepared for the Scottish Executive by Scottish Development Centre for Mental
Health*

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE PREVENTION OF SUICIDE AND DELIBERATE SELF-HARM

SUMMARY OF REPORT BY SCOTTISH DEVELOPMENT CENTRE - “LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS: IDENTIFYING PRACTICE EXAMPLES”

Identifying practice examples

In launching the National Framework for Suicide Prevention and Deliberate Self-harm Reduction, one of the key challenges will be to secure the interest, engagement and commitment of the wide range of sectors and agencies who have a role to play in this important area of social policy implementation.

This project set out to gather examples of practice and work on the ground that contribute in a variety of ways to the prevention of suicide and deliberate self-harm, as well as to the improvement of mental health and well-being. It was considered important to ensure that further policy development was founded on recognition of the diversity and richness of existing activity in this area, which may not necessarily be explicitly identified as falling within the ambit of the Framework.

The aims of the project were to:

- complement the formal consultation on the Draft Framework
- inform the further development of policy and its implementation
- illustrate that the implementation of the Framework will build on a great deal of work already in place
- indicate the part that a variety of agencies might have to play in this area of social policy implementation.

The project focused on two areas of Scotland – the Scottish Borders and Edinburgh. Information was gathered on a selected range of projects and initiatives working with groups identified as potential high-risk groups in the draft Framework. The aim of the exercise was to provide an illustration of the range of work being undertaken rather than to provide a comprehensive data set.

This extract presents a summary of the material gathered from the research. The services provided, and approaches taken, by each project are summarised in Tables 1 & 2 below, as are the target groups and issues facing project users. The key features of each project are also highlighted.

Table 1: Edinburgh projects

Project	Target group	Issues	Services / approach	Key features
1. Be Well Craigmillar Health Project	Local people	Stress Anxiety Depression	Counselling Group work, including men's group Drop-in Complementary therapies	Community development Mutual support and volunteering Developing skills and self-confidence Confidential Independent of employer
2. Time for Talking SAMH	SAMH employees	Personal and work related issues: e.g. stress, relationships, bereavement	Short term free counselling (5 sessions) Longer term requires self funding	
3. Men in Mind	Black and ethnic minority men with mental health problems	Isolation Racism Cultural identity Risk of suicide	1-1 support Group work Drop-in and user Forum	Activities and interests to stimulate discussion and reduce isolation (drama, IT) 'Mental health by stealth'
4. Ward 1A, Edinburgh Royal Infirmary	Toxicology inpatient care, patients referred (fast track) from A&E or the Royal Edinburgh Ages 16-65	DSH, especially overdose Abuse Bereavement Relationships	Full assessment Treatment Follow up support in community Training for staff in Community and A&E	Opportunity to assess Time out for people, including to sober up in safe place Database of local resources for onward referral Good liaison with GPs Procedures in place to deal with regular attenders
5. Wester Hailes Youth Agency	Young people aged 8-25, living in W Hailes Vulnerable young people: 'low achievers'	Lack of confidence Bullying, violence Coping with independence	Adventure play Educational work in and outside school Prep for school leavers and college students Detached street work	Mix of formal, structured and informal, ad hoc work Building communication skills and confidence Help with choices and transitions

Table 1 continued: Edinburgh projects

Project	Target group	Issues	Services / approach	Key features
6. SACRO	Ex offenders, more recently incl. Women	Mental health Drugs and alcohol Anger and aggression Women esp vulnerable – abuse, DSH and depression Most young offenders have been in care	Supported accommodation Hostel for young offenders Linking people in training and work opportunities Behavioural programmes, group and individual work	Working holistically with an individual Get people settled, stabilised and work with them to build skills and self esteem
7. Grass roots community work Church of Scotland	Clubbers	Hopelessness Loss of connections and community Disillusionment with club scene	Building networks or resourceful friends and healthy structures	Working within the club culture Helping build connections
8. Stonewall	Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual young people	Isolation and rejection Family relationships Identity Practical problems with housing etc	1-1 support by phone and email Groups Drop-in Pen pals Practical social and emotional support	Focus on issues of self acceptance in relation to gender and sexual orientation Hard to reach groups e.g. people with a disability are a priority
9. Barnardos 16 plus	Young people 15 _ to 21	Self harm Drugs Abuse	Practical and emotional support Drop-in	Consistency - establish long term supportive relationships Develop problem solving skills

Table 1 continued: Edinburgh projects

Project	Target group	Issues	Services / approach	Key features
10. Student Counselling Service, University of Edinburgh	Students	Anxiety and depression Smaller numbers with severe mental health problems Increasing number of students are self-harming	Assessment and brief counselling intervention Train other University staff and volunteers on Nightline	Proactive campaign to promote awareness of service Ease of access, encourage early use Training for Wardens and Directors of Studies to identify problems at an early stage
11. Nari Kallyan Shangho	South Asian women and children	Isolation Relationships Poverty Adapting to culture in UK	Groups Support networks 1-1 support	Dedicated youth worker Training for health agencies Mutual support
12. Lothian PCT Suicide Review Committee	Review of suicide incidents among patients	To identify learning points and improve quality of care	Examination of cases – situation reviewed, meet with care team	Reports to Clinical Governance: quality enhancement not blaming.
13. Streetwork	Young people and rough sleepers at risk on the streets People with ‘too many needs’ for most services	Mental health Suicide and self harm Drugs and alcohol Homelessness	Assertive outreach to make contact Detached work, on the issues that people want to address Small goal-directed steps, starting with basic needs Practical and emotional support	Fluidity around structure Active engagement of people who other services do not reach Acceptance and tolerance Providing a sense of belonging

Table 2: Borders projects

Project	Target group	Issues	Services / approach	Key features
14. Big River Turning Point Scotland	People whose lives are affected by drugs	Drugs Mental health Relationships Housing Many people have experience of suicide attempts or DSH	1-1 counselling Drop-in Advocacy support and liaison with other services	Continuity of support Harm reduction focus
15. Health promotion NHS Borders	Age groups and local communities	Improving confidence and well being	Work in schools Community health development in disadvantaged local area Health and exercise class for older people GP exercise referral	Range of initiatives using community development and health promotion approaches
16. Burnfoot Community School	Pupils, families and community	Peer relationships Self esteem Bullying Bereavement	Drop-in for pupils Family work and home visits by school nurse Activity based groups	Use of activity as basis for discussion of health and social issues Drop-in provides accessible information and advice
17. Royal Scottish Agricultural Benevolent Institution	People in rural occupations	Isolation Loss of confidence Depression Relationship stresses Financial anxieties	Helpline operated by volunteers (due to end) in response to Foot and Mouth crisis	Loss of traditional community supports Impact of initial financial worries and increasing social isolation now being manifested as mental health problems

Table 2 continued: Borders projects

Project	Target group	Issues	Services / approach	Key features
18. Penumbra Youth Project	Young people with mental health problems	Social isolation Abuse Family relationships Self harm	Drop-in several towns 1-1 support on harm reduction Developing coping strategies Practical support with housing, training etc	Self harm regarded as a choice people make Work with the whole person not just the self harming behaviour Allow time and space for person to talk about deeper issues when ready