Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care System

Resources to support suicide prevention in education settings in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent

(March 2026)

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Introduction

Following the creation and distribution of the document Guidance for education settings responding to a sudden unexpected death being treated as a suspected suicide, it has been suggested that a summary of some of the other resources available to help prevent suicides in education settings might also be helpful.

This document is not intended to be a guide in itself but aims to signpost the reader to key guidance materials, training opportunities, and system-wide support that can help education settings reduce the risk of suicide within their communities. It is designed to increase knowledge and understanding around suicide prevention, as well as to support staff in knowing what to do when situations arise. As such, it has been created as both a proactive and reactive resource for schools. The document also includes a section outlining PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic) resources that are appropriate for use in suicide prevention.

This document has been created by members of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent-wide CYP (Children and Young People) Suicide Prevention subgroup of the wider Integrated Care System (ICS) CYP Prevention Workstream group.

Guidance and support for educational establishments from key national suicide prevention organisations

Samaritans

How Samaritans helps in schools

Samaritans is known as an all-age charityhave a range of support offers for schools, college communities and other youth settings through their postvention services, lesson plans and school talks.

Suicide Awareness Training

It is easy to be overwhelmed if searching for suicide awareness training online, but the following examples are for free or low-cost training with established credentials.

Zero Suicide Alliance

For a quick introduction to suicide awareness the Zero Suicide Alliance provide several **free** short online interactive sessions.

ZSA suicide awareness training courses

Of particular interest might be the 'standard' session which can be taken by anyone who wants to learn basic suicide awareness and prevention skills, and takes no more than 30 minutes, and the 'Autism' version which was co-produced with people from the autistic community, and which takes up to one hour.

North Staffordshire Mind Suicide Prevention Awareness Training

Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council commission North Staffordshire Mind to provide regular, free half day online training sessions (held via Zoom) for anyone living or working in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

Visit the following website to book on the training: https://apps2.staffordshire.gov.uk/web/publichealthbooking/.

The training has been designed to:

- Help you recognise signs that someone may be at risk
- Train you to use a simple 4-step suicide intervention
- Share information with you about local support service

Two versions of the training are available – the 'standard' version which is applicable to everyone, and a specialised version - 'focus on children and young people' version which is recommended for adults who work with or otherwise regularly interact with young people.

NHSE E-Learning Hub

If you can access the NHSE (NHS England) E-Learning Hub there are free online training courses on 'Suicide and self-harm prevention, skills for schools' which cover a range of topics including self-harm and safety planning. Visit: NHSE elfh Hub.

To access the course go to the NHS Learning Hub and create a new general account – there is no need to have access to OpenAthens or an NHS email. The module is best viewed on a desktop or laptop computer.

Samaritans

Samaritans has produced a short (30 min) free open access e-learning module on internet safety, suicide and self-harm, developed in partnership with Health Education England eLearning for healthcare

Free e-learning course | Internet, Suicide and Self-harm

Stay Well

As part of Children and Young People Mental Health Awareness training, Stay Well provides a free 2-hour Suicide Awareness Programme – where individuals can gain an understanding about suicide in children and young people, learn to identify and recognise signs of suicidal thoughts and actions, develop the skills and confidence to approach children and young people to discuss suicide, and gain the knowledge and skills to create a safety plan with children and young people.

Stay Well Staffordshire

Stay Well Stoke-on-Trent

System Support

Stay Well

Stay Well is an emotional health and wellbeing service for children and young people living in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

Stay Well is provided by Changes Health & Wellbeing, working in partnership with North Staffordshire Mind and the Dove Service.

The service works with children and young people, aged 5-18 years (up to 25 years with SEND), to support their emotional health and wellbeing.

Operating within the THRIVE framework, Stay Well offers a wide range of interventions designed to ensure CYP's emotional health and wellbeing.

Stay Well is provided from local venues across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, including wellbeing centres, community venues, schools and colleges.

For children & young people residing in one of the 8 districts of Staffordshire, visit Stay Well Staffordshire for more information or to make a referral.

For children & young people residing in the city of Stoke-on-Trent, visit Stay Well Stoke-on-Trent for more information on the service and how to make a referral.

A summary of the services is provided below:

Getting Advice

Stay Well provides advice to young people who may need support to cope with changes or things that are happening in their life, i.e. guidance on self-support (including signposting to online resources on the Stay Well website).

Parents and professionals can also contact the Stay Well team for advice on how best to support a young person's mental health.

Designed to support schools to develop and embed a whole school approach to mental health, Stay Well also offers professionals and parents the opportunity to attend CYP mental health awareness training, providing them with a better understanding of young people's mental health issues and how they can offer advice. Training sessions include:

- Understanding the Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health of Children & Young People (4 hours)
- Suicide Awareness (2 hours)
- Supporting children and young people with Worry & Low Mood (2 hours)
- Raising Self-Esteem in Children & Young People (2 hours)
- Dealing with Difficult Emotions – Anger (2 hours),
- Cyberbullying & Social Media Awareness (2 hours),
- Supporting children & Young People with Bereavement & Loss (2 hours)
- LGBTQ+ Awareness (2 hours)
- Understanding disordered eating in CYP (2 hours)
- Understanding Neurodiversity (2 hours)

Stay Well also offers access to accredited CYP Mental Health First Aid Training.
As part of this whole school approach, Stay Well also provides targeted psycho-educational programmes, wellbeing assemblies and school mental health ambassador training.

Getting Help

Stay Well provides more structured help for young people who are struggling with their mental health and need help to get well, with a clearer understanding of what a young person is going to get out of engaging with our services.Services include:

Weekly Peer-Support Groups – age-appropriate meetings, where young people can connect, offer each other support, and learn how to manage mental distress.

Psycho-educational Programmes – a series of fun, interactive and age-appropriate training sessions designed to give young people the tools to improve their emotional wellbeing.Programmes include:

Wellbeing Programme – providing young people with information about and strategies to manage Anxiety, Low Mood, and Low Self-Esteem.

Decider Programme © developed by Cognitive Behavioural Therapists to provide young people with 12 skills that they can use to manage their emotions.

Dealing with Difficult Emotions Programme - providing young people with information about strategies to manage anger and aggression.

Getting More Help

Where a young person's mental distress has started to negatively impact their home, school or social life – Stay Well provides more structured and focused support for 5- to 18-year-olds.

This includes:

1-2-1 Therapy: a number of sessions with a trained therapist, helping the young person to explore and understand their mental health issues, introducing techniques to enable them to build on their strengths, develop more helpful thinking and behaviour, improve their coping skills and set and achieve wellbeing goals.

1-2-1 Counselling for Grief & Loss: designed to help young people to process intense emotional, physical and cognitive reactions associated with significant loss. Whilst often related with death, it also addresses other life-altering losses, such as parent's divorce, the ill-health of a family member, change in financial circumstances etc.

Mental Health Support Team in Schools

Mental Health Support Team in Education (MHST) is an NHS service made up of Education Mental Health Practitioners and Children's Wellbeing Practitioners that work within schools across Staffordshire. The service provides early intervention and prevention to support children and young peoples' mental and emotional wellbeing.

The Mental health support team can be accessed by contacting the Mental health lead within the school setting.

For more information regarding South Staffordshire MHST: South MHST

For more information regarding North Staffordshire MHST: North MHST

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (MPFT - South MHST)</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Carry out whole school approach audits</td></tr>
<tr><th>School Staff training</th><th>Parent/Carer Workshops</th></tr>
<tr><td>• Introduction to MHST
• Mental health awareness
• Introduction to emotion regulation
• An introduction to anxiety, low mood, worry and panic
• Delivering target focussed support
• Using school-based outcome measure
• Staff wellbeing</td><td>• Understanding sleep hygiene
• Understanding anxiety
• Understanding worry
• Understanding low mood
• An introduction to Exam stress
• Social Media and Wellbeing
• Emotion regulation</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">As well as 1:1 individual session for CYP</th></tr>
<tr><th>Assemblies and Workshops</th><th>Groups for Young People– 6 week course</th></tr>
<tr><td>• Managing exam stress (year 6 – year 13)
• Building Resilience
• An introduction to worry (year 3- year 6)
• Coping skills
• Transition to high school (year 6 &7)
• Social Media and Wellbeing (year 5 – year 13)
• Sleep hygiene (year 6 – year 13)
• Feelings and emotions (year 3 – year 6)
• Emotion regulation (year 5 -year 13)
• Self-esteem and confidence (year 5 -year 8)
• Talking about mental (year 5- year 8)
• The importance of being kind (year 3- year 6)</td><td>• Worry management course
• Understanding anxiety
• Low Mood</td></tr>
<tr><th>Targeted group workshops</th><th>School support</th></tr>
<tr><td>5 individual sessions:
• Amazing brain
• Managing stress
• My mood – My values
• Managing unhelpful thoughts
• 5 ways to wellbeing</td><td>• Drop in clinic
• School staff support
• PSHE – Advice to support mental health elements.</td></tr>
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<tr><th colspan="2">North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust (NSCHT - North MHST)</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Carry out whole school approach audits</td></tr>
<tr><th>Staff CPD Workshops</th><th>Parent/carer workshops</th></tr>
<tr><td>Introduction to Mental Health Awareness
Suicide and Self Harm
Restorative Practice
Staff Wellbeing
Understanding Anger
Suicide awareness – longer more in-depth session on suicide mitigation.</td><td>Anxiety
Sleep
Understanding and supporting my child’s emotions
Behaviour concerns
How to respond to children asking about suicide and self-harm</td></tr>
<tr><th>Staff Support & Reflection</th><th>Parent/carer coffee mornings</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">As well as 1:1 individual session for CYP</td></tr>
<tr><th>Classroom workshops K1 & K2</th><th>Small group workshops K1 & K2</th></tr>
<tr><td>Bouncebackability 9 interactive whole class sessions targeting emotional literacy and resilience
5 Ways to wellbeing</td><td>Drawing and talking (attachment based therapeutic intervention)
The Decider skills programme (DBT/CBT informed)</td></tr>
<tr><th>Classroom workshops – Upper KS2 and above</th><th>Classroom workshops K3/4 & FE</th></tr>
<tr><td>Introduction to Mental health awareness
Managing difficult emotions
Healthy relationships
Understanding Resilience
An introduction to Sleep Hygiene
Understanding Anxiety</td><td>Brief introduction to: What is Self-harm?
Introduction to Suicide Awareness
Healthy relationships
Exam Stress – Managing your mind-set.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Peer Mentoring KS2, K3 and K4</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Peer Ambassador Programme KS4 & FE</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Wellbeing Ambassador Project – KS1 & KS2</td></tr>
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Staffordshire Educational Psychology Service (EPS)

Staffordshire EPS supports children and young people aged 0–25, alongside their families and schools. They use specialist training and experience in psychology to understand and support a wide range of needs, including situations that are complex or challenging.

The service can provide advice and support in relation to self-harm. They have developed a series of self-harm webinars for parents, available via Staffordshire Connects.

They have also produced a Self-Harm Guidance Document, which offers practical advice and guidance for schools and families.

They offer free critical incident support following the death of a young person at a Staffordshire school. The service will contact the school directly to provide advice, guidance, and emotional support during difficult times.

Training and professional development

Staffordshire EPS offers a range of training opportunities for schools, including:

- Self-esteem
- Bereavement and loss
- Emotion coaching
- Attachment and trauma
- Anxiety and worries
- Emotional wellbeing

ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) programme

Staffordshire EPS delivers a highly regarded ELSA training course, which equips teaching assistants to support the emotional needs of pupils in school. Course topics include emotional wellbeing, anxiety, self-esteem, bereavement, and loss.

They also provide half-termly supervision for trained ELSAs and currently support over 17 ELSA supervision groups across Staffordshire.

Exam stress support

If schools require advice relating to exam stress, this can be discussed with their linked Educational Psychologist. The EPS team will then develop a bespoke support package tailored to the needs of the pupils they wish to support.

For all general enquiries, please contact: eps.queries@staffordshire.gov.uk.

Traded services

Staffordshire schools can buy into the EPS Traded Service on an annual basis.

For traded service enquiries contact: EPSTradedService@staffordshire.gov.uk.

Stoke Educational Psychologist Services (EPS)

Stoke-on-Trent Educational Psychology Service (EPS) supports the wellbeing, resilience, and sense of belonging of children and young people across the city. Although the EPS does not provide mental health diagnoses or crisis intervention, educational psychologists play an important role in suicide prevention by working in positive, relationship-focused, and developmentally informed ways with schools, families, and other services.

The work centres on recognising strengths, building protective factors, and supporting the positive relationships that help children and young people feel safe, valued, and understood. By doing this, it aims to help reduce vulnerability and support emotional wellbeing.

Stoke on Trent EPS provides several core services to schools and settings at no direct cost. These include:

- Solution Circles – online collaborative problem-solving sessions for staff.
- Statutory Work – contributions to Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessments.
- Systemic and Strategic Projects – involvement in local and national initiatives, such as Relational Approaches in Education (RAiE) and Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS).
- Critical Incident Response – provides setting leaders with psychologically informed guidance to support their response to events that affect the wellbeing and coping of the whole school community.

Schools and settings can also commission additional support from the EPS through a Service Level Agreement (SLA). This can include consultation; direct work with children and young people; and capacity building support such as training or workshops.

For all enquiries, please contact: ed.psychology.admin@stoke.gov.uk

Digital Apps

Both Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire have access to the Organisation for the Review of Care and Health Apps (ORCHA) Library, where you can find health and care apps that support health and wellbeing. Each app includes detailed information based on assessments carried out by ORCHA.

Schools can access the library using the two links below. You can browse the library independently or recommend suitable apps to pupils and/or their families.

Link to Stoke-on-Trent ORCHA

Link to Staffordshire ORCHA

The library includes a dedicated section for young people's mental health apps, covering a wide range of tools designed to support mental wellbeing. There are also recommended apps for parents and carers relating to mental health. This library

provides confidence and reassurance that the apps you are recommending are safe, evidence-based, and quality assured.

Education Safeguarding Advice Service (ESAS) – Staffordshire Learning Net (SLN) Resources

For Staffordshire education settings only.

The Education Safeguarding Advice Service (ESAS) provides a dedicated area on the Staffordshire Learning Net (SLN) offering practical safeguarding resources that also include support suicide prevention and early identification of concerns. This includes many of the following resources.

All education settings will have two accounts to access the SLN, please speak to your DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) / Headteacher to obtain account details.

Link to the SLN: Education safeguarding support | Staffordshire County Council

For more information, please contact ESAS on: esas@staffordshire.gov.uk

Resources available on SLN include:

- **Safeguarding guidance documents** – including suicide-prevention materials, local pathways, and advice on responding to concerns about self-harm or suicidal ideation.
- **Templates and tools** – such as safety planning tools, risk-assessment templates, conversation prompts, and a link to the postvention guidance.
- **Training materials and signposting** – ESAS-led content plus links to wider suicide-prevention learning opportunities.
- **Support for risk assessing and safety planning**- includes examples of these and education colleagues are supported with these if required

These resources support DSLs in delivering consistent, evidence-informed safeguarding practice and responding confidently to concerns linked to self-harm, mental health and suicide risk.

Stoke-on-Trent Education Safeguarding Advice

For any concerns or advice relating to safeguarding please contact:

Samantha.plews@stoke.gov.uk (for Stoke-on-Trent education settings only).

Addressing Suicide Through the PSHE Curriculum

The Department for Education (DfE)-published new statutory Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education (RSHE) guidance (effective from September 2026) does not require schools to teach explicitly about suicide. However, because the guidance references suicide prevention, schools may need support in deciding how to respond.

Schools can choose whether to address suicide directly, but if they do, they must proceed with caution. This should only happen after consulting mental health professionals with specialist expertise, and careful consideration should be given to:

- pupils' age, maturity, and personal experiences
- parents' and carers' views
- staff confidence and training

Schools must avoid any content that could be instructional or distressing, and they should never link lessons about suicide to a recent suicide in the school community.

There is strong evidence that broader mental health education—already a key part of PSHE—helps prevent crises. Teaching children and young people to:

- recognise and express emotions
- manage friendships, loneliness and challenges
- look after their wellbeing
- know how and where to seek help

This all contributes to suicide prevention without mentioning suicide directly.

The statutory guidance (pp. 25–26) supports this, noting that most aspects of suicide prevention are already included within wider mental wellbeing education.

If a school chooses not to teach directly about suicide, the topic may still arise during lessons. Staff should:

- avoid discussing specific methods of suicide
- focus on help-seeking and support
- follow up individually with the pupil through safeguarding or pastoral systems, rather than addressing the issue with the whole class

The Pan-Staffordshire PSHE Education Service offers support, visits, advice, and a wide range of curated resources to help schools deliver safe and effective PSHE education

Service Offer from the Pan-Staffordshire PSHE Education Service

Alongside support visits and providing bespoke support, advice and guidance to education settings, there are a wealth of resources that have been collated or developed by the Pan-Staffordshire PSHE Education Service to help education settings deliver safe and effective PSHE education, these include:

- Best Practice Guidance – a series of best practice guidance documents which contain information to help advise and guide education providers in implementing best practice principles of PSHE education development and delivery in their own settings.
- Training – access to local and national training opportunities, date/time specific training opportunities are published in the PSHE Digest. There is a mixture of free-to-attend and paid for opportunities.
- Education Resources – national resources and locally produced resources that align with the quality framework for education settings to tailor to their group's needs. You need to register for an account to access the Resource Library, it's free to sign-up, there are no limits to the number of accounts one education setting can have.
- PSHE Digest –a regular newsletter providing national and local updates, including the latest research, links to new resources, and key awareness dates. The PSHE Digest is published on the first termly Friday of each month. To join the mailing list please get in touch: https://pshestaffs.com/pshe-digest/.
- PSHE Leads Network Meetings are held online each half-term, and are recorded for those unable to attend the session live. These provide a safe space for PSHE leads to come together, explore different aspects of PSHE pedagogy, talk about challenges, concerns and share best practice/celebrations from their own setting. You can book onto an event here: Eventbrite page.

Contact Details

Staffordshire – natalie@staffscvys.org.uk

Stoke-on-Trent – ellie@staffscvys.org.uk

www.pshestaffs.com