

**penumbra**  
your way to a brighter future

North Ayrshire  
Self-Harm Project

## About Penumbra

Penumbra is one of Scotland's largest mental health charities, supporting around 1000 adults and young people each week. Founded over 30 years ago, we provide a variety of innovative services across Scotland:



- [ARBD](#) | Recovery focused support for people with Alcohol Related Brain Damage (ARBD)
- [Crisis Support](#) | Short term support for people experiencing a mental health crisis
- [Employment Support](#) | Helping people who are working towards employment or need support in employment
- [Homelessness Services](#) | Practical and emotional support for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness
- [Nova Projects](#) | Wellbeing projects that promote recovery, social inclusion and self-management
- [Plan2Change](#) | Peer support services
- [POWWOWS](#) | Penumbra workshops on wellbeing
- [Self Harm Projects](#) | Community based projects for both adults and young people who self-harm
- [Short Breaks](#) | Supportive breaks for people to focus on their recovery
- [Supported Housing](#) | A variety of supported accommodation and tenancy projects
- [Supported Living](#) | Offering practical and emotional support to meet people's needs in their own home
- [Young People's Projects](#) | Services for young people

## Values

The Penumbra Strategic Plan 2016-2020 sets out four core values which inform our work across Scotland.

- [Recovery](#) | People can and do recover from mental ill health
- [Human rights](#) | People have equal human value regardless of their situation or ability and have the right to dignity, respect, privacy and choice
- [Control](#) | People should be enabled to exercise control over their lives by means of real choice and participation and should be free from stigma and discrimination
- [Person centered](#) | Penumbra's services should provide person centred support on an ordinary and inclusive basis wherever possible.

## Annual Reviews

### Vision

Penumbra envisages a society where people with mental health problems expect recovery and are accepted, supported and have the resources to fulfil their potential.

*Penumbra Strategic Plan 2016-2020*

To achieve Penumbra's vision for society, both the Strategic Plans for 2012-2015 and our new plan for 2016-2020 identify five key aims. These are supported by objectives and an annual results and monitoring framework.

As part of the monitoring framework, every year Penumbra services compile a Review. These Reviews are available to the public and summarise the work each service has undertaken to meet the five key aims and realise Penumbra's vision for society.

### Mission

Penumbra will provide, support and influence services and activities that improve the mental health and wellbeing of people.

*Penumbra Strategic Plan 2016-2020*

## Aims

Penumbra's aims can be summarised as: recovery, people, innovation, influence and improvement (RPIII). They describe how Penumbra's mission will be realised.

- Recovery** | To ensure that all mental health services and activities are hopeful, personalised and recovery focused
- People** | To ensure a highly valued, skilled and involved workforce
- Innovation** | To develop, support and provide innovative responses that promote recovery, social inclusion and citizenship for people with mental health problems
- Influence** | To promote mental health and wellbeing in communities by influencing; policy makers, funders and others
- Improvement** | To ensure quality and continuous improvement in all business processes to achieve our mission

RPIII forms the structure for this Annual Review.

## Service overview

The North Ayrshire Self-harm Project is based in Ardrossan Youth Centre and provides support to residents of North Ayrshire who wish to reduce or stop self-harming. We also work to raise awareness of self-harm issues and to help reduce the stigma around self-harm.

The North Ayrshire Self-harm Project was set up in in January 2005, with initial funding from Choose Life to work with young people aged 16-25 years old, their families and professionals around the issue of self-harm. Thanks to increased funding from ChooseLife, the project widened its remit in April 2013 to provide support to people over 25 years. In addition the project can also provide information and expertise to assist teams in developing good practice.

## Service aims

The service provides non-judgemental and confidential support to people who wish to reduce or stop self-harm. We aim to:

- Provide and promote individual self-harm coping strategies and an understanding of the triggers for self-harming behaviour
- Reduce self-harming behaviour and minimise harm
- Increase awareness and promote understanding of self-harm and the issues associated with it for individuals, families and workers
- Increase the community of understanding around those who self-harm

## Types of support

- One to one support for those who are self-harming, including support to minimise risk, manage their self-harm and develop alternative coping mechanisms.
- Informal support to parents/carers of service users.
- Information and advice to professionals who come into contact with people who self-harm.

## Future plans

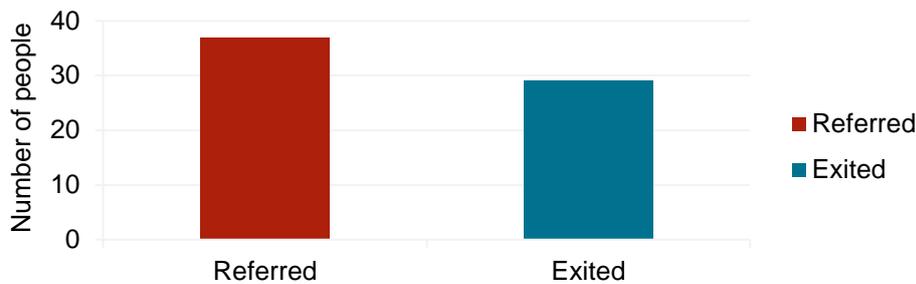
We would like to build on our strengths of flexibility, consistency, non-clinical and outcome based approach, as these are areas which are highly valued - as evidenced in our recent three year contract review.

We would also like to build on the excellent work we have carried out with education by working with professionals in other organisations to enable them to improve their response to people who self-harm. We have also identified a need for support for parents and staff dealing with younger children who self-harm.

## People who use our services

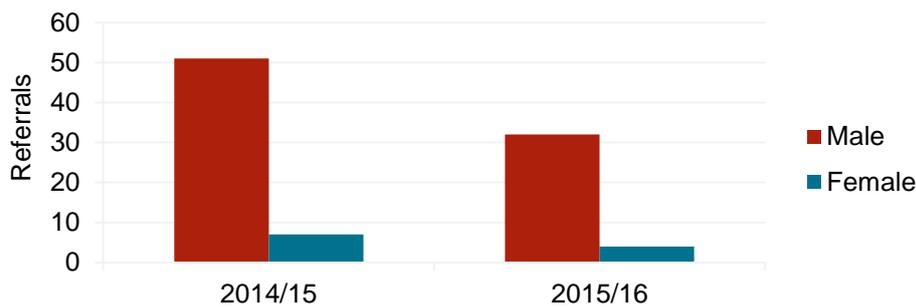
A total of 122 people used the service. This included service users, parents/carers and professionals who attended training or received good practice advice/information.

### Referrals



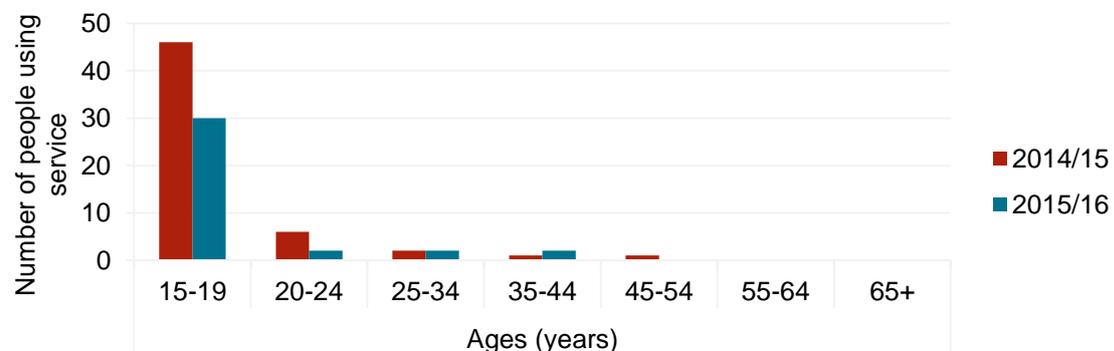
This year's referrals are down on last year. Most of the referrals were from parents (some of whom were signposted by NHS and Education).

### Referrals by sex



Male and female referrals are exactly the same as last year, at 12% and 88% respectively.

### Referrals by age



The majority of referrals (52%) are again in the under 16 age group, which has again also increased from last year.

## Recovery

### People who have used the service

This year we have provided over 500 hours of one to one support.

Our evaluation forms show that a significant majority (75%) of those who engaged with the project reduced or stopped their self-harm.

**I am proud of myself. When I came for support at the start I didn't see how talking about things would help me stop self-harm. However, it has and I am really chuffed.**

**- Anonymous**

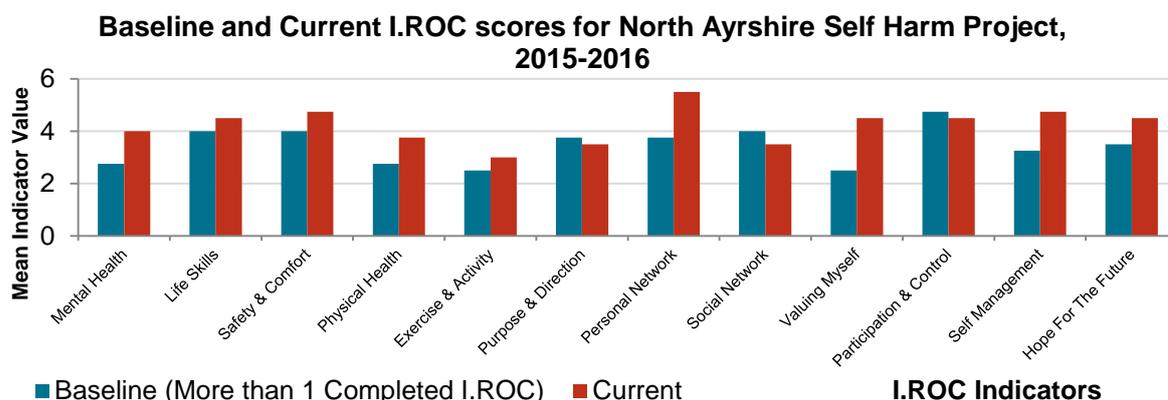
### Kerry's story



Kerry, a previous service user of the project, has recently started up a project called Little Box of Distractions.

Kerry set this project up not long after her sessions with Penumbra finished. She stated that, apart from helping her to reduce her self-harm, the support from Penumbra helped her to gain confidence and helped her with goal setting. The confidence she has gained has allowed her to get in contact with mental health professionals and members of the public to advertise her project and explain what it is about. She is also in the process of trying to make her project a registered charity, which she states she would never have had the confidence to do before support.

## I.ROC



The graph presents the difference between baseline and current results for people who engaged with the project. The results show the highest increase in valuing myself, personal network, self-management and hope for the future and mental health.

## People

### Staff

The project is run by Helen Gibson, Support Manager, who is employed on a part-time basis. Fiona Tall, West Area Manager, oversees the project.

Helen Gibson provides one to one support, self-harm awareness raising sessions and good practice advice to teams. She regularly meets with Sarah Watts, ChooseLife Manager, North Ayrshire, to discuss and monitor the project's progress. The project and ChooseLife regularly undertake partnership work and co-deliver training.

### Training

The Support Manager has completed all Penumbra's core training for the post, which includes training on I.ROC – Penumbra's outcomes measurement tool. This core training gives staff a detailed understanding of Penumbra's recovery-focused approach.

In addition, the Support Manager has attended Training for Trainers workshop. She has also undertaken SafeTALK (suicide alertness training) and ASIST (Applied Suicide Interventions Skills Training). Whilst suicide and self harm are different behaviours people who self harm may be at increased risk of suicide. These suicide alertness courses are delivered by Choose Life and provide staff with the skills they need to keep people safe.

This year the Support Manager has attended: The Law and Children Protection Event, and; PRISM - Child Protection and Personal Reflection. Both events were run by North Ayrshire Council.

### SSSC registration

North Ayrshire Self Harm Project does not require to be registered with SSSC.

## Innovation

### Self-harm tools for schools and parental resources

Following the supply of the Self Harm Tools for Schools to all secondary schools in North Ayrshire the Support Manager carried out an evaluation of these resources. The feedback from the evaluation was excellent.

Following this feedback we decided to design and produced a list of frequently asked questions. The service sought advice from a Penumbra Peer Worker with lived experience of self-harm, based in Penumbra's Edinburgh Self Harm Project, and consulted with parents of our service users.

This resource was widely disseminated within North Ayrshire including secondary schools, extended outreach, school nurses community development and GPs. In addition, this resource has been shared with Penumbra self-harm staff nationally. We also provide all parents of our service users with this resource and provide copies to participants on our training. We also have a copy available on our website [www.penumbra.org.uk](http://www.penumbra.org.uk).

*“Thank you for the attachments you sent Helen. I have spent some time researching self-harm over the last couple of years, to help give me a better understanding of it and I really appreciate your help. It was helpful, thank you.”*

- Parent of a service user

*“I have circulated this to staff and drawn their attention to the FAQ, which I found especially useful. I have also passed on your recommendation to give on to any concerned parent / carer.”*

- Pupil Support Service, North Ayrshire, Education

### Case Studies

We adapted our existing school case studies for wider use and piloted these at the launch of the revised Ayrshire multi-agency self-harm and suicide guidance.

This involved working in partnership with ChooseLife and CAMHS to deliver an awareness raising session aimed at professionals in North Ayrshire. This not only covered the details of the revised guidance, but also provided information on Penumbra's Tools for Schools, alongside the opportunity to discuss and learn from the case studies developed by Penumbra. This session was very successful and received excellent feedback.

## Influence

### Work in the community

The Support Manager and/or the West Area Manager attend The Health and Social Care Provider Forum. The Support Manager also attends the newly formed Children's Services Providers Forum. The project has also been involved in the review of the Ayrshire multi-agency guidance for people working with children and young people at risk of self-harm or suicide.

The project has worked hard to foster close links with Deputy Head Teachers, Guidance Teachers, School Nurses and Community Development staff. This year we provided them with advice/resources on good practice and all of these groups had the opportunity to provide feedback on our Self-harm Tools for Schools. Similarly, this year the project consulted with parents and invited them to contribute to our new parental resource (Parental FAQs).

### Self-harm Tools for Schools

The Self-harm Tools for Schools resources were shared with East and South Ayrshire and ChooseLife in South have requested and been given permission to use them in South Ayrshire. Our Self Harm Forum Chair, Amber Higgins also shared the Tools with the Self Harm Group in Fife, which she takes part in.

### CAMHS

We have also been invited by CAMHS to deliver talks on self-harm at various events:

- Delivery of presentation at Children's and Young People's Seminar to group of Pan Ayrshire professionals (Dean Park – May 2015)
- Co-delivery of presentation and case study (with ChooseLife and CAMHS ) at Supporting Mental Health & Well Being of Children and Young People event to a group of Pan Ayrshire professionals (Crosshouse Hospital – October 2015)

### Streetwise

The project was consulted on a piece of drama (Streetwise) organised by Damian Taylor, Community Development Staff (NAC) covering mental health topics, including self-harm. This drama was delivered to the Child Protection Conference in October 2015 which included adult delegates and various youth groups from North Ayrshire.

## Improvement

### Feedback

Feedback is used to continuously improve our service. The project collects feedback via End of Service Questionnaires from service users and Evaluation Forms from training participants. Feedback is consistently very good from service users and our feedback from training participants is also excellent.

*"I managed how to deal with my emotions better and deal with my self-harm."*

- Service user

*"Very good information. Very helpful. I now have a better understanding of self-harm."*

- Training participant

### Self-harm Tools for Schools

This year we also conducted an evaluation of our Self Harm Tools For Schools Resource. Education staff felt that the tool was: easy to follow, child friendly and provided a clear route to follow in the event of self-harm. The documents also helped to reassure education staff that their actions are correct.

It would appear from the feedback that some education staff still tend to pass issues of self-harm onto School Nurses or their Child Protection Officer. However, as self-harm is so prevalent amongst adolescents, the intention of these documents was to increase education staff's confidence in responding to self-harm, helping to reduce the over reliance on specialist staff.

We felt this indicated a clear need for increased training in secondary schools and more information for parents. Following the feedback we decided to produce a parental FAQs resource. In addition, we are currently conducting a review of our young people's workshops following feedback.

Please contact the service for more information on the feedback provided.

## Contact

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INFLUENCE | IMPROVEMENT



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- Crisis Support
- Employment Support
- Homelessness Services
- Nova Projects
- Plan2Change (Peer work)
- POWWOWs
- Self Harm Projects
- Short Breaks
- Supported Housing
- Supported Living
- Young People's Projects

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