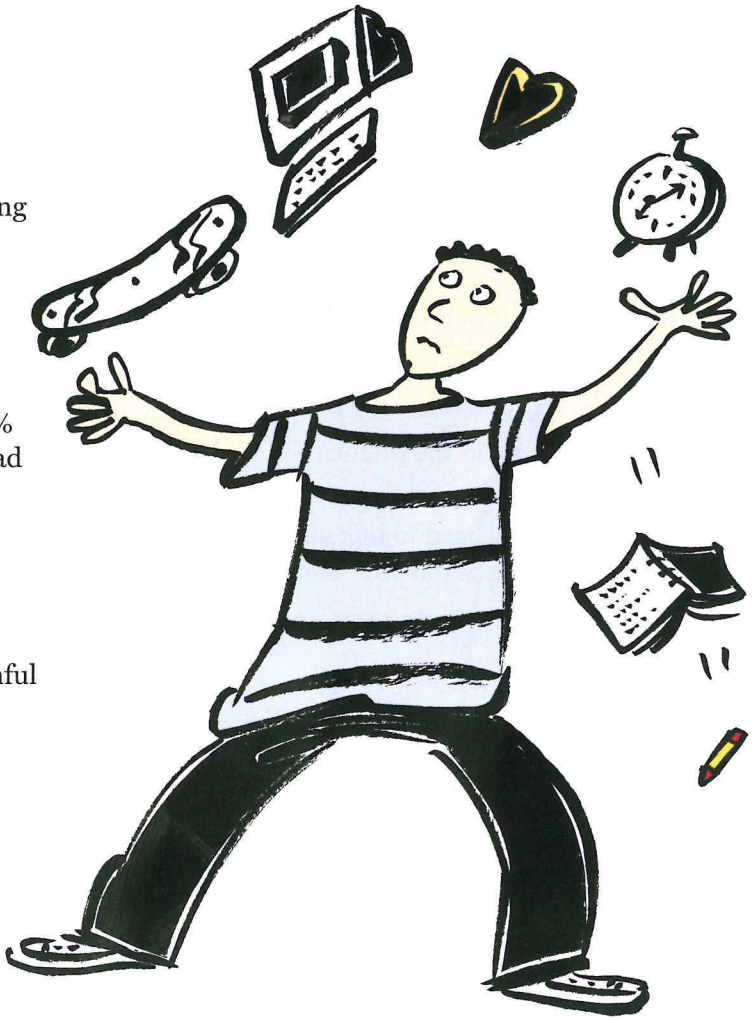
Appendix F Information sheet for young people on self harm



What is self harm?

Self harm is when someone does something to deliberately hurt him or herself. This may include: cutting parts of their body, burning, hitting or taking an overdose.

How many young people self harm?

A recent large study in the UK found that about 7% (i.e. 7 people out of every 100) of 15-16 year olds had self harmed in the last year.

Why do young people self harm?

Self harm is often a way of trying to cope with painful and confusing feelings. Difficult things that people who self harm talk about include:

- Feeling sad or feeling worried
- Not feeling very good or confident about themselves
- Being hurt by others: physically, sexually or emotionally
- Feeling under a lot of pressure at school or at home
- Losing someone close; this could include someone dying or leaving

When difficult or stressful things happen in someone's life, it can trigger self harm. Upsetting events that might lead to self harm include:

- Arguments with family or friends
- Break-up of a relationship
- Failing (or thinking you are going to fail) exams
- Being bullied

Often these things build up until the young person feels they cannot cope anymore. Self harm can be a way of trying to deal with or escaping from these difficult feelings. It can also be a way of showing other people that something is wrong in their lives.