



Dorset SHARPS and FLASH training project

Overview summary report

NHS Dorset alongside “The Winter Pressure Money for CYP Mental Health funding” commissioned the Supporting Holistic Approaches to Risk Parents and Self Harm (SHARPS) and Families Learning about Self Harm (FLASH) training packages developed and delivered by the Ministry of Parenting CIC. The Ministry of Parenting (MoP) CIC is a Colchester-based organisation working nationally to deliver workforce training and family interventions, with a specialist focus on adolescent self-harm — equipping professionals and families to respond more effectively.

The training was commissioned to enable Dorset-based practitioners to feel confident in supporting young people who self-harm and their families. The SHARPS practitioner training aims to develop a network of practitioners in a range of community-based settings such as Primary Care, Acute Hospitals, Education provisions, and other services with knowledge and confidence to work directly with young people and their families. For those wishing to develop their skills further, the FLASH training offers the opportunity to gain facilitation skills and resources to deliver the group-based FLASH parent and carer programme. Some practitioners may then wish to progress through The Ministry of Parenting’s internal graduate Train-the-Trainer Pathway, which provides a structured opportunity to develop as FLASH trainers. This model supports opportunities for personal and professional growth, while helping to build a sustainable network of skilled facilitators and promote consistency of practice across services and strengthening local capacity.

All training content and delivery approaches are consistent with current NICE guidance on self-harm assessment, management, and family involvement (NICE NG225, 2022).

In addition to the above, we introduced Group Skills training and the new Teen FLASH training.

Commissioning contract dates: November 2022 to 31st October 2025. This summary report is based on the developments, delivery of the trainings and supervision from November 2022 to 31st October 2025.

Total number of training places completed is **301**

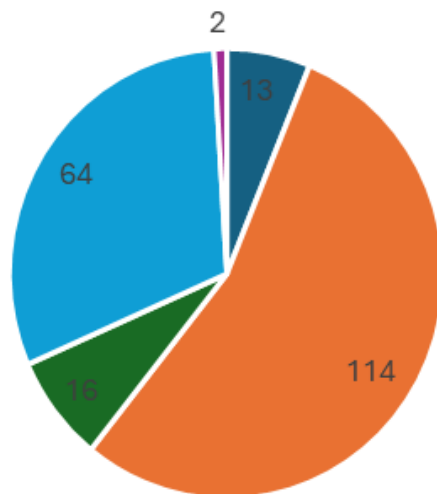
Training programme overview information

SHARPS	This is a three-day multi-agency training course that aimed to provide professionals with an awareness of the key principles of working with young people (aged 11-17 years) who self-harm, and their families. The training objectives were to: • Gain a wider knowledge, awareness and understanding of self-harm behaviours in young people. • Understand the basic approaches for professionals communicating with families where the young person is self-harming. • Provide practical strategies for professionals in managing the emotional demand of working with young people who are harming themselves. • Feel more competent/confident when working with young people who self-harm.
FLASH	A bespoke one-day training course for professionals who have completed the Dorset-hosted 3-day SHARPS training. FLASH training is for multi-disciplinary practitioners working with parents and carers of children aged 11-17 years who are showing signs, or behaviours of self-harming. FLASH is a ten-week group programme for parents and carers of young people who are exhibiting self-harming behaviours, where these behaviours are having an impact on the family system. The FLASH programme also includes protocols for online delivery and adaptations for parents and carers of young people with autism who self-harm.
Group Skills	This four-day training course was introduced to the project in 2024 following requests from Dorset-hosted FLASH trainees. The course aims to equip participants with greater confidence, enhanced group-work skills, a deeper understanding of group dynamics, and practical ideas for working effectively with groups.
Teen FLASH	This three-day training course is for professionals who have completed the Dorset-hosted FLASH training. Teen FLASH (Teens and Families Learning About Self-Harm) was inspired and developed as a natural progression from the successful FLASH parenting group programme. It is designed for young people aged 11–16 who are exhibiting self-harming behaviours and is delivered by two trained group leaders across five workshops, usually held on alternate Saturdays. This group programme helps young people explore what self-harm is and the associated risks, develop listening and self-esteem skills, learn strategies for managing self-harm within the family environment, and practise healthy coping techniques. Ideally, parents and carers attend the FLASH (Families Learning About Self-Harm) group programme alongside their young person's participation in Teen FLASH. However, if this is not possible, each can attend their respective programme independently without the other person attending theirs.

Data Summary

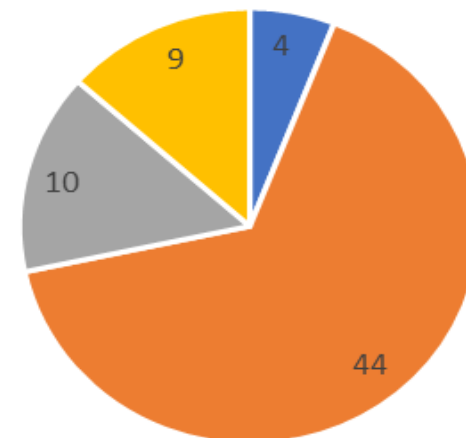
Total number of training places completed to date is 301

SHARPS training, trainee services



■ DCC ■ NHS ■ Charity ■ Education ■ Private company

FLASH training, trainees service



■ DCC ■ NHS ■ Charity ■ Education

	SHARPS	FLASH	Group Skills	Teen FLASH
Total number of trainings	14	5	1	1
Total number of professionals trained	210	70	7	14
Total trainees self-identified as female	188	62	6	12
Total trainees self-identified as male	22	8	1	2
Most common service sector accessing the training	NHS	NHS	NHS	NHS
Most common professional job role	Emotional Health and Well-Being Practitioner	Social Prescriber Children & Young People, Team Lead-Mental Health Support in Schools Team and Emotional Health and Well-Being Practitioner.	Social Prescriber Children & Young People.	CAMHS Practitioner
Highest qualification level reported by trainees	Degree and Diploma level	Degree and Diploma level	Degree	Degree
% of trainees found all the training content useful.	92.38%	85.71%	N/A as different evaluation questions requested	100%
% of trainees found all the training enjoyable.	74.28%	82.8%	/A as different evaluation questions requested	N/A
Formal complaints	0	0	0	0

Data information in more detail is in the appendix on page 5

We asked the trainees: How long will they be using the content of the trainings in their practice?

- The highest response comments were “For as long as I'm working with children who self-harm and their families”, “indefinitely” and “forever”.
- Barriers to using the content in practice, were based on concerns regarding staffing time to deliver an intervention and/or group.

We asked the trainees: Is there anything that can be done to improve the trainings?

Main comments from trainees	What MoP has done in response
“More for what professionals can do directly with young people.”	Created the online SHARPS workbook, including printable handouts and resources for young people. Teen FLASH training delivered to 16 professionals in April 2025.
“Summary of some of the strategies.”	Created the online SHARPS workbook, with a summary of training content and strategies.
“The location of the training”	Discussed and reviewed with commissioner. Training venues, locations and areas were changed from 2024.
“A review day following course to come back as a group and to reflect about actual practice.”	FLASH supervision offered. At first this was presented in an online peer supervision format. However, uptake was low. To overcome and meet this request, individual supervision is now offered either online or face to face to the FLASH trainees. Two ‘after hours’ face to face FLASH get togethers offered to all FLASH trained people to go over delivery ideas, revisit strategies and consider together any ‘barriers’ to delivery from agencies. Delivered in 2025. Mobile phone based ‘FLASH Facilitators Group’ created, to provide an ‘opt in’ peer support platform, where questions around delivery, best practice and resources or signposting can be shared.
“Mention triggers before training beginning.”	Training warning now on pre training email.
“Not to keep refer only to heterosexual parental relationships.”	Training disclaimer– use of the term “parents” in workbook to advice throughout the training delivery and training materials, the term “parents” is used as a universal reference to include all primary caregivers, regardless of sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or family composition. This language is intended to be inclusive rather than prescriptive.
“More training on group skills”	We delivered a four-day Group skills training course to seven professionals who had completed both the SHARPS and FLASH trainings.
“Trainers’ reflections- We wanted to increase awareness of inclusive language and gender identity”	An extra online resource was created to include handouts which are available on the SHARPS and FLASH website to ensure pages are available to all trainees.
“More SHARPS, FLASH and Teen FLASH training”	Training evaluation feedback reports sent to Dorset NHS

We asked the trainees: What part of the trainings did they get the most from?

Main comments

- Understanding of the parent's position and thinking about it from a parent's perspective.
- Discussions around self-harm. Group activities
- Role play practices.
- Not having a PowerPoint in sight.
- Parental styles strategy. Teenage brain strategy.
- I statement strategy.
- Handouts to re visit useful information.
- Understanding the developing brain
- Understanding the difference between self-harm and self-injury.
- Opportunity to share practice and approach ideas with other professionals.
- Refreshing some of the tasks we learnt in SHARPS and practicing the facilitating.
- The trainers are very friendly and interactive - they challenge which is always good - keep and hard topic light and on subject.
- Going through the programme
- Practising the delivery of the materials.
- Interactive activities 'trying on' the tasks".
- Clarification of common misconceptions.
- How the Teen FLASH manual has a lot of creative activities to do with children and how some adjustments have been implemented to meet different needs of individuals.

Building Local Capacity: The Train-the-Trainer Approach

As part of the project, a *Train-the-Trainer* model was introduced with a small number of staff to support programme sustainability. One professional, Luke Webb (Dorset NHS), has successfully completed this pathway and is now recognised by The Ministry of Parenting as a SHARPS and FLASH trainer. He is also authorised to offer the one-day FLASH training to professionals who have previously completed The Ministry of Parenting SHARPS training.

FLASH supervision and Implementation Support

Luke Webb was authorised to offer supervision to all trainees who have completed the FLASH training. This supervision supported the implementation and local delivery of FLASH groups, as well as progression through The Ministry of Parenting's internally accredited 'train the trainer' pathway. Sessions were facilitated online, with a range of times and days offered to accommodate people's schedules — a flexibility that proved effective in increasing attendance and engagement.

On average five delegates attended each supervision session, bringing a range of support needs. Common themes included:

- Building confidence in starting the process.
- Changes in team roles impacting group delivery
- Finance concerns
- Lacking a second facilitator to link with to comply with the group delivery requirement of two trained facilitators

Luke adapted the invitation method to support more people to access the online sessions and created (at the delegates request), a What's app group to update on information in the local area.

Luke Webb and Debbi Barnes (The Ministry of Parenting's Director and Trainer) also supported two face-to-face networking sessions, which proved highly valuable for sharing ideas and supporting the development of additional groups locally. One of these sessions was kindly attended by Elaine Hurl, who provided updates on the project and thanked the delegates for their continued dedication to young people.

Since starting the supervision, there has been an increase in attendance but also groups running.

Overcoming Barriers; Project Challenges and Solutions

Project barriers identified	What we have done to support overcoming these barriers
Rail and teacher strike in 2023/24 resulted in some registered delegates not being able to attend trainings as planned.	Delegates offered secured bookings on future training dates.
Due to Dorset NHS budget changes from April 2024, some pre-booked venues had to be changed by Dorset, resulting in the cancellation of four planned training being sessions.	The Ministry of Parenting (MoP) used part of the commissioning grant to fund a venue and refreshments in order to support a training to go ahead as planned. From May 2024, trainee lunches were no longer provided. The Dorset NHS administration team worked hard to identify and secure suitable venues for the 2024–2025 delivery period.
Dorset NHS administration team experienced periods of staff sickness, and staff leaving which-caused some disruption to the booking and confirmation system and processes. “Event” used as a booking term on the system, without further context or instructions.	Various booking systems were used by Dorset, settling on “Event Bright” later in the project. Trainer Luke Webb (Dorset NHS) supported by providing his local knowledge to support with logistical information. Maintaining frequent communication channels via: - Regular Zoom meetings with Dorset NHS project lead Elaine Hurl and the Ministry of Parenting CIC Directors. - Regular email communication with Dorset NHS administration team and the Ministry of Parenting CIC Directors

The Success Story So Far

- Four FLASH groups have been run locally, with other groups planned.
- The Poole team have started a Teen FLASH group.

- CAMHS, GAU and Acute Hospital have linked to start a group, supporting each other to overcome any challenges by implementing a collaborative approach.
- Sourcing charitable funds to support groups locally.
- People feeling more confident in running a group knowing that support is available.
- Staff supporting changes in their role to aid the facilitation of groups.

Going Forward

Recent NHS Digital data <https://digital.nhs.uk/supplementary-information/2024/hospital-admissions-related-to-self-harm> shows significant regional increases in hospital admissions for self-harm among 8–17-year-olds. These figures highlight the urgency of building local capacity to respond meaningfully to distress. We recognise that hospital data captures only a fraction of the picture. Many young people who self-harm manage their distress alone — while families are left feeling isolated, unsure how to help, and in need of meaningful support.

This is where the FLASH SHARPS and Teen FLASH training and supervision makes a difference — equipping frontline professionals with the tools, language, and confidence to support both adolescents and their families more effectively.

We believe the training, supervision and networking opportunities have had an impact on the confidence and strategy of FLASH and Teen FLASH groups and should continue. We are concerned that as services change and people move on from their roles there is a chance that facilitators may not have capacity to run a group and could negatively impact waiting lists and service-capacity for being able to provide the best care to these families in need.

A continuation of training and supervision would prove invaluable, supporting consistency across services and enable the FLASH, SHARPS and Teen FLASH process to continue to support parents and carers whose young people self-harm.

Next Steps

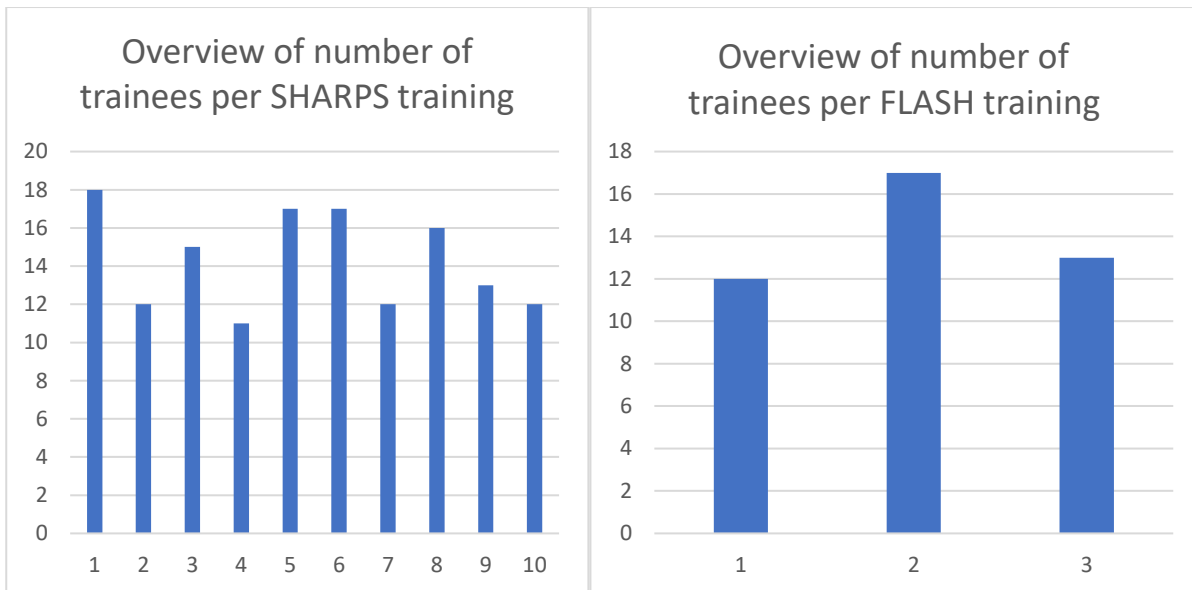
Sustainability of the project post November 2025 to be reviewed by Dorset NHS

For further information contact administration@theministryofparenting.com

Appendix

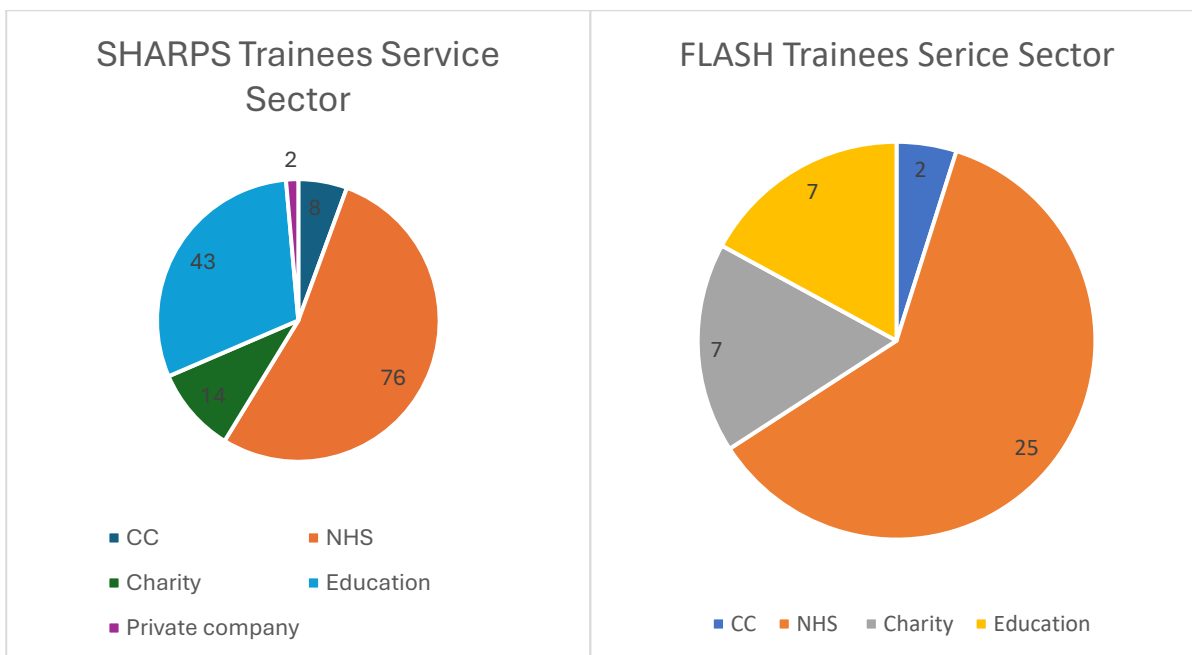
Data in more detail

Table 1 & 2 – Overview of number of trainees per training



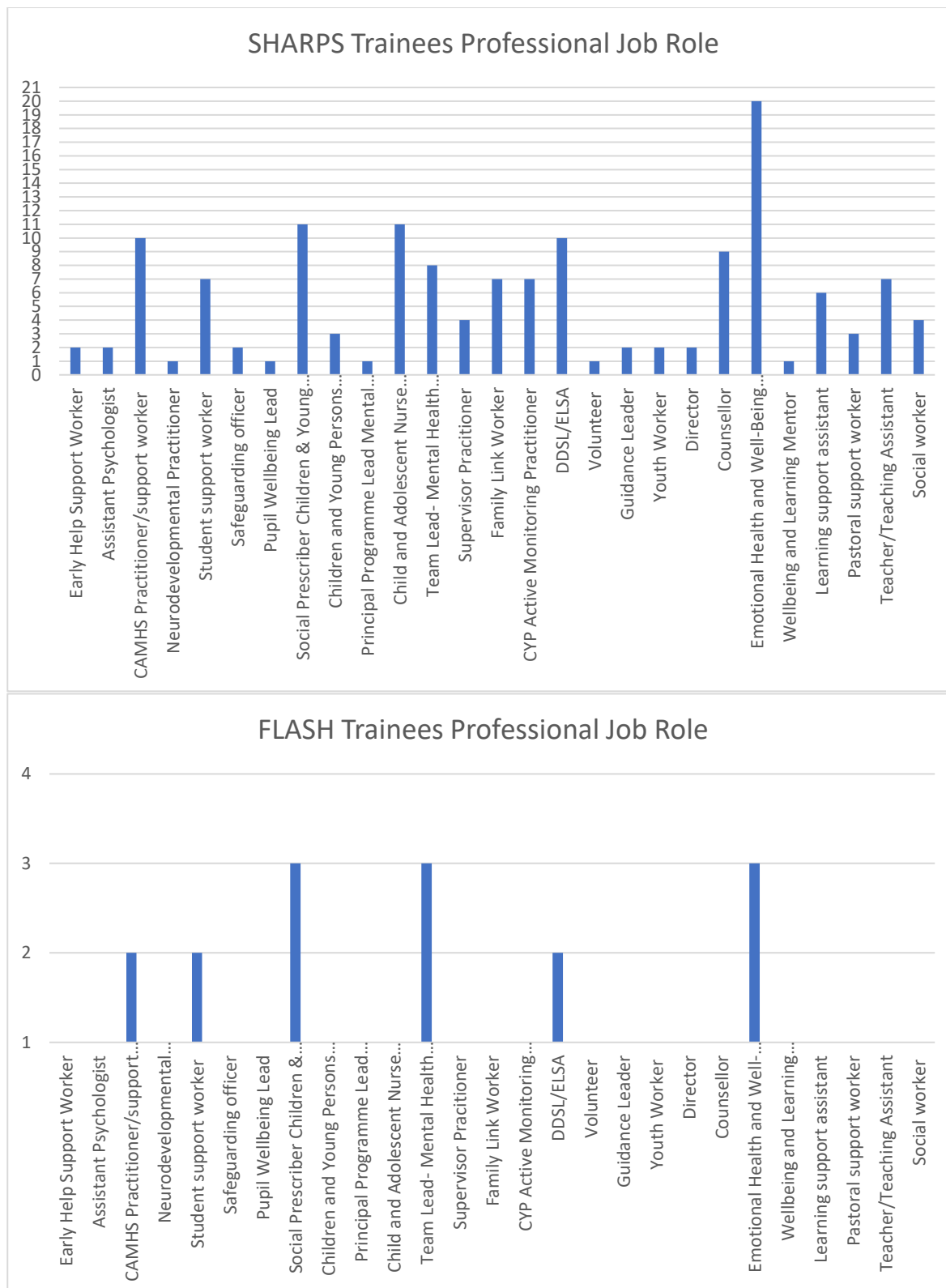
11 to 18 per training

Table 3 & 4 – Trainees Service Sector



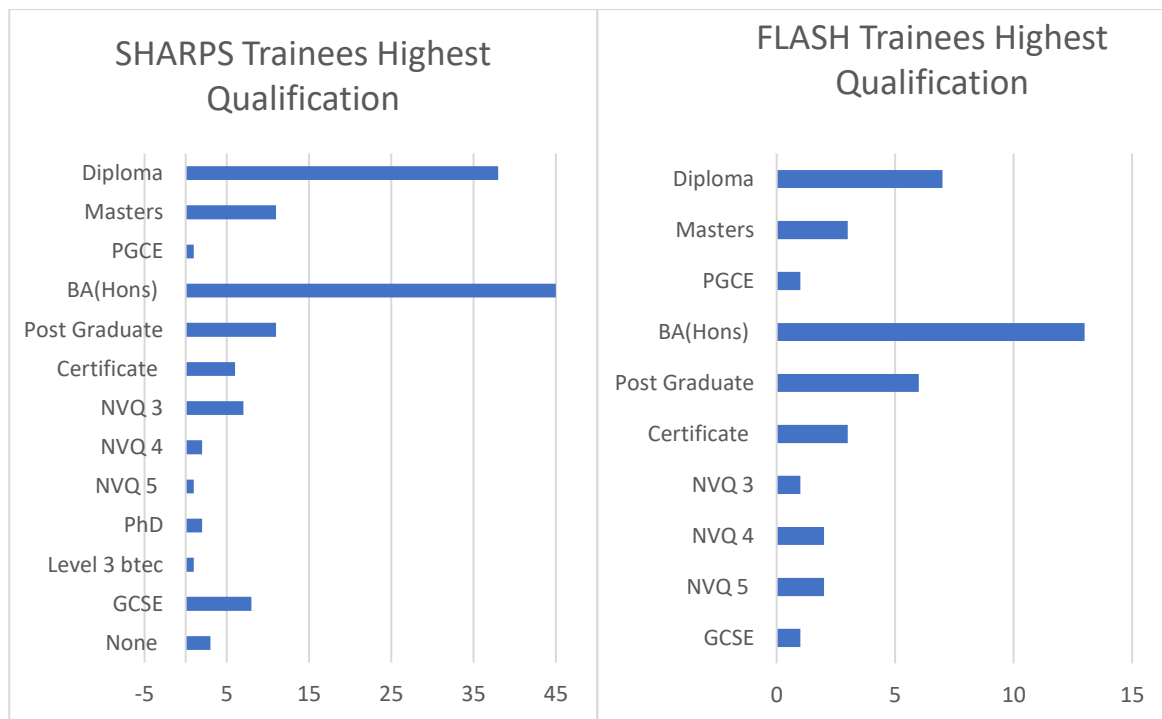
NHS highest service sector accessing the SHARPS and FLASH trainings

Table 5 & 6 – Trainees professionals job role



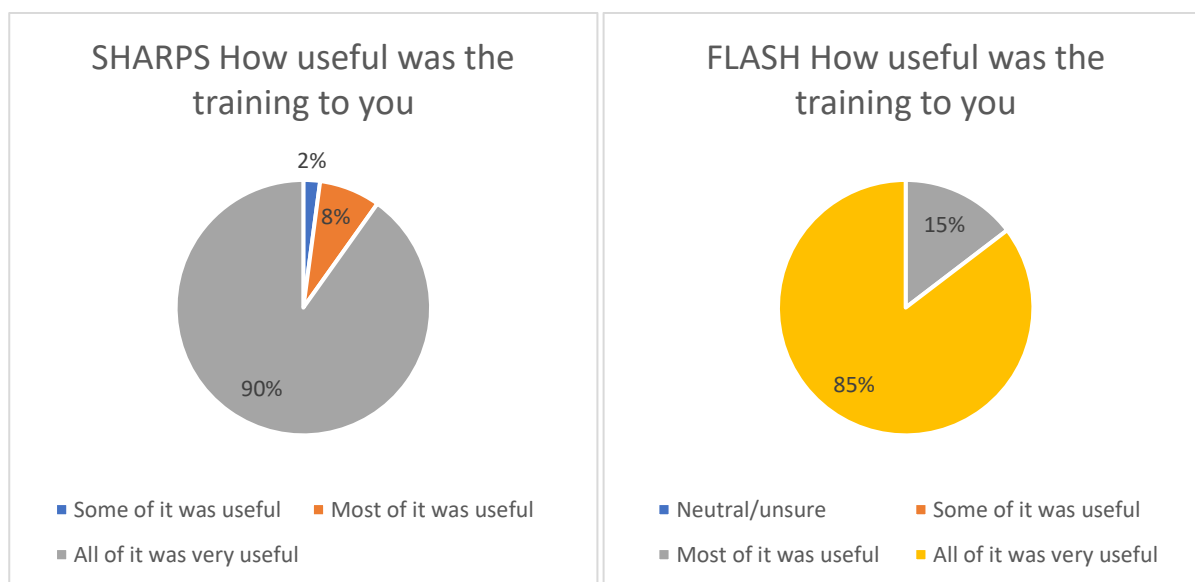
Wide range of job roles. The most common job role in SHARPS was Emotional Health and Well-Being Practitioner. For FLASH it was Social Prescriber Children & Young People, Team Lead- Mental Health Support in Schools Team and Emotional Health and Well-Being Practitioner.

Table 7 & 8 – Trainees highest qualification



Highest level of qualifications stated by trainees in both the SHARPS and FLASH trainings were Degree and Diploma level

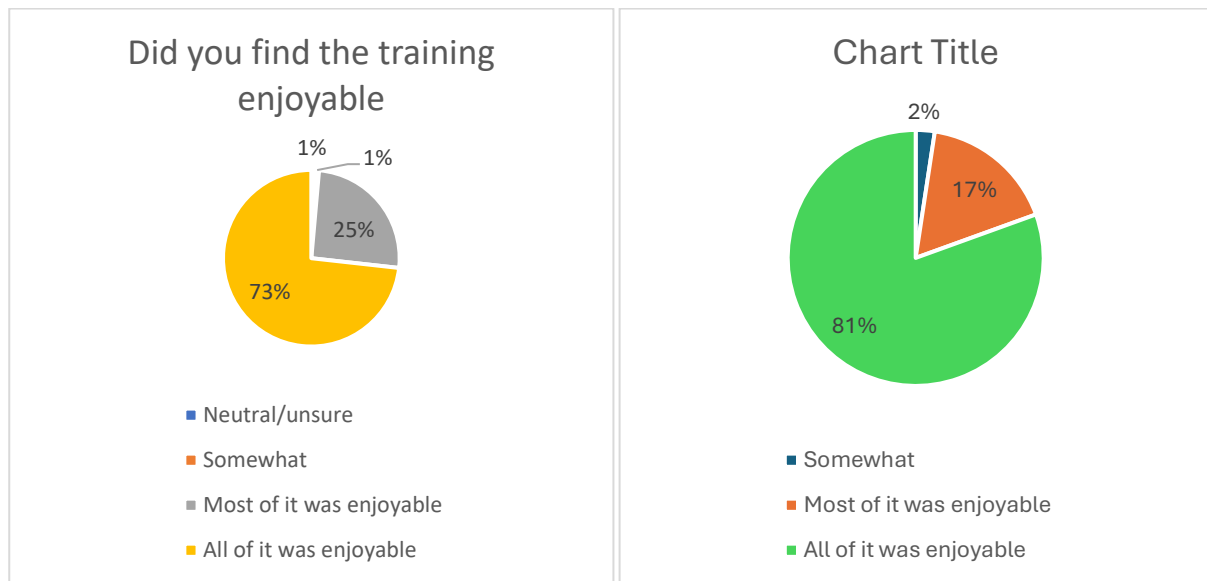
Table 9 & 10 – How useful was the training to the trainees



90% of trainees found all the SHARPS training content useful and 85% of trainees found all the FLASH training content useful.

Some practitioners were from a learning disability background and communicated that this was a real eye opener to the challenges of self-harm within ID CAMHS and something that they would recommend to their colleagues.

Table 11 & 12 – Did the trainees find the training enjoyable



73 % of trainees found all the SHARPS training enjoyable, and 81% found all of the FLASH training enjoyable, which considering the sensitive nature of the content is very high.