

Emotional Well-Being and Mental Health - Online Counselling and Support Service.

Today's children and young people are digital natives comfortable interacting with support services via their connected devices (smart phones, tablets and PCs). Solihull CCG are exploring the possibility of piloting an online counselling and support service to complement traditional support networks to increase the accessibility and reach of mental health and wellbeing services for Children and Young People.

Kooth are providers of online counselling and support services to a number of LA's in the West Midlands, they were also acknowledged for their best practice in the 'Future in Mind' report 2015:

“While digital support can encourage an individual's autonomy over their treatment, online services should be commissioned in a way that is integrated and complementary to face-to-face support. This supports the principles of some services which are already established in this field such as KOOTH, an online service providing counselling and group support to 11 - 25 year olds, which when commissioned can work and cross refer with face-to-face services provided in a local area to promote integrated support”

Solihull CCG is keen to pilot this approach with Kooth and is seeking support from Secondary Head Teachers.

The Kooth service is promoted and integrated into existing support systems by

- visiting schools, colleges and other agencies to promote the service to children and young people, parents/carers and professionals and ensure they know how it can be accessed
- Developing and providing publicity materials for schools and other services and to promote the service

The Objectives of the service would be to:

- Provide an online counselling and support service 7 days a week, 365 days a year from 12noon to 10pm Monday to Friday and 6pm to 10pm Saturday and Sunday
- Provide an accessible, safe, secure, moderated website with online community features
- Target CYP with emotional wellbeing and/or emerging mental health problems, many of whom will require a low level/targeted/short-term intervention
- Target CYP that are hard to reach and do not engage with services through traditional routes
- Use recognised assessment tools, and set clear outcomes with CYP using the service. Use the CAF or another suitable tool as a method for recording discussions/activities and therapy content, and to link with other services on the delivery pathway.
- Through the online counselling service website provide:
 - A chat function for a young person to drop in to speak to a readily available counsellor

Julie Hackett, Strategic Commissioner. SMBC.
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- A messaging function for young people to contact the service
 - A schedule function to provide booked sessions with a named counsellor on a regular basis
 - A range of forums, all of which are pre-moderated, to offer facilitated peer support for CYP. They also provide crucial first steps towards getting further therapeutic support
 - Live discussion groups – run by professionals (with all comments moderated) to enable groups of CYP to interact with each other in a safe environment
 - An online magazine with full content moderation, creation and editing which includes opportunities for CYP to submit their stories or write articles, all of which is moderated
 - Information, activities and self-care tools and resources on the site for CYP to download.
- Provide quarterly reports that measure demographics, usage, new registrations, feedback, outcomes and case studies.
 - Ensure clear pathways are in place for follow on work, signposting and safeguarding and work closely with the local CAMHS provider, schools and Early Help offer locally to develop effective service pathways.
 - Work closely with Local Authority Children’s Services and the Safeguarding Children Board to implement effective safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in accordance with locally agreed multi-agency safeguarding thresholds.
 - Provide a trained qualified workforce experienced in working with CYP; with counsellors who are registered with an appropriate professional body e.g. BACP or equivalent.
 - Undertake regular engagement and integration work in schools and with wider CYP’s trusted stakeholders to promote, educate and build effective working relationships between the services.