

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S  
STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP REPORT

<b>DATE OF MEETING:</b>	<b>14 December 2011</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>KOOTH- Online Counselling for young people aged 11-25 with emotional wellbeing concerns</b>
<b>REPORT SPONSOR:</b>	<b>Debbie Barnes</b>
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<b>IS THE REPORT EXEMPT?</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>IS THE REPORT CONFIDENTIAL?</b>	<b>No</b>

**1. Purpose**

To inform the CYPSP of the new online counselling service available in Lincolnshire for young people aged 11-25 who have emotional wellbeing and mental health concerns. Xenzone, the Service Provider, will be making a presentation on the Service at the CYPSP.

**2. Background/Context**

As the CYPSP has previously been made aware, Children's Services is the lead commissioner for Tier 2 (targeted) Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in Lincolnshire. Using pooled funding from NHS Lincs and LCC, early intervention CAMH Services have recently been commissioned, which are modelled on the Targeted Mental Health in Schools Pathfinder and link into Children's Services Local Integrated Teams and processes. The purpose of the Tier 2 Service is to up-skill staff working universally to identify and support young people with mental health concerns and to provide them with a direct referral route and quicker access to CAMHS for those who need direct mental health interventions. Interest has been very high so far from Schools and Academies wanting to have access to this service.

To enhance early intervention CAMH Services and the Brilliant Lincolnshire approach, Children's DMT approved a one year pilot project to deliver online counselling. Online counselling has the potential to solve a number of key local problems by providing:

- Out of hours provision including weekends
- Easy access to services despite the rural nature of the county

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- Reduced stigma associated with physically accessing a service and needing to involve other professionals
- Immediate support from point of registration with no waiting for an intervention thus helping to prevent the escalation of concerns
- Interim support for those waiting to receive a CAMHS intervention
- Value for money due to low overhead costs
- Useful needs analysis data showing the type of concerns young people are presenting with

The Youth Cabinet contacted their peers in other areas to see what they thought about online counselling- those that responded had positive feedback and those who didn't have such a service in place were very interested in the innovative approach and wanted to know more. Requests for quotations were sought in July/August and Xenzone were awarded the contract.

### **The Service**

KOOTH is a project run by Xenzone, a company based in Manchester that specialises in online counselling. The project has been running for seven years and is currently commissioned by Local Authorities and Primary Care Trusts in 12 geographical areas in the UK.

KOOTH is an online resource that is free to access for young people aged 11-25 and provides:

- Drop in chats with counsellors
- Booked 1:1 counselling
- Group chats
- Themed message forums
- Training and promotion in schools and colleges

The service is available seven days a week, web access is 24/7 and counsellors are online 12-10pm weekdays and 4-10pm weekends.

The service is provided by 14 qualified psycho therapists and counsellors, some of whom are trained nurses. All staff are clinically supervised by the British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy and receive regular face-to-face supervision, caseload management and training.

The KOOTH team visit schools and colleges and other relevant settings to promote the website and train staff. All marketing materials are provided.

Young people can then register on KOOTH. They are asked to provide contact details, including age, gender, ethnicity and their location. Should a young person wish to remain anonymous they can still access support without filling in these details.

Following registration, young people can roam the website and forums and can immediately access 1:1 counselling. Young people then have two weeks to roam the site and take part in drop in chats with other Counsellors. After two weeks or sooner young people can choose an individual Counsellor and can book in regular 1:1 chats. A contract is made with the young person at this point setting out dates and times of sessions. Up to 12 sessions (can be more if needed) are provided after which young people are encouraged to access CAMHS if needed. Young people can return to the site for more support at any point. Current statistics show that 55% of users only require one session with 15% requiring four or more

sessions.

### **Internet Security**

All emails are secure and case notes are held centrally under a young person's username, which counsellors can access. Young people sign a confidentiality agreement when registering, but if a serious safeguarding concern or disclosure is made then KOOTH are legally able to track a young person's IP Address and location and contact the appropriate Local Authority's social services team to escalate.

### **Measuring Outcomes**

KOOTH are licensed to use the Child Session Rating Scale and YP-CORE outcome measure (on those aged 14+) which is also being used by the CAMHS Outcomes Research Consortium (CORC). Lincolnshire CAMHS also uses CORC to measure outcomes delivered.

Upon accessing any 1:1 counselling, young people are asked to complete YP-CORE questions- this is a very quick process and helps set out planned outcomes. Young people then update their responses each session so that achieved outcomes can be measured.

KOOTH is able to identify and report on which locality area (including district/town level) young people are accessing the service from and can provide output data on user age, gender, ethnicity, how users spend their time on KOOTH, time of logins, day of logins, nature of concerns and numbers of referrals to CAMHS and other agencies.

### **Links to CAMHS**

KOOTH works best when it is part of a local area's comprehensive CAMHS. Since commissioning the Service, meetings have taken place between CAMHS and Xenzone and referral pathways between the two services are being put in place allowing either party to refer to one another. KOOTH can also be used as an out of hours top-up CAMHS and as an interim service whilst young people are waiting to receive an intervention from specialist CAMHS. Joint promotion to all Head Teachers is also planned as well as joint training/information sharing to each others staff groups.

## **3. Recommendation**

Following a presentation by Xenzone on the Service, that CYPSP members inform Xenzone of any other key areas for promotion within their own networks and also promote the service themselves wherever possible.