

Media release

Thursday, 8 July 2021

West Yorkshire and Harrogate Health and Care Partnership has launched a new pilot overnight mental health crisis support line for children and young people.

[Night OWLS](#) (Overnight West Yorkshire Listening/Advice Service) is a service for all families including those with children and young people who are Looked After, Adopted or have any additional needs who are in crisis or struggling with their mental health.

Night OWLS is a confidential support line and online chat facility that helps young people get virtual support when they need it. It provides a safe space where someone can listen and show warmth, acceptance and understanding; offers a chance to look at ways for children and young people to cope and to keep themselves safe; supports with finding solutions to problems, and provides information about local services for carers.

The service was designed in collaboration with young people and parent/carer groups across West Yorkshire. The groups involved represent a variety of interests, including neurodiverse needs, SEND, Mental Health, Looked After and adoption which brings a richness of involvement in the shaping of the service, a wide representation of families' voice and understanding of needs.

The young people have been involved in agreeing the key principles of the service, coming up with a name, contributing to the design of the logo, and are now making a video to promote the service, including music they have created themselves. The parent/carer groups have helped with the specification of the service, the directory of local services, gathering views and promotion of Night OWLS. These groups will support the pilot and subsequent evaluation.

Thank you to everyone who has given their time and contributed their thoughts and ideas to co-produce this service.

Sue Rumbold, Programme Director, Children and Families Programme, West Yorkshire and Harrogate Health and Care Partnership said:

"This pilot initiative has been co-produced with children and young people across our region and designed around their needs. By also supporting parents and carers whose children are experiencing mental health difficulties anxiety and stress overnight, the service is intended to prevent escalation into full-blown crisis, offering immediate advice when many services are closed and signpost to relevant local services for the child and young person and their families to access.

"The Night Owls innovation is important at this time of increased anxiety and stress for children and young people as it will give support and ensure care is in place for everyone who is in distress. This is seen as a very positive approach by all partners across the Health and Care Partnership. Directors of Children's services are very supportive of this approach as are third sector organisations.

"It has been a true partnership effort both from a commissioner perspective – with Leeds CCG leading the regional collaboration across our five geographical places (Calderdale, Bradford, Wakefield and Kirklees) and through work with partner organisations across West Yorkshire to ensure connections are made with local services."

Keir Shillaker, Programme Director for Mental Health, Learning Disability and Autism Programme West Yorkshire and Harrogate Health and Care Partnership said:

“The numbers of children and young people and parent/carers who need support in the middle of the night can be relatively small but we need to acknowledge that their needs are both important and complex. By working in collaboration across West Yorkshire we have been able to collectively fund a pilot of an overnight support service through Leeds Crisis Led Support Service which will ensure that support and advice is available overnight seven days a week”

James Robinson - Healthy Minds Service Transformation Apprentice said:

“I've really enjoyed the co-production work with the Night OWLS focus group, it's been nice to be part of something new and have an input. The project has come together really well and at a quick pace - it's going to make such a positive difference to people's lives.”

Emma Holmes CEO, Leeds Survivor Led Crisis Service said:

“We are really pleased to be delivering the pilot for the Night OWLS service, says. Night OWLS is such an essential service for the region and will complement the services that are already in place and assist in ensuring children and young people and their families receive the support they need when they are in or experiencing crisis overnight and when other services are closed.”

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