

Kooth.Com on-line counselling service

Kooth.com is an online portal offering counselling and support and rapid referral into face2face services to young people aged 11-25 across tiers one and two. We currently operate in 8 local authorities.

We also do support some young people who are currently tier three (in partnership with any existing work that is currently being carried out- joint working is very much a protocol for Kooth).

It is part of the early intervention and prevention strategy and came originally out of Invest to Save monies, piloted in Stockport in Partnership with Xenzone who built and operate the platform – the project is now mainstreamed due to its success.

We wanted to set up an easy to access service for young people struggling with emotional well being issues and the internet is very much young peoples medium. The driver was to make sure that those young people who needed a face2face intervention could get one easily at the point of need in a manner that was non-stigmatising - young people have the choice of working online or/and seeing a worker. By investing in preventative work, monies can be saved.

Other drivers were the Every Child Matters agenda – Kooth uses the CAF as its referral base and case notes are based on the CAF as well. Also the lessons learned from Climbie/Laming recommendations.

Kooth fits the framework outlined in the papers “Choosing Health” and “Our health, Our care, Our say”.

The drivers can be summarised as thus:

- Need to improve outcomes for children and young people in need whilst delivering savings in public expenditure
- Young men more likely to commit suicide, enter youth custody and less likely to access support services
- Young people experience high waiting lists for face to face services
- High waiting lists leads to deterioration of mental health
- Preventative provision stretched by high thresholds making family support services difficult to access leading to more children, young people and families in crisis
- Current process for assessment of need and access leads to delay and duplication of information

The aims of the project are summarised as:

- An easy point of access for young people to get help when they need it from a team of professionals trained to work online
- A rapid referral pathways system into face2face services
- Reporting system measuring access, outcomes, joint working
- More young men accessing support services
- Access into family based services

The full evaluation report is on the ODPM website or people can ask for a copy of it from Elaine@xenzone.com or gill.askew@stockport.gov.uk