

Stakeholder briefing – online wellbeing support for Children and Young People

Dear stakeholder,

Providing the best mental health and wellbeing support to children and young people (CYP) and adults is of the highest importance to NHS North East London.

From 2018 onwards, children and young people in our area have been able to access free, digital services through an independent provider, Kooth. As part of this contract, Kooth provided access to their adult online platform, Qwell. The current contract for these services is coming to an end, and we have decided to update the service specification in line with new guidance and user requirements. We would like to thank Kooth for their services during the years and appreciate the journey of learning we have had together.

Young people accessing Kooth will continue to receive support until 31 December 2025. Around 90 of the CYP are currently receiving direct online support through a Kooth practitioner or counsellor, and one adult via Qwell. They will be supported through a personalised safe handover plan with their practitioner or counsellor in the coming weeks. New registrations will stop from 7 November 2025.

We are pleased to confirm that we will continue to commission digital support next year and will be exploring options that best meet the needs of our population. As part of our continuous mental health service improvement work, to meet standards and legislation, we have undertaken extensive engagement with CYP and clinicians over the last 18 months. Together with a review of the service, feedback and experience insight, we found that the main factors that contributed to our decision are:

- Young people told us that they would prefer an App based product to support their wellbeing, rather than via a webpage. As a result, there has been lower uptake of the Kooth service than expected. Unfortunately, Kooth's app will not be available until later in 2026, and we are keen to respond to feedback from young people. We have also seen low uptake of the adult wellbeing service, Qwell.
- From a system perspective, we want to continue to improve our integration of local NHS services and pathways, as well as recognising the support available through our vibrant Community and Voluntary sector partners. This would support our move towards neighbourhood health working and align with the ambitions set out in the NHS 10 Year Plan. We believe knowledge of relevant local services will support and empower CYP to access the right services at the right time.
- Our extremely challenged financial position means that we must make the best value for money decisions, that meet the needs of local people.

We have considered these factors carefully and have decided the best option is not to renew our current contract with Kooth, which will end this calendar year. We have co-developed a robust system to ensure those currently receiving direct support from Kooth are provided with information about alternative services available to them, depending on need.

For those that need urgent mental health support, the below services will be shared:

- **NHS 111**: dial 111 on any phone and select 'Option 2' to speak to a mental health professional
- [**Childline**](#): dial 0800 1111 or visit the website to talk to someone and get text support.

For those requiring self-help resources, for emotional wellbeing support for children and young people, that are available via mobile apps or online, the below options will be shared:

- **[Every Mind Matters](#)**: simple and practical ways to ease anxiety, manage stress, lift mood, and sleep better
- **[Young Minds](#)**: information and support for CYP or for someone wanting to help a child or young person who is struggling with their mental health
- **[Clear Fear app](#)**: information and support to reduce the physical responses to threat as well as changing thoughts and behaviours, and releasing emotions
- **[Calm Harm](#)**: information and support to help manage the urge to self-harm, based on Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT)
- **[The Good Thinking](#)**: news, advice, and tips on managing mental health plus guest blogs and personal stories from experts, Good Thinking users and communities from across London.

For those requiring direct emotional wellbeing and mental health support, information about the below services will be shared:

- **Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)**: accessible to children and young people, up to the age of 18, with significant mental health needs or providing links to local voluntary and community sector services as appropriate:
 - Residents living in Barking and Dagenham, Redbridge, Havering and Waltham Forest can [Refer/Contact us | NELFT NHS Foundation Trust](#)
 - Residents living in Newham can contact [Newham Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service \(CAMHS\) | East London NHS Foundation Trust](#)
 - Residents living in Tower Hamlets can contact [CAMHS Tower Hamlets | East London NHS Foundation Trust](#)
 - Residents living in City and Hackney can contact [Referral Process and Details - City & Hackney CAMHS](#)
- **Mental Health Schools Team (MHST)**: offer a range of services that can be accessed via participating schools and colleagues
- **Talking Therapies**: accessible to young people aged 18 years and above. Referrals can be made by a professional or independently via the appropriate website. Search online for 'Talking Therapies' in the local area and self-refer online, this is the quickest and easiest way to access this service.

We have begun the process of redesigning our digital offer, and continue to work with professionals, system partners, and most importantly children, young people, parents and carers, to define the requirements of a digital wellbeing service that meets the needs of those accessing it and is integrated with local health and wellbeing services.

Thank you for your understanding and support. If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact the ICB's communications team by email and we will respond as quickly as possible: nelondonicb.enquiries@nhs.net

Yours faithfully,



Paul Gilluley,
Chief Clinical and Quality Commissioning Officer

NHS North East London