

# Vocal

VCSE forums facilitated by  
Salford CVS

Vocal Children, Young  
People & Families Forum



**Date:** Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> July

**Time:** 10.00am – 12noon

**Venue:** Salford Lads' and Girls' Club

**Number of people registered:** 13

### Speakers

Layla Farahzady (Kooth/Quell)

Rachel Shenton (Wellbeing Matters)

### Salford CVS staff present:

Katrina Fletcher

Ella Saltiel

Helen Johnson

**The theme for this forum meeting:** Suicide Prevention and Mental Health

Katrina Fletcher welcomed everyone, and the attendees were invited to introduce themselves.

**Free, safe and anonymous  
mental health support**

For all ages in **Greater Manchester**.

For ages 10-25: [kooth.com](https://www.kooth.com)  
For ages 26+: [quell.io](https://www.quell.io)

The graphic features the Kooth + Quell logo at the top left. Below it, the text 'Free, safe and anonymous mental health support' is written in a large, bold font. Underneath, it says 'For all ages in Greater Manchester.' and provides two website links: 'For ages 10-25: kooth.com' and 'For ages 26+: quell.io'. On the right side, there is an illustration of four diverse people (two men and two women) standing in front of a building that resembles a church or cathedral. The background is a light beige color with a dark blue curved shape at the top left and a green curved shape at the bottom right.

### Young People's Mental Health

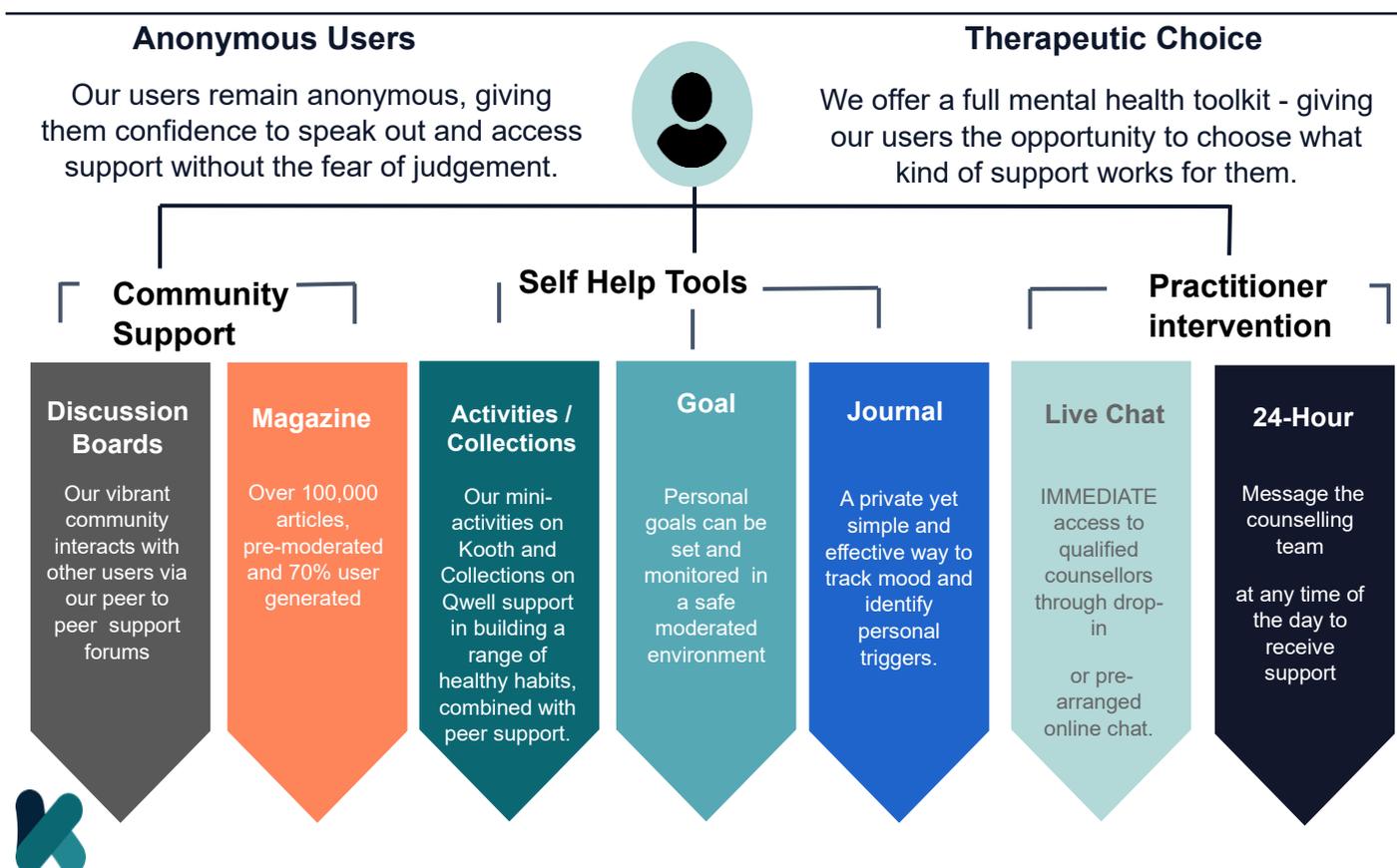
Layla Farahzady from Kooth/Quell shared a presentation on the mental health services that Kooth offer for young people and Quell for adults.

Kooth is an online platform for supporting young people with their mental health. It was founded in 2001 to help break down the stigma attached to mental health services. Those who wish to use Kooth can self-refer and remain anonymous. This is aimed at all ages across Greater Manchester. The flagship service has won awards for delivery, including Health Tech Pioneer of the Year in 2021.

The most presenting issue for Kooth, as well as the adult service Quell, across the UK is anxiety and stress. Since the pandemic, the most increase issue is suicidal thoughts.

Quell is also an online platform, supporting adults with their mental health. It emerged in 2018 after the proven impact that Kooth was delivering for young people. Quell is one of the only British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) accredited digital services for adults. Over 3.8 million adults in the UK have access to Quell, and it is available to adults aged 26+ across Greater Manchester.

Kooth and Quell have been commissioned by the Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership.



There is a live chat option available which has counselling hours. There is also an out of hours option which is a text based service. If text isn't preferred, the client will

be signposted to a face to face service if an alternative cannot be offered. The first three sessions are assessment based, which helps to build a picture of the need and any presenting issues.

The service delivery team for Kooth and Quell is made up of:

- **Senior Practitioners** – a team of professionals from mental health and/or managerial backgrounds who manage and support their own team of Counsellor and Emotional Wellbeing Practitioners. There are at least 2 available for safeguarding support and triage duties
- **Counsellors** – a large number of accredited Counsellors who offer both assessment drop in and case loads which offer structured therapeutic interventions for service users. There is also a messaging support offer
- **Emotional Wellbeing Practitioners** – a larger number from various different backgrounds including mental health, social care and community support work. They offer assessment, drop in and caseloads offering self esteem, resilience, relationship building and coping strategies. They also offer messaging support

There are community features including a magazine and discussion boards. The discussion boards are moderated before they go live to ensure that they are safe and supportive, and include forums ranging from mental health and wellbeing, to more casual chat. There are also self-help resources available which include goal setting, journaling, activities and collections. The journal is offered across both the children and adults services and is moderated for any concerns but is otherwise left private for those who do not want to leave a paper trail at home.

Although Kooth/Quell aren't crisis services, they would not turn anyone away but would signpost them to the correct organisation or need. There is also a safeguarding team, which is the first point of contact for all concerns raised by staff and service users.

The Greater Manchester Engagement Programme is the opportunity to tell people about the Kooth/Quell services and includes workshops in schools and work places, resource packs with a QR code to ensure it is discreet and webinars. The webinars can be accessed via Eventbrite here: [@KoothEngagementTeam | Linktree](#)

## Questions and Answers

Q - If someone is in crisis is this done by text or do you then phone them?

A – It is all online but we will keep them up to date with communication about signposting and who, where and why.

Q – Is there a specialist team for Neurodiverse patients?

A – All of our staff are trained, some may have further training so someone can request a specific staff member. If someone has difficulty speaking online, we would find a face to face or phone call service which would suit them better.

Q – Do you have waiting lists?

A – No, the client is dealt with quite quickly, there may be an hour or so wait at most.

For any more questions contact, [greatermanchester@kooth.com](mailto:greatermanchester@kooth.com)



### **Social prescribing support for mental health and wellbeing**

Rachel Shenton, Children and Families Community Connector for the Wellbeing Matters programme in Salford, shared a presentation on the social prescribing support available for children, young people and families.

Rachel is based in the Ordsall, Langworthy, Seedley and Quays areas of Salford. She is a Community Connector linking people to supporting a non-medical, non-clinical approach and a holistic way of working. The programme is person-centred and is around what is important to them. The person is connected to groups in the community to reduce pressure on GP surgeries.

Wellbeing Matters is open to adults over 18 years, who have a GP in Salford and who consent to being referred. The connector talks to the referred adult about their current situation, personal circumstances and support networks to find out more about them. The connector then shares information on local activities and support available in Salford and creates a simple shared plan. The support is given face to face, over the phone or by email and the referred adult can work with the connector for up to 8 sessions. Currently, the referred adult will be contacted within 3-5 working days from their referral from the GP practice.

Social prescribing works for a wide range of people and issues including:

- One or more long-term conditions

- Mental health support (including low mood, anxiety and depression)
- Loneliness or isolation
- Social needs which affect wellbeing
- In need of increased activity levels/weight management support
- Those who frequently attend either primary or secondary health care

The referral pathway is via GP practices, but also through services such as Living Well Mental Health team, Six Degrees and the Adult Health and Social Care contact team.

**Wellbeing Matters**

**Meeting your Community Connector**

From your recent appointment at your GP practice, it was agreed by yourself and your healthcare professional to explore support from a Community Connector.

**Your Community Connector will:**

- Listen to you and focus on what matters to you
- Talk to you to find out more about you as a person
- Share information of local activities and support available in Salford
- Connect with community groups and agencies for practical and emotional support
- Visit community groups and first appointments with you where needed
- Work together face to face, on the phone and email

**What will happen next?**

- You will receive a call, text or email to introduce the support from your Community Connector.
- Together we will look at a menu of options and ideas that may work for you.
- Discuss together if this is an offer that would work for you. Chat about your initial thoughts. Talk about the things that matter to you.
- We will meet with you at a time and place that is convenient for you. Together we can connect to activities and community support that can have a positive impact on your health and happiness. If you have any compliments or concerns please contact [wellbeingmatters@salfordcvs.co.uk](mailto:wellbeingmatters@salfordcvs.co.uk) 0161 787 7795

As the Children and Families Connector, Rachel creates relationships to services and support which are tailored to support children and families, such as the Family Hubs, youth teams, social care and health visitors. There are VCSE organisations which can support the referrals out for such things as practical support and cost of living support, including Visit from the Stork, Wood Street Mission, Foundation 92, Salford Baby Bank, Mustard Tree etc. Connections can also be made to wellbeing and social groups for activities and support including the Angel Centre, Ordsall Community Arts, Langworthy Cornerstone, Salford Health Improvement Team,

Salford Libraries etc.

The Community Connector team are based across the whole of Salford and will make appointments times that suit the client and can meet in places that they feel comfortable. The team work across the anchor organisations Social adVentures, Big Life, Langworthy Cornerstone, Start, Helping Hands, Inspiring Communities Together and Salford CVS. They are also based in community spaces such as community centres, the gateways and some GP practices.

If you would like more information or to connect with Rachel, she can be contacted at [Rachel.Shenton@socialadventures.org.uk](mailto:Rachel.Shenton@socialadventures.org.uk)

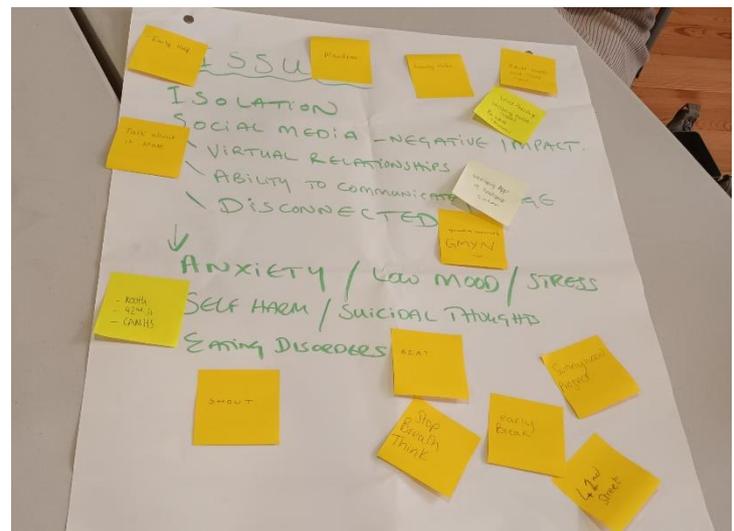
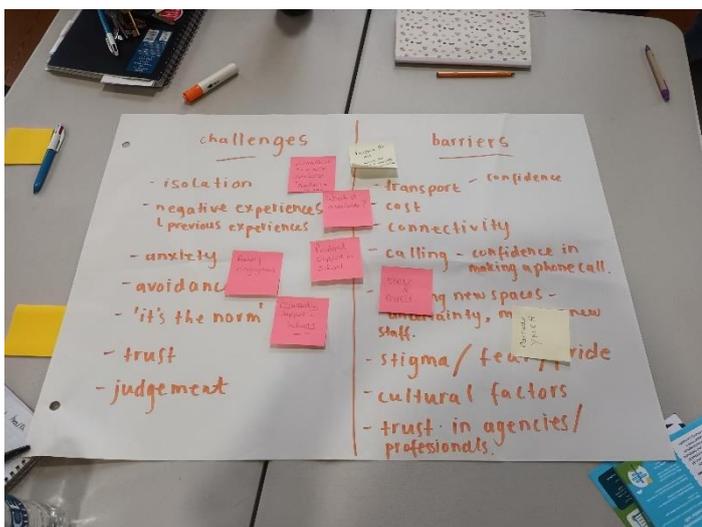
## Questions and Answers

Q - Who refers children into the programme?

A – The primary care network haven't decided the criteria for working directly with children so at the moment, the referral is done via the parent and I work with the child and parent. Schools can't make referrals at the moment. Schools can ring the GP practice and ask to be referred into the programme, they don't necessarily need an appointment.

Q- Do you have a list of signposting organisations for higher level mental health/suicide prevention?

A - We aren't a crisis centre. We would send them crisis numbers and contact the GP as a safeguarding issue. If they don't need practical support with us, we would discharge them from our service. They would get mental health support and then they are welcome back to our service when they are ready for non-crisis support. Our focus is wellbeing and low level mental health, the specialists provide higher level support.



## Breakout session

The attendees were split into groups. They were given questions to discuss and fed back.

What can we do as VCSE organisations to support young people's mental health?

- Support with transition through school, specifically result and exam stress. Coping mechanisms, offer support services on school website, book in with school support
- Teachers need training on how they deliver pressure, young people being more than a final grade
- Wider view of success? Successful and 'professional' subjects not just focus on 'academic' subjects
- Teacher/parent/student triangle of support, both teachers and parents need to address attitudes and ways they motivate and support young people
- Recognise it is contextual – schools are very pressurised for teachers and head as well
- Unrealistic expectations on children. Need to alter what's expected of children, outdated expectations on children
- Education healthcare plan – massive wait list. This is the main space to access support in school system. This is generally key to access next steps
- Pressure on schools to be everything to children – pastoral, nurses, additional support
- Place for sector to have conversations with schools about this?
- VCSE sector have a place in checking climate in schools. What messages are they giving to children?
- Early intervention – get in there early, target issues early on
- Is there pressure on the sector to do this? Statutory services are relying on the VCSE sector to provide mental health services. It should be group work but ends up being one on one, while young people are on waiting lists

What are the key aspects to consider when developing the new Suicide Prevention Strategy?

- Strategy written in 2017, things have changed in 5 years. We're in a different place. Social media changed (tiktok), cost of living etc – should be reviewed more frequently than 5 years
- Neurodivergent support needs to be focused on in the strategy – feels different and can heighten feelings
- Prepare when we know the strategy is about to run out so we're not left with something outdated
- Mind Salford deliver lots of free training
- Pre and post intervention in suicide – how to manage and talk about it
- Training for education workforce on this. Upskill staff and schools

- Real need to train people in the work place. Work with businesses on this – more mental health first aid training
- Train people to not be afraid to ask about subject (suicide)
- Should train lots of people how to identify early stages of behavioural changes, not a few people on later stages (especially in schools)
- Need to be able to talk about suicide – massive stigma, talk to people who have experience suicide

### **Next steps**

Early intervention – linking up with Early Help teams, Family Hubs and Salford Early Help Partnership.

Prevention Strategy – inclusion of SEND, neurodiversity etc is key to development of the strategy

Trauma Informed training – for more information contact [Katrina.Fletcher@salfordcvs.co.uk](mailto:Katrina.Fletcher@salfordcvs.co.uk)