

Children and Young People's Newsletter



Brent, Wandsworth and Westminster

December has arrived and we are approaching the end of 2020! For this reason we want to make this newsletter a bit different. We believe that for all of us this year has been challenging and it's time to think about some positives!



Festive season

The festive period is approaching and hopefully this will be a time to relax and spend with your families. Whatever Christmas may mean to you, we wish this to be a time of kindness: for yourselves and those around you. How can you be kinder to others? There are many ways in which we can do something nice for others. For instance, the mental health support organisation [WarriorKind](#) is connecting lonely individuals via letters this winter, encouraging participants to share some of the challenges they have faced during lockdown as well as their tips for staying resilient – why not to give it a go to spread the kindness! Find out more [here](#).

Fantastic scientific achievements

Recently, there have been very positive news around Covid-19 vaccines. The vaccine developed by Pfizer and BioNTech, performed better than expected during trials and has raised hopes that the world may soon emerge from the pandemic. Their first analysis showed the vaccine was 90 per cent effective. Hopes were further boosted with the positive news that a vaccine developed by the University of Oxford triggered a strong immune response in adults in their 60s and 70s. It is extraordinary how such advancements which can take up to few years, were achieved in such a short time and brought so much hope for the end of the pandemic. Until then we still need to obey the restrictions and stay safe, but I'm sure we all needed the positive news!



The number of 'school streets' in London has quadrupled

A campaign to have streets outside schools closed to traffic at the start and end of the day has gathered momentum in London, which has some of the dirtiest air in Europe. According to the campaign group Mums for Lungs, the number of 'school streets' in the capital increased from 81 to 383 between April and October, meaning thousands fewer children are being exposed to pollution at school. This is a great move in the right direction for all of us, and hopefully thanks to this both parents and children will become healthier.

Free school meals campaign success

Thanks for the campaign of Marcus Rashford, the English professional footballer, there has been a change in government's decision about free schools meals. Disadvantaged children will now receive free meals during the Christmas holidays. The 23-year-old said he was "overwhelmed by the outpouring of empathy and understanding", and promised "to fight for the rest of my life" to end child hunger in the UK. We are indeed very happy and proud of this achievement!



On this page you can find more positive news from our **Mental Health Support Team**. Have a read to see how we have found last few months in schools and what we were up to:

Congratulations to our practitioners!

Our Educational Mental Health Practitioners have now finished their University studies and received their qualifications! This means our service is now ready to support more children, young people and families in Westminster schools.

We wanted to congratulate our practitioners and thank them for all the hard work they have put in! It was certainly a challenging year and our team is very proud of your achievements.



Results from our interventions

The data from our 1:1 interventions this year between January and October showed that young people's anxiety symptoms reduced significantly. This means that our interventions are showing effectiveness and making real difference across young people's mental health! Since we are very new service, these results are based on limited data, nevertheless they are very promising and encouraging.

We wanted to thank all the schools which have been engaging with us over this year and all the young people and parents who have worked with us.

Our psychoeducation workshops

Since the beginning of September our team has also been very busy delivering different psychoeducational workshops to children and young people, parents and carers, and school staff. We have already delivered 65 different sessions across 33 schools.

It is clear that we are spreading mental health awareness and fighting the mental health stigma because we believe that everyone deserves better mental health.

We will continue to work hard and hopefully we will reach more young people and families across Westminster.

The power of positivity

One of our Educational Mental Health Practitioners has shared how powerful she has found the use of positive affirmations when working with young people.

We are often very kind and positive when talking to our friends and the people we love but we forget how important it is to use positive self talk. Our practitioner said that it might feel a bit strange and uncomfortable to start doing it at first but she noticed that once the young people start and keep doing it, they really notice they feel better in themselves and continue using this strategy. Have a go and repeat this:

I can do it
I am doing my best
I am strong
I am loved
I am beautiful
I am enough

Just a reminder

We want to wish you great Christmas break and also remind you about the mental health support that is available, because even the holidays can get tough and difficult.

Check [this website](#) for more information on different helplines which are there for you anytime you need them. You can also go to www.kooth.com/ where you can access free counselling sessions without needing to phone or leave your house. You can also visit www.ellefriends.org.uk/ where you can chat anonymously about how you feel in a safe and supportive environment.

If you're feeling overwhelmed, or like you want to hurt yourself, you can ring HOPELINEUK on 0800 068 41 41 or text YM to 85258 to Young Mind's Crisis Messenger service, and a counsellor will talk things through with you confidentially.

We wish you and your families to stay safe and well. See you in 2021!

Mental Health Support Team