**Notes of the Refugee and Asylum Seeker Mental Health Pathways meeting**

**Held on zoom 25th January 2021**

Attending: Sanjeev Dayal (PAFRAS), Kathryn Ashworth (Solace), Robin Ellis (LYPFT), Wendy Tangen (LYPFT), Anne Burghraef (Solace), Ella Montgomery Smith (Children’s society), Zainab Abdelkader (Leeds Mental Wellbeing Service), Gill Newman (Solace), Amy Hearn (100% Digital Leeds), Sam Powell (Communities team Leeds City Council), Heidi Fleary (LYPFT)

1. Ella from Children’s Society gave an update on the outcome of the work she has been doing with a group of refugee young people. They have created a booklet to try and help other young people who struggle with sleep. There are a limited number of hard copies available or it can be downloaded <https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk//better-sleep> or via mindmate.

Agreed that Kathryn will add to LMP blog and Mirgration Yorkshire info hub. For more information contact [ella.montgomery-smith@childrenssociety.org.uk](mailto:ella.montgomery-smith@childrenssociety.org.uk)

1. Zainab (Primary Care Mental Health Support Worker LMWS) discussed the Health Inequalities Strategy of LMWS and her specific role within it as Refugee, Asylum Seeker and BME Champion. Each of the Mental Health Support Workers at LMWS are a Champion for one aspect of the Health Inequalities Strategy which aims to improve access to support for people from communities who are currently under represented in LMWS services.

The role of Mental Health Support Worker is now rolled out across all Primary Care Networks and is being well used by GPs. They are based in GP surgeries and are able to offer short term interventions to try and link people with the services which would be beneficial. They are able to spend more time with individuals than a GP and are able to explore more holistically what the issues are affecting their wellbeing.

It hasn’t always been easy to find services for people to access, particularly during lockdown when many groups have stopped running. Please contact [zainaba@touchstonesupport.org.uk](mailto:zainaba@touchstonesupport.org.uk) if you have any updates about your existing support or to find out more about her role.

Information about making a referral: (can be self referral or from an organisation)

[https://www.leedscommunityhealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services-a-z/leeds-mental-wellbeing-service/lmws-referral-guide/Referrals to Primary Care](https://www.leedscommunityhealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services-a-z/leeds-mental-wellbeing-service/lmws-referral-guide/Referrals%20to%20Primary%20Care)

1. Amy Hearn (100% Digital Leeds): Part of Leeds City Council. Small team tasked with reducing barriers to digital inclusion. This includes working with LMWS to develop a Digital Inclusion Strategy as part of their Health Inequalities Strategy.

Aware that Refugees and Asylum Seekers face additional barriers to accessing digital health support during lockdown, and have applied for funding from Leeds Community Foundation (with RETAS as lead applicant) to try and improve access to health services. Aim is to share learning about what helps refugees access support and enable services to do things differently so they can remove barriers. Also to support staff and volunteers in “non mental health specialist” organisations to recognise when the people they are supporting could benefit from mental health support.

More generally 100% Digital Leeds can help organisations find ways to tackle persistent barriers to digital inclusion. This is more about systemic issues rather than individual needs but contact [Amy.Hearn@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:Amy.Hearn@leeds.gov.uk) for advice. Website is also a useful source of information. <https://leedsdigitalinclusion.wordpress.com>

<https://leedsdigitalinclusion.wordpress.com/support-for-individuals/equipment-and-connectivity/>

BARCA also have a digital inclusion project supplying data enabled tablets for men: <https://www.barca-leeds.org/services/mhu>

Healthwatch report on digital exclusion in Leeds: <https://healthwatchleeds.co.uk/covid-19/2020/digitising-leeds/>

1. Updates:

* Robin, Wendy, Heidi (LYPFT): working with the hospital trust to improve cultural understanding, and accessibility of services. Welcome to Heidi, who is part of crisis services. Together with another new colleague who is working with perinatal services the team is expanding and able to have greater impact. Hoping to expand further to do more to tackle health inequalities.

Working with Leeds Survivor Led Crisis Service who are renovating a house which will be used to divert people away from inpatient services as an additional resource for people in crisis.

Also supporting the development of a Wellbeing and Mental Health Hub to support staff and volunteers who are themselves supporting people with mental health problems. This is in response to the feedback that “non mental health organisations” were supporting people with increasing levels of complexity and need for support and this was having an effect on the wellbeing of staff and volunteers.

Finding that the work to improve data collection around ethnicity and access to LYPFT services is having an impact and starting to see more reliable information.

* Sanjeev (PAFRAS): as all their service users are destitute issues of digital exclusion affect them enormously. They struggle to access online sessions with external service providers due to financial restraints.

The drop in is still available, but on a limited basis following a conversation and invitation from PAFRAS. Please phone the PAFRAS office to discuss individual needs and do not ask people to come to the drop in

The group sessions at the 2 houses St Monicas had to be put on hold due to lack of equipment but are now running well at 1 house but not as well as the other house due to lack of equipment, ie Laptops

* Solace: A range of therapeutic services are available online or on the phone including the weekly stress management group for people on the waiting list. Data top ups can be provided if necessary.

Referrals for one to one therapy welcome for anyone who is part of the Resettlement Schemes, or Refugees who fit the criteria for Connecting Opportunities. <https://www.solace-uk.org.uk/therapy>

Next meeting 19th April. 2 - 3.30pm

Zoom link to follow