**News release**

8 September 2020

**Go-To mental health support website for children and young people returning to school and college**

Clinical leaders in North Yorkshire are encouraging children and young people who are returning to the classroom this week “not to suffer in silence” if they feel anxious and overwhelmed.

The [The Go-To](https://www.thegoto.org.uk/) mental health support website ([www.thegoto.org.uk](http://www.thegoto.org.uk)) – developed by NHS North Yorkshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) – has a raft of useful information and avenues of help.

It’s more than 160 days since school and colleges sent home the majority of pupils at the start of a nationwide lockdown, imposed to curtail the coronavirus pandemic.

The adjustment to “life after lockdown” and living with the many disruptions caused by the pandemic can be challenging. While some young people may be looking forward to getting back to school life, for others, this could trigger a range of emotions and anxieties.

GPs in North Yorkshire say it is important that young people, their parents, teachers and others are aware of the support that’s available for young people, so they can get any help they need during what may be a daunting and difficult time.

Dr Peter Billingsley, NHS North Yorkshire CCG Governing Body member and clinical lead for vulnerable people, said: “We recognise the physical, mental and emotional impact of going back to school and college after such a long time away. Young people have been cocooned for five months and a return to lessons may feel overwhelming and daunting.

“Some children will also face additional worries about catching the virus and passing it on to more vulnerable family members, or will be picking up on household anxieties over money, insecure jobs and pressure to return to offices.

“My message to children and young people is simple; it’s absolutely ok to be worried about going back to lessons. If you’re feeling anxious and need support, don’t be frightened to ask for help. There’s lots of support available through The Go-To website at [www.thegoto.org.uk](http://www.thegoto.org.uk).”

The Go-To has been developed by NHS North Yorkshire CCG on behalf of North Yorkshire County Council and neighbouring CCGs.

Young people from North Yorkshire Young Minds Combined – a group made up of members of North Yorkshire’s Youth Parliament and other youth voice groups – also helped to design the website.

Young people, parents, carers and professionals are also encouraged to get involved through becoming a Go-To Champion, which involves helping to promote the website through writing blogs, managing social media accounts and contributing towards editing website content. More information on how to get involved is available on The Go-To website.

**ENDS**

 **Notes to editors**

**About NHS North Yorkshire CCG**

[NHS North Yorkshire Clinical Commissioning Group](https://www.northyorkshireccg.nhs.uk) was formed in April 2020 and is responsible for ‘buying’ health services for more than 425,000 people living in the county. It replaces NHS Hambleton, Richmondshire and Whitby CCG, NHS Harrogate and Rural District CCG and NHS Scarborough and Ryedale CCG which have now been disestablished. The organisation is led by Accountable Officer, Amanda Bloor, and the Clinical Chair is Dr Charles Parker.