



Mental health art exhibition in Epsom

Children and young people using mental health services have been taking part in a 'My Voice Matters' exhibition, which allows participants to express themselves through the medium of art.

The exhibition is an opportunity to celebrate the talents of the children, young people, parents and carers and to support them in using art to tell us how their voices matter. The "My Voice Matters" Exhibition opens from 2pm on August 27 and runs until September 6 at The Horton Arts Centre in Epsom.

Children and young people who use services such as STARS and New Leaf were invited to create art and encouraged to think about how their voice matters. "I feel satisfied when I do art," said a young person who contributed to the exhibition. "It is simple." They are displaying a painting called 'Flowers' at the show.

"Being able to express yourself through art can be a therapeutic experience for some but can also during the process release traumatic thoughts, experiences, and feelings," said Rebecca Robertson, who works as a Specialist Mental Health Therapist within STARS and is also a qualified Art Therapist. She explained: "It's not just the finished image, which is useful, but also the process of creating it."

New Leaf and STARS provide specialist mental health services for children in Surrey. They offer trauma and attachment therapy to children in care, care leavers, adopted children and those subject to Special Guardianship Orders (New Leaf) and children who have suffered sexual trauma (STARS). The service is delivered by Mindworks Surrey.

The STARS service supports children and young people who have been affected by sexual abuse and assault. The New Leaf Service supports children and young people who are in care, leaving care, adopted or under special guardianship orders.

Emina Atic-Lee, Service Manager for STARS and New Leaf services, said: "Last year's exhibition received the most incredible feedback from young people, their carers and families, as well as the members of the local community who visited. We are really pleased to be able to put on another exhibition this year."

The exhibition is free to enter and showcases artwork by both young people and their parents/carers and staff.

Image: Sibling painting from My Voice Matters exhibition. (Credit: Surrey and Border Partnership NHS Trust)