Hello,

It’s been a little while since we last wrote to you. Over recent months, much of our time and energy has been focused on listening, learning, developing new resources and strengthening the support we offer across our community. Alongside continuing delivery, training and direct support, we have been working behind the scenes on new projects, partnerships and plans that will shape OLLIE’s next chapter and we’re excited to finally share some of those updates with you.

Since October, we have been listening carefully to the needs of our Hertfordshire community, reviewing feedback, developing new projects and continuing to strengthen the support and resources we offer to families, schools and professionals.

New Support & Resources

REACH Suicide Prevention Talk

We are proud to have launched our brand-new REACH Suicide Prevention Talk. It's aim is simple: to help people feel more confident to have difficult conversations and more equipped to support someone struggling.

This free online awareness session is available 24/7, allowing people to access practical guidance and suicide prevention awareness whenever they need it most. You can watch on demand here.

Alongside the recorded session, we are also introducing live facilitated sessions with opportunities for Q&A and discussion, delivered by Maria Nastri and Jo Cakmak.

Balance Well-Being Workshop – Launching This Summer

Launching later this year, our new Balance well-being workshop has been designed to support self-reflection, understanding and emotional well-being.

The workshop explores the many pressures people navigate in everyday life and offers practical tools to help individuals better understand themselves, build self-awareness and move towards healthier balance.

The session will be available online 24/7, alongside live facilitated sessions with opportunities for questions and discussion.

Supporting Families Navigating Neurodiversity

We know that many families continue to face challenges navigating neurodiversity, mental health challenges and suicidal ideation. We are therefore delighted to be collaborating with ADD-vance, leaders in supporting neurodivergent families and the professionals who support them. Together we will be offering dedicated online support groups for parents and carers.

These sessions will share helpful resources, signpost you to appropriate services and offer suicide prevention and well-being awareness.

Our first online session is on Tuesday 9th June 1.30 to 2.30pm . Book your place here

Lived Experience, Connection & Community

One thing that continues to come through strongly in conversations with our community is the importance of human connection and honest conversation. Over recent months, we have continued developing opportunities for people to hear lived experience stories, reduce stigma and feel less alone.

We are excited to share that our brand-new podcast, OLLIE Talks, will be launching later this year. The podcast will explore lived experiences of poor mental health, grief, caring, hope and recovery through open, compassionate conversations with guests and members of our community. We know that hearing honest human stories can help people feel less alone, more understood and more hopeful. If you feel that sharing your experience may bring comfort or support to somebody else, we would love to hear from you.

If you would be interested in being a guest on OLLIE Talks, please email Vicky Gutteridge at:

vicky@theolliefoundation.org

Panel Events

Our live panel events continue to create important spaces for shared learning, honest conversation and human connection.

You may like to watch our most recent recording of our new panel event Pornography: Addiction, Risk and the Impact on Young People. This recording has been added to our growing library of awareness and lived experience discussions.

Our website analytics continue to show that OLLIE's back catalogue of panel events remains incredibly valuable to our community, with many people still regularly accessing some of our original talks covering themes such as adoption, relinquishment, grief and loss.

These conversations continue to offer comfort, insight and understanding to many people long after the live events have taken place. All talks remain available to watch in your own time and at your convenience, so please do explore our library of panel events and discover a topic that may be helpful or of interest to you.

New Support Programme for Schools

Suicide Prevention and Safeguarding

With the updated RSHE curriculum guidance encouraging schools to include suicide prevention within their wellbeing and safeguarding approaches, we know many education professionals are now seeking practical, compassionate and confidence-building support to help them feel more equipped navigating these important conversations and responsibilities.

In response, we have expanded our support offer for education professionals with two new specialist sessions designed to strengthen suicide and safeguarding awareness, support early intervention and help staff feel more equipped navigating difficult conversations around mental health and suicide, in line with their school policies.

Empowering Conversations

Our interactive Empowering Conversations session provides practical guidance to help school staff recognise distress, respond appropriately to concerns and feel more confident having supportive conversations around suicide and emotional well-being at school.

"The reassurance and care you both offered, across all different roles in the school, was very thoughtful. What stood out most from the morning was the warmth and respect throughout your delivery. It was clear how much care and expertise you brought and colleagues were completely engaged, listening to your every word. There were so many practical, thoughtful and supportive strategies shared that staff have already begun referencing in conversations." Paul Kershaw, Head teacher at STAGS

Safeguarding and Mental Health: Supporting Staff with Confidence

Sitting alongside Empowering Conversations, we have launched Safeguarding and Mental Health: Supporting Staff with Confidence. Maria Nastri personally designed this session using her wealth of experience, in response to growing requests from schools for greater clarity and confidence in responding to complex safeguarding and suicide-related concerns. This workshop helps staff with safeguarding and mental health responsibilities, including Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and Deputy DSLs to navigate complex safeguarding and mental health situations with greater confidence, clarity and understanding. The workshop encourages staff to apply their current policies to anonymised real life case studies to focus on creating psychologically safe conversations, improving communication and supporting both young people and staff well-being.

Find out more here

School Crisis and Bereavement Support

Joining the team in 2025, Maria Nastri now leads OLLIE's School Crisis and Bereavement Support for schools following a sudden death or suspected suicide, bringing calm, compassionate and experienced support to communities navigating incredibly difficult circumstances.

Find out more here.

Meet the Team I New Roles at OLLIE

As OLLIE continues to develop, so does our team. Over recent months, several members of the team have stepped into new and evolving roles to help strengthen our delivery, partnerships and future development.

Maria will be leading the organisation's ongoing development, partnerships, collaborations and strategic growth, alongside continuing to oversee safeguarding, suicide prevention and postvention response work across the community.

With extensive experience, compassionate leadership and a deep commitment to supporting young people, families and professionals, Maria will continue helping shape and strengthen OLLIE's future support and impact across Hertfordshire and beyond.

Jo Cakmak – Education and Communications Lead

With 27 years of experience as a teacher, Jo is now leading the continued development of OLLIE's education and awareness offer as Education and Communications Lead.

Jo plays a central role in shaping and delivering training sessions, school support and awareness talks, bringing both professional expertise and genuine warmth to every conversation and interaction. Her extensive experience within education gives her a deep understanding of the pressures facing young people, schools and families today, helping OLLIE create support that is practical, compassionate and relevant.

Vicky Gutteridge – Head of Operations

We are also pleased to share that Vicky Gutteridge has now returned to OLLIE as Head of Operations.

Vicky continues to support OLLIE's communications, partnerships, digital development and strategic projects, alongside overseeing operational systems and supporting the continued growth and development of the organisation. Bringing together creativity, organisation and strategic thinking, Vicky plays a key role in helping connect OLLIE's ideas, people and projects, ensuring the organisation continues to grow in a way that is compassionate, accessible and community-focused.

Naomi Powell – Corporate Partnerships Manager

Naomi plays a vital role in helping drive OLLIE's future growth, sustainability and strategic partnerships, working closely with organisations, funders and community networks to strengthen OLLIE's reach and long-term impact.

With a huge passion for people, collaboration and meaningful change, Naomi brings energy, professionalism and genuine care to everything she does. Her ability to build strong relationships and identify opportunities for growth is helping OLLIE continue developing innovative, accessible and community-led support.

Can you help OLLIE?

Like many charities, OLLIE continues to face increasing demand for support at a time when funding across the sector remains incredibly challenging.

As we continue developing accessible suicide prevention support, awareness talks, school resources, parent support, safeguarding guidance and lived experience projects, fundraising remains essential to helping this work to continue.

All of OLLIE's staff work remotely so the money raised goes directly towards delivering community support, developing free online resources, supporting schools and families in crisis, safeguarding training, postvention response work and ensuring people can continue accessing compassionate, preventative support when they need it most.

If OLLIE's work has ever helped you, supported somebody you care about, started an important conversation or simply made you feel less alone, we would be incredibly grateful if you would consider supporting us.

There are so many ways to help us to raise funds. You could:

- **Organise a coffee morning, bake sale or quiz night**
- **Take on a personal challenge or sponsored event**
- **Choose OLLIE as your Charity of the Year**
- **Make a one-off donation**
- **Or, if you are able to, consider setting up a small monthly direct debit**

Quite simply, regular giving helps charities like ours survive.

If everybody reading this newsletter contributed just £7 per month, OLLIE would have the stability to continue delivering life-saving support, developing new resources and being there for families, schools and communities who need us.

Every single contribution, no matter the size, genuinely makes a difference.

To support OLLIE or find out more about fundraising opportunities, please visit our website or get in touch with the team.

Thank you for continuing to stand alongside us.

Team OLLIE

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