

## Leeds 'Sanctuary' open for longer



Leeds Survivor Led Crisis Service. Pictured manager Fiona Venner, left, and Laurie Armitage (volunteer with Connect Helpline).

Published on **Tuesday 26 July 2011 07:55**

Leeds Survivor Led Crisis Service is now open for an extra day a week to provide sanctuary for those in mental health crisis.

Extra funding of £82,000 a year has come from NHS Leeds, while the charity was also helped by a £10,000 donation from a fund started by late Leeds businessman Jimi Heselden.

Manager Fiona Venner said: "The funding has come from NHS Leeds in recognition that we could not meet the demand for the service, that the service is very high quality and that we save money from other parts of the NHS by stopping people needing to go to Accident and Emergency."

The service is based at Dial House in Halton and aims to provide a supportive environment for people in mental health crisis, who are often at risk of harming themselves. It now opens four nights a week, Friday to Monday, as well as running the Connect helpline which provides support over the phone every evening.

However Ms Venner added that despite the extra hours, they still couldn't meet demand.

"We are busier generally. We are seeing people who have lost their jobs and who are struggling because the services they have used have been cut," she said.

Ms Venner said they were delighted to receive £10,000 last year from Jimbo's Fund, which was set up by Jimi Heselden, and run by Leeds Community Foundation. Mr Heselden, who died in an accident last September, was alerted to the charity's work through a previous article in the Yorkshire Evening Post.

"We literally would not have got that money if it hadn't been for that article," Ms Venner said, adding that the cash had allowed them to overhaul their gardens.

| The Connect helpline is open from 6pm until 10.30pm every night on 0808 800 1212. Contact Leeds Survivor Led Crisis Service on 0113 260 9328 or log on to [www.lslcs.org.uk](http://www.lslcs.org.uk).