Children and Young People’s Autism Service (south Staffordshire)

Welcome to the weekly update about the Children and Young People’s Autism Service in south Staffordshire.

**Working diagnosis files**
Following our update last week, we are pleased to confirm that files for those with a working autism diagnosis have been transferred to us from the previous provider.

A total of 306 files were transferred and the team are in the process of reviewing these case records. We will be writing to families to confirm we have received their working diagnosis file, provide them with details of how they can access the service and share details of upcoming workshops. Please accept our apologies, but due to demand from those awaiting assessment and/or intervention, we are currently unable to provide a specific timescale for a review of working diagnoses. However, please be assured we will update you as soon as we are able.

As a reminder, may we please confirm that children with a diagnosis of autism and those with a working diagnosis will have access to intervention, whilst those awaiting assessment without a working diagnosis will not.

It is important to reiterate from last week’s update that there will remain a cohort of young people who may have been diagnosed by the previous provider and have previously accessed interventions, but were not classed as ‘open’ at the point of transfer. Please be aware we will not have these records. In these cases we ask that families complete a self-referral form (available by emailing the service at cypautismservice@mpft.nhs.uk).

**Recruitment**
We were delighted to welcome Rebecca Bohara (*pictured*), our new Speech and Language Therapist to the team this week.

Rebecca will be offering appointments for intervention and supporting the team as part of the assessment process. The team are reviewing notes of children requiring interventions from the waiting list to ascertain those that would be most appropriate for speech and language support.

We mentioned in last week’s update that two new Assistant Psychologists are due to start later in February and early March and we were pleased to receive an early visit by one of these two new starters to meet the team.
In other team news, we have this week welcomed back a staff member from maternity leave, with another clinician also due to return from maternity leave later this month.

We have spoken previously about the staffing issues that have affected the team’s capacity and led to delays in appointments for assessments and we look forward to these new and returning staff helping to support families.

We remain keen for parents to be involved in the service and welcome expressions of interest in becoming part of interview panels for future recruitment posts within the service. Should you be interested then please contact Louise Crompton by email at involvement@mpft.nhs.uk or call 01785 221377.

**Feedback from Voice for Change session**

Further feedback to questions and comments raised by parents at the recent Voice for Change session we attended are now available to view on our service web page at www.mpft.nhs.uk/services/children-and-young-people-autism-service.

We have also today attended the South Staffordshire Autism Partnership Group and will report back in next week’s update on this meeting.

**Referring to the service**

Any professional, including education and health, can make an autism referral for a child or young person where they have concerns around the child’s social communication, interaction and rigidity of thought and behaviour.

Specific examples of how these issues manifest are required in order to process the referral. You are welcome to supply additional verifying information from school where a professional other than from a school is making the referral, which the referrer can attach to their referral. Any professional is welcome to contact the service should they wish to discuss a potential referral by calling 0300 303 0691 (9am-5pm, Monday to Friday) or emailing cypautismservice@mpft.nhs.uk.

The assessment referral form can be found on the service web page at www.mpft.nhs.uk/services/children-and-young-people-autism-service.

**Assessments and interventions**

Letters were sent recently to families awaiting an intervention to establish whether this was still required. The letter was issued following a number of ‘did not attends’ for intervention appointments prior to Christmas, and in response to some parents who felt they no longer required an appointment for their child.
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Please be aware that this letter was sent to everyone – including those families who have been in touch with us as our system that generated the letter was not able to pull out those families who had already been in touch with us. We apologise for any distress this may have caused.

We are forwarding completed assessment outcome reports to families and professionals. Families whose children are now receiving a full or working diagnosis report will be offered the option of a follow-up appointment to discuss the report and any questions or concerns families may have.

Families whose child has a diagnosis continue to have ‘open access’ to the autism service and the process remains the same as with the previous provider, wherein a self referral is required for a new episode of care or support for intervention.

For those in receipt of a diagnosis, or working diagnosis a self-referral form is available by contacting the team who can forward a copy via email. Completion of this form enables families to provide information in their own words around the presenting needs of their child and informs the team of the most appropriate support required.

**Workshops**
Thank you to those parents and carers who have completed our survey seeking views on what workshops you would like the service to provide, and the most appropriate times for these workshops to take place. We continue to welcome views on this so please take a moment and [click on this link](#) to complete this survey; thank you.

We held an additional Me, Myself and Autism workshop today (7 February) in Rugeley following requests from a number of families. We were really pleased with how the session went; as this feedback shows (pictured).

Our Sleep workshop is for parents only and provides advice around sleep hygiene, sleep management and strategies. Two sessions will be delivered by a registered Learning Disability Nurse, who is a qualified sleep counsellor for children with additional needs, has completed training with the Children’s Sleep Charity in Scotland and also completed an MSc in Behavioural Sleep Medicine, which included specialist populations and children. They take place on:

- Friday 14 February from 9.30am-12.30pm at Rugeley Community Centre, Burnthill Lane, Rugeley, WS15 2HS
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- Thursday 27 February from 9.30am-12.30pm at Glascote Library, 80 Caledonian, Glascote, Tamworth, B77 2ED.

Our **Understanding sensory processing in children with autism – parent/carer** workshop will cover basic theory of sensory processing and help with identifying sensory behaviours in children with autism, thinking about strategies parents can use and developing understanding to help improve functioning in activities of everyday life. It takes place on:

- Thursday 19 March from 10am-12.30pm at East Staffs Children Centre, Waterloo Street, Burton-on-Trent, DE14 2NJ.

Further workshops around speech and language and feeding are under development and details of these will be provided in due course. In addition, our **Introduction to Autism** and **Me, Myself and Autism** workshops are due to return in April with venue details and dates to be confirmed.

**To book a place on any of our workshops** please contact the team by email at cypautismservice@mpft.nhs.uk or telephone 0300 303 0691.

**Contacting the service**
- Telephone: 0300 303 0691 (9am-5pm, Monday to Friday; excluding Bank Holidays)
- Email: cypautismservice@mpft.nhs.uk

NB: Please be aware that our patient records system is being updated on Monday 10 February. This work is due to be completed by 10am. As a result we may experience a delay in accessing patient information during this time. Please be assured that we will come back to you should access not be available when you call the office for an update on your child.

More information about the service can be found via MPFT’s website at www.mpft.nhs.uk/services/children-and-young-people-autism-service. The service web page features:

- Referral information (NB: Referrals into the service can only be made by a professional who has met with the child and family)
- Frequently asked questions that provide more information both to current and new users of the service
- Information should urgent help be required
- Contact details for a number of other useful services and organisations
- Workshop information
- Previous weekly updates.
If you need urgent help between the hours of 9am-5pm from Monday to Friday, you can contact the Single Point of Access directly on 0300 303 0691, or call First Response (social care and health) on 0800 1313 126.

If you need urgent help out of hours (evenings, weekends or bank holidays) please contact:

- NHS 111, who have access to on-call mental health professionals; or the
- First Response Emergency Duty Team on 0345 604 2886
- In the event of a medical emergency please go straight to A&E.

Should a parent/carer have a specific question relating to the care of their child, we ask that they email cypautismservice@mpft.nhs.uk.

The Trust's Customer Services Team is also available for advice and support and provides information on NHS and social care services. They can be contacted by:

- Email: palsandexperience@mpft.nhs.uk
- Telephone: 01785 783026
- A website form is also available by clicking here