Stakeholder update

Children and Young People’s Autism Service

The team continue to work as hard and fast as they can to commence autism assessments for families, including cognitive assessments, school observations and liaison and parental diagnostic interviews. They are also continuing to commence or continue interventions and, once again, we thank parents for their patience and understanding.

Linked to this, a daily clinical duty worker is on hand to offer telephone advice for urgent support. Please see below the information you need for accessing the service.

We were pleased to welcome parents to our first ‘Introduction to Autism’ workshop on Thursday (28 November), held in Rugeley.

A range of needs were raised by the parents at the session and it was particularly good to see how motivated and engaged they were.

Comments from parents included:

- “We found the workshop very informative and were given some great advice.”
- “I found this so beneficial to be able to talk to other parents with children of a similar age.”
- “It was really helpful to have the three areas of the diagnosis explained and how these can be supported.”
- “The explanation around sensory issues was explained well and gave me a better understanding.”

The session was followed by a drop-in clinic at the same venue, where we were pleased to provide advice and support to a number of parents concerning issues they were currently experiencing with their child.

We’re looking forward to the next Introduction to Autism workshop, which is being held on Wednesday (4 December) from 9.30am-12.30pm at St Peter’s Church in Hawksworth, Tamworth, B77 2HH. This session will provide more information on the difficulties that are commonly seen in children with autism, alongside recommendations on how the team can support this.

Also next week, we will be holding an ‘Understanding sensory processing in children with autism – parent/carer’ workshop on Thursday (5 December) from 10am-12.30pm at
Families First Children’s Centre, Faraday Road, Stafford, ST16 3NQ. There are still places for this session, which 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.

These sessions are only open to parents in possession of a full or working autism diagnosis for their child and those wishing to attend are asked to contact the service directly on 0300 303 0691 or email cypautismservice@mpft.nhs.uk to register. This will be on a first come, first served basis and a copy of the child’s diagnosis will be required when registering.

This week has seen the appointment of a full time Occupational Therapist and two new Assistant Psychologists to the service. We've also held interviews this week for a new full-time Speech and Language Therapist.

Each new member of the team is serving to enhance the level of support we are able to offer to families who are awaiting assessments and interventions.

Meanwhile, a member of the autism management team this week attended a conference entitled ‘Them and us?’ there is only us’, that explored ways of caring both for ourselves and others. It was a very informative event and will provide a powerful tool for the autism team as a whole and also in supporting families.

The team are also developing a new workshop scheduled for January entitled ‘Me, Myself and I’, targeted at children and young people aged 9-14. This will focus on understanding autism for the child, the difficulties that may affect them and advice and support around how to manage these issues.

**Contacting the service**

The service can be contacted by calling 0300 303 0691 between the hours of 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday (excluding Bank Holidays). The team can also be accessed by email at cypautismservice@mpft.nhs.uk.

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