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

The Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) covering Stafford and Surrounds, East Staffordshire, Cannock Chase, and South East Staffordshire and Seisdon Peninsula announced on Friday (13 March) that MPFT has been awarded the new contract to provide improved services for children and young people with autism in the south of the county.

We are delighted with this news. The mobilisation of the contract will commence on 1 May and the new service will be provided with a 30 per cent increase in investment from the CCGs.

The procurement process was carried out in conjunction with the National Autistic Society and with the involvement of service users, their families, carers, and local clinicians.

The new service has been extended to cover 0-19-year olds and will also cover intervention for young people up to the age of 25 with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP). Each child or young person will have a designated key worker to oversee and coordinate their care and support their requirements.

Meanwhile, MPFT will continue to work with commissioners on addressing the current diagnosis backlog.

The CCGs’ media release on the announcement can be viewed by clicking here.

Ahead of the new service mobilisation, the Trust will continue to provide the interim service.

**Assessments and interventions**

The new Assistant Psychologists who have joined the team are now contacting families to arrange intervention appointments across South Staffordshire.

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 on request by emailing the team at cypautismservice@mpft.nhs.uk. 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**

We are closely monitoring national guidance in relation to Coronavirus (COVID-19) and, should a workshop need to be cancelled as a result then we will inform those who are booked directly.

We are in the process of arranging further Introduction to Autism workshops on the following dates (venues and times to be confirmed):

- Thursday 2 April – Stafford
- Monday 27 April – Stafford
- Monday 11 May – Wombourne

This course offers an excellent opportunity for parents and families to understand their child’s diagnosis – whether for families with a recent diagnosis or those looking to refresh their knowledge and meet with other families. This introduction group offers a unique opportunity for parents to discuss their experiences, share strategies and chat about different stages of their child’s development.

‘Me, Myself and Autism’ workshops are due to take place on Tuesday 21 April from 1pm-3pm and Tuesday 28 April from 1pm-3pm in Glascote Library, 80 Caledonian, Glascote, Tamworth, B77 2ED. This will be a two-session workshop focusing on understanding autism for the child, the difficulties that may affect them and advice and support around how to manage these issues. NB: A parent or carer must attend with the child. There will be an opportunity for parents to speak to the team following the workshop to answer any questions around upcoming workshops and specific advice for their child.

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. If you no longer require your place at one of our workshops, please contact the service to let them know to enable other families to access this support as places are limited.

**Workshop survey**

We continue to welcome views on what workshops you would like the service to provide, and the most appropriate times for these workshops to take place. Please click on this link to complete a survey.

**Referrals**

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.

**Recruitment**

Any parents who are interested in becoming part of interview panels for future posts are asked to email Louise Crompton at involvement@mpft.nhs.uk or call 01785 221377.

The service is in the process of advertising for further staff to support the team, so your support on these recruitment panels would be welcome.

**Contacting the service**

- Telephone: 0300 303 0691 (9am-5pm, Monday to Friday; excluding Bank Holidays)
- Email: 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
- Resources
- Voice for Change session feedback.

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