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

Update on assessments and interventions

The team continues to work through the assessments and interventions for children and families awaiting an appointment. Assessment outcome reports are being forwarded on to families and professionals for those that have now been completed. 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 parents/carers may have.

Parents or carers of children and young people with a diagnosis continue to have ‘open access’ to the autism service and the process remains the same as with the previous provider, where a self referral is required for a new episode of care or support for intervention. A self referral form is available from the team, please email to request one. Completion of this form enables parents/carers to provide information in their own words around the presenting needs of their child and informs the team of the most appropriate support to be given.

The team continues to receive a high volume of calls from families asking about the progress of their appointment or referral. We are responding to queries as soon as possible and thank everyone for their continued patience during this interim period. Our daily clinical duty worker remains on hand to offer urgent telephone advice if required.

Referring to the service

Any professional, include education and health, can make an autism referral for a child or young person up to their 18th birthday where they have concerns around the child’s social communication, interaction and rigidity of thought and behaviour.

We would require specific examples of how these issues manifest in order to process the referral.

Please feel free to supply additional verifying information from school which the GP can attach to their referral.

Any professional is very welcome to contact the service should they wish to discuss a potential referral. The team can be contacted on 0300 303 0691.

A copy of the new assessment referral form is available on the service website page at www.mpft.nhs.uk/services/children-and-young-people-autism-service
**Workshop schedule**

We now have a range of workshops being delivered across South Staffordshire for the upcoming months. We would encourage families to take advantage of these workshops as they provide an excellent opportunity to link directly with the team and gain expert advice on any current issues their child may be having.

- **Sleep workshop** is for parents only and provides advice around sleep hygiene, sleep management and strategies. Two workshops have been arranged:
  - Friday 14th February from 9.30am to 12.30pm at Rugeley Community Centre, Burnthill Lane, Rugeley, WS15 2HS
  - Thursday 27th February from 9.30am to 12.30pm at Glascote Library, 80 Caledonian, Glascote, Tamworth, B77 2ED.

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

To book a place on any workshop, please contact the team by email cypautismservice@mpft.nhs.uk or telephone 0300 303 0691.

We also welcome any suggestions or feedback around specific workshops that would meet the needs of their child and would be happy to set up workshops where there is a demand.

**Programme focused on supporting others**

We also have details of an external six week programme being delivered by Fox Training Solutions. This programme of workshops is available for children aged over 11.

This programme will:

- Be an opportunity to share experiences of raising a child with autism
- Understand how to use your experiences to benefit others
- Build resilience with regard to supporting others
- Develop your understanding of relevant legislation
- Rights and support networks
- Develop your understanding of peer support and the associated benefits

Sessions will start on Friday 31st January 2020 and run for six weeks in Wolverhampton, from 1:00pm to 4:00pm.

For further information on this programme and to book your place, please contact: melissatharm@foxtrainingsolutions.co.uk or telephone 07968141919 or 07508345685.
Top ten tips for managing anxiety- preparing for anxious times

1. We all experience anxiety at some point, it is important to **prepare for times that cause stress**: big changes, exams or new challenges.

2. We are all different. While we find a lot of similar things stressful, we are also unique. It can help to **know what triggers your child**, it may be things that you didn’t originally expect.

3. Diaries! The worst part of anxiety is feeling like you are not in control - **keep diaries of what upsets your child**, how they react and what happens afterwards.

4. **Notice patterns in the diaries and break the cycle** - there is always a pattern and when you know what is happening it will make you and your child feel more in control.

5. **Communicate** - talking isn’t the only form of communication; notepads, pictures, expressions, hand signals and even cups on string can be different ways of communicating. Communication is key in supporting anxiety.

6. **Resources** - there are resources to understand anxiety. A quick search on the internet can reveal many visual resources that can be used to understand anxiety.

7. **Think about yourself** - we have a sense of other people’s anxiety. If your child is anxious it can make you anxious. This makes your child anxious again. It is important to take care of yourself, lowering your own anxiety will increase your child’s confidence in your ability to help them too.

8. **Do not remove everything that is scary** - instead try to break anxiety down into small chunks that your child can deal with. Think of this like the immune system. Introducing small germs allows our body to get used to them and becomes stronger so that it can tackle more harmful things. Anxiety works the same way.

9. **Make relaxation a part of your day** - we only get better when we practice. Trying to relax, take deep breaths or talk about worries when we are too stressed is not going to work. Taking time to calm down and get rid of daily stress should be something factored into routine. We all do this in different ways: cooking, watching TV, listening to music… it is about finding what calms your child and getting this into their routine.

10. **Anxiety is normal!** It is perfectly fine to worry, worry keeps us safe and serves a purpose. But, not everything is worth worrying about.

Further information and advice can be found by visiting the National Autistic Society’s website at [www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk) or Autism West Midlands’ website at [www.autismwestmidlands.org.uk](http://www.autismwestmidlands.org.uk).
Stakeholder update

17 January 2020

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.

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