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

**Assessments and interventions**

We are continuing to work through assessments, but recognise there are a number of young people still waiting and are working very hard to ensure they are seen as soon as possible.

Working closely with the Clinical Commissioning Groups, we are committed to reducing waiting times significantly to ensure that young people receive the help and support they need.

We are in the process of obtaining additional capacity for the service and will be contacting families as soon as we are able, in order of clinical priority and longest wait to offer an assessment slot.

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.

**Recruitment**

Welcome to Holly Edwards (pictured), Assistant Psychologist, who has started with the team this week. Holly will be supporting the team with assessments and interventions alongside helping to run upcoming workshops.

**Recruitment panels**

Thank you to those parents who have joined us already on interview panels as we seek to further bolster the team; their involvement has been extremely valuable and we would ask that any other parents who are interested in becoming part of interview panels for future posts email Louise Crompton at involvement@mpft.nhs.uk or call 01785 221377.

**Workshops**

We are pleased to report that our Understanding sensory processing in children with autism – parent/carer workshop on Thursday 19 March in Burton-on-Trent is now fully booked.
We held our latest Introduction to Autism workshop on Tuesday in Burton-on-Trent. A total of three families booked onto the course; however only one family attended on the day.

As mentioned in a previous update, we would kindly ask that families inform the team if they no longer require their places at a workshop to enable other families to access this support as places are limited.

Further ‘Me, Myself and Autism’ workshops will 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.

Additional workshops are being planned across South Staffordshire and we will share details of these in due course.

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.

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
As a reminder, 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.
And finally...
We have uploaded an ‘Introduction to autism parent pack’ onto our web page under the new ‘Resources’ section. This pack provides a range of information, alongside a number of helpful resources and links. We hope you find this useful.

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
- 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