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

**Latest news**

We hope you enjoyed the Easter break. We remain committed to continuing to provide as full a service as possible during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and would ask that you continue to follow national guidance in relation to staying at home and practicing social distancing. You can find out more at [www.nhs.uk/coronavirus](http://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus).

We have welcomed some additional temporary support into the team over the past week; this has come from a number of colleagues within the Trust's Children and Families Care Group whose services have been reduced in line with national NHS guidance. This extra support will focus on carrying out specific elements of the assessment and intervention processes that can be completed remotely.

Until further notice, assessments and interventions will continue to be provided either by telephone or via video consultation and we will continue to contact families to notify them of appointments.

The duty worker remains available to speak to families at this time while urgent support will continue to be available by calling 0300 303 0691 (9am-5pm, Monday to Friday) or emailing cypautismservice@mpft.nhs.uk.

We continue to process outcomes for children and young people whose assessment pathway was completed prior to the COVID-19 outbreak. Families are being contacted to discuss the outcome and a report will be forwarded to the referrer, parent or carer, GP and school where appropriate.

We would welcome consent from those families who are happy to receive SMS text reminders or information via email to help reduce demand on the postal service and to ensure telephone or online appointments are received in a timely manner. Please provide written consent via email to cypautismservice@mpft.nhs.uk where possible, or call 0300 303 0691.

**Workshops**

We mentioned in last week’s update that we are developing an online version of the Introduction to Autism workshop we provide for families. This is in the process of being rolled out and will be offered in the form of a pre-recorded podcast that can either be listened to in audio form through headphones, or via a computer with visual slides to accompany the audio.
The session is suitable for families who have just received a diagnosis, or serves as a refresher for those seeking further advice following an earlier diagnosis. The workshop is approximately one hour in length and offers a variety of information and advice.

One of the benefits of the workshop is the ability to discuss specific issues with the team. To ensure this remains available, we will be running more interactive sessions for up to five parents as part of each workshop to answer questions and/or provide advice and support.

We are in the final stages of launching this and will share details on how you can get involved shortly.

**Resources**
The Trust has provided links to a range of advice, guidance and resources relating to the COVID-19 outbreak. These can be found at [www.mpft.nhs.uk/service-users-carers/coronavirus-information/coronavirus-resources](http://www.mpft.nhs.uk/service-users-carers/coronavirus-information/coronavirus-resources) and include:

- Guidance from Public Health England for parents and carers on supporting children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing
- A children’s factsheet (produced by Alder Hey Children’s NHS Foundation Trust)
- Other resources supporting your health and wellbeing.

The current situation is generating a lot of anxiety and the Trust is doing all it can to support those who are experiencing this. A 24/7 urgent NHS mental health service has been set up by the Trust, providing telephone support, advice and triage. The number to call for people living in South Staffordshire is 0300 555 5001 (NB: this telephone line cannot provide advice on Coronavirus symptoms).

The team’s video supporting children and young people with anxiety can be viewed by clicking here.

**Assessments and interventions**
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. As mentioned above, for the foreseeable future these appointments will be offered via telephone or via video consultation, where possible.

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.

**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.


Please note that the service update is moving to fortnightly until further notice. Check the Trust’s Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/mpftnhs](http://www.facebook.com/mpftnhs) or service web page at [www.mpft.nhs.uk/services/children-and-young-people-autism-service](http://www.mpft.nhs.uk/services/children-and-young-people-autism-service) for the latest news.

**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](http://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
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- 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.

As previously mentioned, the Trust has set up a 24/7 urgent NHS mental health service, providing telephone support, advice and triage. The number to call for people living in South Staffordshire is 0300 555 5001 (NB: this telephone line cannot provide advice on Coronavirus symptoms).

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