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

_We remain committed to continuing to provide as full a service as possible during Covid-19 and would ask that you continue to follow national guidance in relation to staying alert and practicing social distancing. You can find out more at [www.nhs.uk/coronavirus](http://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus)._

A duty professional remains available via the service contact number on 0300 303 0691 Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm to offer help and support to families.

**Assessments**

The autism team continue to work closely with Psicon and Caudwell to offer additional appointments to families to ensure they can commence their assessment in a timely manner.

We have received a number of compliments from families who have utilised this extra capacity, particularly in relation to the smooth process along with the support and information being made available following an outcome appointment.

During October, a total of 20 first appointments to commence an assessment were cancelled at short notice, or did not attend. Can we please ask that anyone who is unable to attend an appointment contact the team as soon as possible to ensure this can be offered to another family.

Any family currently awaiting an assessment appointment for **new assessments only** and are happy to receive a late notification are asked to email the team at cypautismservice@mpft.nhs.uk with their details so that we can get in touch should an appointment become available at short notice.

**New additions to service page on MPFT website**

You will have seen in recent editions of the newsletter that the service has continued to recruit, further bolstering the team. We’re keen to share the skills and experience of the various members of the team and, with this in mind have created a new ‘Meet the Team’ section to the service webpage - [www.mpft.nhs.uk/services/children-and-young-people-autism-service](http://www.mpft.nhs.uk/services/children-and-young-people-autism-service).

This section introduces each team member, their role within the service and a short bio. We hope you find this useful.

Alongside this, we’ve also added the new ‘What is Autism?’ workbook for young people to the ‘Resources’ section. This has been developed by the team and based on questions and feedback we’ve received from families. We hope you will find this useful.
Don't forget, we also have a number of videos on the page that focus on an introduction to autism, supporting children and young people with anxiety, and supporting young people to manage behaviour.

We are developing other videos, including a range of short films that introduce various members of the team and focus on how their role is providing support. Watch this space.

**Engagement**

We continue to provide families with our feedback form following completion of their assessment, intervention or when attending a workshop. We would encourage families to return these as it provides the service with important feedback and data on what we are doing well and where we can review or improve your experience of the service.

Similarly, we would also encourage you to complete an online feedback form that seeks your views, comments and suggestions on any part of the service – please visit [http://surveys.mpft.nhs.uk/Survey486/Create?channel=15181](http://surveys.mpft.nhs.uk/Survey486/Create?channel=15181) to share your views.

We were delighted to meet with Positive Practice in Mental Health as part of a virtual visit to the Trust last week. It was a great opportunity to showcase the work the team have been doing and to talk through our ideas for the future, including how we are working with our families to deliver a service that meets the wide range of needs that autism presents. We received really good informal feedback which has been shared within the team. Positive Practice is a collaborative of NHS organisations, charities, voluntary/community organisations and service users groups.

Two members of the team also gave a presentation at a Quality Improvement event on Friday (6 November) organised by MPFT. It was a wonderful opportunity to link in with other services and again showcase the work we have been doing to improve quality and delivery for assessments and interventions. The team received great feedback from other services and acknowledgement of how much work has been done over the last 12 months.

**Feeding back on your experience of using the service**

As well as completing the survey mentioned above, we would also encourage you to share feedback on your experience of using the service with the Trust's Customer Services Team.

The Customer Services Team is happy to receive any comments and suggestions you may have to improve the Autism service, or any other service provided by the Trust. You can find out more at [www.mpft.nhs.uk/service-users-carers/complaints-concerns-and-compliments](http://www.mpft.nhs.uk/service-users-carers/complaints-concerns-and-compliments).

The team is open 8am-6pm, Monday-Friday and can be contacted by:
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- Email: palsandexperience@mpft.nhs.uk
- Freephone: 0800 783 2865
- A website form is also available via the website link above

Workshops
We held our latest Introduction to Autism workshop last week – thank you to everyone who attended. We received lots of positive feedback, including:

- “Thank you for today. There are some interesting strategies that I can try with my son.”
- “Thank you for the advice and tips. I feel optimistic these will help.”
- “Very informative, thank u.”

Both our Sleep and Managing Behaviours that Challenge workshops are now fully booked. If you would like to express an interest in attending a future workshop on these subjects, or wish to leave your details should a place become available then please email us at cypautismservice@mpft.nhs.uk.

Our new Autism Toolbox course will be available to book very soon. This will be a 10 session course that will provide a range of advice and support to both families that have been recently a diagnosis or to those families that received a diagnosis several years ago. This course has been developed following feedback from our families that are actively receiving support from the service or who have just received a diagnosis and wish to have a greater understanding to support their child or young person.

We would ask that anyone who has booked a place for any of our workshops and is unable to attend to please get in touch to let us know so we can offer your place to a family on the waiting list – thank you.

Any families wishing to attend any upcoming workshops are asked to email cypautismservice@mpft.nhs.uk to book their place. The sessions will be hosted by the team using Microsoft Teams. Once you have called the team to book your place, you will receive a web link to access the appropriate session *(NB: You do not need to have Microsoft Teams installed on your computer to join this meeting. Click ‘watch on the web instead’ to view via your web browser).*

Staffordshire Autism Group
In September and October 2019 Staffordshire County Council spoke with people living with autism as well as their families and carers about what was important to them and what they want to achieve. Following this engagement, the council has worked alongside Staffordshire Clinical Commissioning Groups to jointly produce a plan of actions to deliver these outcomes.
An ‘Implementation’ group is now being set up and people with lived experience of autism are being asked to help deliver these outcomes to make sure they have a voice.

If you would like to join this group or would like more information, please email wholelifedisability@staffordshire.gov.uk. As only a small number of people are able to sit on the group, please get in touch by Friday 20 November. Click here to view a leaflet with more details.

**Webinars for parents/professionals caring for SEND children with anxiety-led extreme or violent behavioural challenges**

A series of webinars funded by the NHS and presented by Yvonne Newbold of Newbold Hope are open to parents and professionals who care for SEND children with anxiety-led extreme or violent behavioural challenges. Designed to empower parents to gain the skills needed to be able to rescue a child from their own difficulties, each one looks at a different aspect of how family life is impacted by a child with very difficult behaviours, and how to help a child cope better in a safer and happier way.

All of these webinars are on Tuesday evenings between 8pm-10pm. All participants will also have access to a webinar replay link for one month to enable viewing at convenient times. Each webinar costs £2.50, with free places available for families in financial hardship.

For more information on upcoming webinars and to book your place, visit https://yvonnенewbold.com/webinars-workshops-courses-and-books. Email webinars@newboldhope.com for more information.

**And finally…**

A member of our clinical team has recently commenced Level 1 Systemic Therapy training as part of their continuous development; this will enhance the provision of support for our families.

In addition, the Team Lead has recently completed the Leading Quality Improvement training run by MPFT. This training will enable the whole team to look at a range of options to not only improve on quality of service delivery, but to understand where changes can be made to provide the biggest impact for service users and staff.

**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, which 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
- Information should urgent help be required
- Contact details for a number of other useful services and organisations
- Workshop information
- Previous service updates
- Voice for Change session feedback
- Resources
- Videos

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.

The Trust’s 24/7 urgent NHS mental health service provides telephone support, advice and triage for all ages. The Freephone number to call for people living in South Staffordshire is 0808 196 3002 (*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.