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

The service update is being issued fortnightly until further notice. Check the Trust’s Facebook page at www.facebook.com/mpftnhs or service web page at www.mpft.nhs.uk/services/children-and-young-people-autism-service for the latest news.

**Online Introduction to Autism workshop**

In light of the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic, we wanted to look at different ways of working to improve access to the service.

To that end, we’ve worked with a number of families to adapt our face-to-face Introduction to Autism session into an easy-to-use podcast-style audio and video workshop.

The session is available via the service’s web page at www.mpft.nhs.uk/services/children-and-young-people-autism-service under ‘workshops’.

It’s suitable for families who have just received a diagnosis, or serves as a refresher for those seeking further advice following an earlier diagnosis. The session is approximately one hour in length and offers a variety of information and advice covering key areas, including:

- Social communication
- Social interaction
- Restrictive, repetitive patterns of behaviour
- Sensory

It also addresses common myths and facts concerning autism and covers other areas, including ‘what is the spectrum’.

The session, which has been voiced by members of the autism team can be listened to on the go or watched with visual prompts if this is the preferred way of receiving information.

A popular aspect of our face-to-face workshops has been the opportunity for parents to talk to other families in a similar position, and to be able to raise questions or concerns with team members.

We’re keen to ensure this continues during COVID-19 – as such, we’re offering virtual group sessions with up to five families in each group for a chance to talk to other families and team members.
The video is accessible to everyone – whether for families who need information on how to support their children with their new or long-standing diagnosis, for other services to learn about those they care for, or for the wider community to provide the tools for building a better future our children will be able to thrive in.

To find out more about getting involved in the virtual group sessions, call 0300 303 0691 (9am-5pm, Monday-Friday) or email cypautismservice@mpft.nhs.uk and the service will respond as soon as a session becomes available.

Please note that whilst the video resource is available to anyone, the group sessions are exclusive to families in South Staffordshire who have a full or working diagnosis to ensure those in need of immediate support are supported.

**Assessments and interventions during COVID-19**

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).

In the current climate, assessments and interventions are continuing to be provided by the team through telephone or video consultation.

This work includes conducting Autism Diagnostic Interview-Revised (ADI-R) interviews with parents, contacting families to provide structured support, advice and a range of appropriate resources, such as workbooks for children and young people to complete. Care plans are discussed and agreed with parents during the outcome appointment for each diagnosis. We are also continuing to liaise with schools on referrals and appropriate next steps.

We have welcomed further additional temporary support into the team to support with specific elements of the assessments and intervention process and new appointments are being sent out regularly.

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.

Please be reassured that the service is committed to ensuring all children who require a review of their working diagnosis will receive this and we will be in touch in due course to make arrangements to see your child. All families awaiting this review continue to have access to the service.
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.

**Resources**

Alongside the online Introduction to Autism workshop, we’ve also added a new video to the service web page that focusses on managing behaviour. It’s been developed by the team and can be found under ‘Videos’. We hope you find this useful.

Families in receipt of a full or working diagnosis are welcome to contact the team, who will forward copies of the resources out by post or email if they are not currently available on MPFT website.

A 24/7 urgent NHS mental health service set up by the Trust is providing telephone support, advice and triage for all ages. 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 Trust is providing a growing number of links to a range of advice, guidance and resources relating to the Coronavirus 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).

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete our survey seeking views on what workshops should be provided and when. The team is reviewing this feedback and will use it to determine how and when future workshops are held.

**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.

The assessment referral form can be found on the service web page at www.mpft.nhs.uk/services/children-and-young-people-autism-service.

**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.

The Trust's 24/7 urgent NHS mental health service provides telephone support, advice and triage for all ages. 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](#)