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.

Update on assessments
A total of 55 appointments have been booked with families to commence assessments this month, with 14 booked for the first week of August.

Separate to this, more than 170 patients have so far agreed to be transferred to Psicon and Caudwell Children and a total of 36 first appointments have taken place – of these 32 have received an outcome.

You will recall this additional capacity is prioritising those families who have been waiting the longest or who have the greatest clinical need in terms of offering an assessment.

Families who have received a diagnosis from either Psicon or Caudwell Children will of course continue to have full access to our autism service’s workshops, resources, the duty worker and other tailored interventions where clinically indicated.

Recruitment
We are pleased this week to welcome Jon Hodgkins (pictured) to the team as a Clinical Nurse Specialist. Jon has spent a number of years working with young people within inpatient services who have autism, and will be a vital part of supporting the team and families with assessments and a range of interventions.

We are interviewing in the coming weeks for a further Speech and Language Therapist, an Autism Spectrum Condition Practitioner and a Therapy Assistant. In addition we are out to advert for further psychologists and will be shortly advertising for a full time Consultant Psychiatrist. We also continue to receive support from existing CAMHS consultants and a Community Paediatrician.

A number of parents/carers have kindly offered to join us on recruitment panels and, as we continue to bolster the team we would ask that any parent/carer of a child who is in receipt of an autism diagnosis and would wish to be involved on an interview panel to call the team on 0300 303 0691 (Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm) or email cypautismservice@mpft.nhs.uk.
Workshops
Since our last update, we have held two interactive online workshops – ‘Surviving Covid-19’ and two ‘Introduction to Autism’ sessions. The feedback we’ve received has been positive, including the following:

“I achieved my goal of gaining more information and I found helpful.”

“Good to have something we could take away from today’s session.”

One of the things we’ve found that works well from the workshops we’ve held is having smaller groups of parents/families – this enables everyone who takes part to have the opportunity to ask the questions they wish.

This is something we’ve taken forward with the online sessions we’re holding and we’re pleased this approach is being well received by participating parents.

The following upcoming workshops are being held, based on the feedback received from our recent survey.

‘Introduction to Sensory Processing’ – Part 1 (NB: parents/ carers must attend both sessions)
Thursday 6 August, 10am-12pm
This two-part sensory interactive session is available to parents/ carers and will cover an understanding of the eight human senses and sensory integration, how they enable children to engage in activities of daily life, as well as covering the sensory difficulties that some children with autism experience impacting on their emotional and behavioural responses in school, home, community and friendships.

‘Introduction to Sensory Strategies’ – Part 2 (NB: parents/ carers must attend both sessions)
Thursday 20 August, 10am-12pm
This second element of the sensory interactive session is available to parents/ carers where we will work with you to understand your own child’s sensory responses, ‘being a sensory
detective’ and help you develop strategies to create routines and environments that enable your child to engage in meaningful and purposeful daily life at home and in school.

‘Transition back to school’
Thursday 13 August, 2pm-4pm
This is a parent only workshop and is a support and advice session to help prepare your child for the transition back to school following the COVID-19 lockdown.

‘Feel Good’
Date in August TBC
This is a workshop for young people aged 9+ that will support in developing strategies to improve self-esteem and confidence. We would encourage families to contact the service to register their interest for this session.

Please call the team on 0300 303 0691 (Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm) as soon as possible to book your place for one or more of these workshops. 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).

Other resources
A range of resources are available to support children and families via the service web page at www.mpft.nhs.uk/services/children-and-young-people-autism-service.

A duty professional is available on 0300 303 0691 Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm to offer help and support to families.

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
Children and Young People’s Autism Service (South Staffordshire) update
20 July 2020

- Contact details for a number of other useful services and organisations
- Workshop information
- Previous weekly 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 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