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.

Assessments
Appointments with families to commence assessments and receive further interventions are continuing. This includes additional appointments being provided by Caudwell Children and Psicon prioritising families who have been waiting the longest or who have the greatest clinical need. Families who are due to be seen next are being contacted with an appointment date.

A number of appointments have been offered to families/carers which were not attended. We are keen that every appointment is filled, so if you are unable to attend please let us know as soon as you are able so we can offer the appointment to another patient.

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.

Recruitment
For this update, we’re very pleased to announce two new members of the team.

Vandana Patel (pictured right) has joined the service as a Therapy Assistant Practitioner, having had more than five years of experience working in mental health services, ranging from inpatient to community settings. She recently qualified as a Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner at the University of Northampton, has experience of delivering 1:1 interventions and facilitating groups to clients and families/carers.

We’re also delighted to welcome Clinical Psychologist Milena Fischer (pictured left). Milena has been working in a specialist autism service in Dresden, Germany for the past 18 months. There she was involved in assessment and treatment of children, young people and adults with autism. Before that she has been working for over 15 years in the NHS, which included 12 years as a clinical psychologist in CAMHS in Lichfield.
Parents/ carers of children in receipt of an autism diagnosis who wish to form part of future recruitment panels are asked to please contact the service on 0300 303 0691 (Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm) or email cypautismservice@mpft.nhs.uk.

Workshops
Thanks to everyone who attended the ‘Surviving Covid’ workshop held on Friday 11 September. As with all our workshops, we really hope you found this a useful session.

Please see below details of our upcoming workshops:

**Introduction to Autism – next steps**  
**Monday 21 September**  
Please note this session is fully booked. There is a waiting list for this session, so please let us know if you can’t attend and we can offer your place to another family.

**Sleep workshop (two-part workshop)**  
**Tuesday 22 September, 10am-12pm (session one)**  
**Tuesday 29 September, 10am-11am (session two)**  
The workshop is for parents only and provides advice around sleep management and strategies. The second session will review strategies and answer any questions that may have arisen from the first workshop.

**Managing behaviours that challenge**  
**Friday 9 October, 10am-11.30am**  
This workshop will explore how and why different behaviours challenge, review behaviours and the messages behind them, and understand how to respond and the approaches to managing behaviours that challenge.

**NEW Introduction to Autism**  
**Monday 2 November, 9.30am-11.30am**  
This interactive session offers an excellent opportunity for parents and families to understand their child’s diagnosis – whether for families with a recent diagnosis or those looking to refresh their knowledge.

**Sensory processing (two-part workshop)**  
**Thursday 3 December, 10am-12.30pm (session one)**  
**Thursday 10 December, 10am-12.30pm (session two)**  
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.
Please call the team on 0300 303 0691 (Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm) to book your place for one or more of the following upcoming online 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).

Can we please ask that anyone who has booked onto a session at any of our workshops and is unable to attend to contact the service to let us know so we can offer your place to another family.

Contact developing Parent/ Carer Forum
Contact (formerly Contact a Family), the delivery partner for the Department for Education for Parent Participation is seeking to develop a Parent/ Carer Forum to ensure better outcomes for children and young people with SEND and their families.

A virtual meeting is being held on Tuesday 22 September at 10am to discuss how this can be developed further. If you would like to take part in this meeting then please contact Catherine Ratcliffe at catherine.ratcliffe@cafamily.org.uk. If you are interested and are unable to attend daytime meetings then please let Catherine know and an evening session can be set up.

Other resources

Free webinar – ‘OpenHouse on Autism’ – Meal time stress and managing food sensitivities
Wednesday 16 September, 5pm
The Association for Child and Adolescent Mental Health is hosting this event that focuses on ideas to help your autistic child build a healthy relationship with food. It will be followed by a live discussion to answer questions. Click here to view more information about this and future OpenHouse events, including how to book your free place.

MPFT online 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.
Children and Young People’s Autism Service (South Staffordshire) update
14 September 2020

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.

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