Children and Young People’s Autism Service (South Staffordshire)

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

Voice for Change engagement session
We were grateful this week to meet with a number of parents linked to Voice for Change to listen to their views on the service and how it can be improved.

There was a sense of frustration at the session that more progress had not been made in completing assessments and interventions with children and young people. This frustration is both understood and accepted and we apologise to those families who are awaiting an assessment or intervention.

We are responding to queries as swiftly as we can and our daily clinical duty worker remains on hand to offer urgent telephone advice if required. The service has experienced a number of capacity issues and continues to actively recruit to fill gaps in the team. This remains a priority and we will keep you updated.

A list of the questions and comments raised at the session are available to view on our website by clicking here. We will respond to these over the course of the next few weekly updates.

Thanks again to Voice for Change for inviting us to the session and thanks also to parents for their time, feedback and for making us feel welcome.

Referring to the service
Any professional, including education and health, can make an autism referral for a child or young person up to their 18th birthday 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 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 revised assessment referral form can be found on the service web page at www.mpft.nhs.uk/services/children-and-young-people-autism-service.

**Assessments and interventions**

We are forwarding completed assessment outcome reports to families and professionals. 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.

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 the service web page at www.mpft.nhs.uk/services/children-and-young-people-autism-service or by contacting the team who can forward a copy via email. 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.

**Workshops**

As part of the Voice for Change session, we asked parents what workshops they would like to see provided within South Staffordshire. Suggestions included a sibling support group, sensory integration, coping strategies within a mainstream environment and keeping safe, particularly focusing on social media and stranger danger.

We thank everyone for their ideas and will shortly be going out more formally to seek further suggestions on future workshops – watch this space.

We held the first of our ‘Me, Myself and Autism’ workshops aimed at children and young people aged 9-14 on Friday. It was our most well attended workshop yet and the second session will be held next Friday (31 January) from 9.30am-11.30am at Rugeley Community Centre, Burntmill Lane, Rugeley, WS15 2HX.

Our Sleep workshop is for parents only and provides advice around sleep hygiene, sleep management and strategies. The following two workshops have been arranged:

- Friday 14 February from 9.30am-12.30pm at Rugeley Community Centre, Burnthill Lane, Rugeley, WS15 2HS
- Thursday 27 February from 9.30am-12.30pm at Glascote Library, 80 Caledonian, Glascote, Tamworth, B77 2ED.
Stakeholder update

24 January 2020

Our Understanding sensory processing in children with autism – parent/carer workshop will cover basic theory of sensory processing and help with identifying sensory behaviours in children with autism, thinking about strategies parents can use and developing understanding to help improve functioning in activities of everyday life. It takes place on:

- Thursday 19 March from 10am-12.30pm at East Staffs Children Centre, Waterloo Street, Burton-on-Trent, DE14 2NJ.

To book a place on any of our workshops please contact the team by email at cypautismservice@mpft.nhs.uk or telephone 0300 303 0691.

As a reminder, we also have details of an external six-week programme being delivered in Wolverhampton by Fox Training Solutions. This programme of workshops is available for children aged over 11 and will be an opportunity to:

- Share experiences of raising a child with autism
- Understand how to use your experiences to benefit others
- Build resilience with regard to supporting others
- Develop your understanding of relevant legislation, rights and support networks
- Develop your understanding of peer support and the associated benefits

Sessions will start on Friday 31 January and run for six weeks from 1pm-4pm. For further information on this programme and to book your place, please email melissatharm@foxtrainingsolutions.co.uk or call 07968 141919 or 07508 345685.

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.

Together we are making life better for our communities
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.

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