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.

Recruitment
We’re delighted to announce two further additions to the team for this update, starting with Speech and Language Therapist Lisa Christophorou (pictured right). Lisa has a clinical specialism in supporting young children and families with complex speech and language needs and, since qualifying in 2009 she has enjoyed roles in early years, complex needs and special school teams.

Abi Waters (pictured left) has also joined us, having been appointed as an Admin Assistant. Abi has 7 years’ experience working within the NHS at a local GP surgery and brings with her a great deal of knowledge and is hoping to use her skills to provide families with the best possible service.

We are in the process of creating a section on the service web page that provides more information about all the members of the team – watch this space.

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.

Assessments
We’ve spoken in previous updates about having offered appointments to families/ carers which were not attended. So far this month a total of 4 appointments have not been attended (in August, this figure was 11 for appointments offered by the team itself and Psicon, while in September it was 14).

We are committed to reducing the backlog to ensure that service users and their parents/ carers are seen as swiftly as possible and request that anyone who is unable to attend an appointment contacts the team as soon as possible to ensure this can be offered to another family. Thank you.

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.
Workshops
We received really positive feedback from our recent Sleep workshop, with one parent commenting: “Absolutely fantastic course. I learnt so much.”

A further two-session Sleep workshop has been arranged for Monday 16 November from 10am-12.30pm, with session two on Friday 20 November from 10am-11am. This workshop is for parents/careers 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.

The Managing Behaviours that Challenge workshop was also very well received, with a total of 19 parents attending, although there were five families who had registered and did not attend.

Extra places were made available for this workshop due to demand so we would again ask that anyone who has booked a place and is unable to attend to please contact the service to let us know so we can offer your place to a family on the waiting list.

We have added a number of extra places for the upcoming Introduction to Autism workshop on 2 November, while the two-part Sensory workshop being held on 3rd and 10th December is now fully booked.

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).

Any families that have attended recent workshops we would appreciate your feedback by completing this short survey – http://surveys.mpft.nhs.uk/Survey486/Create?channel=15181

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, 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