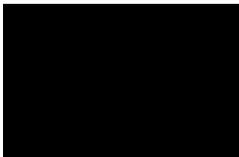


Our Ref:CH/cn

7th April 2020



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Dear Parents / Carers and Colleagues

RE: CAMHS Referrals in response to COVID-19

Our Specialist CAMHS team is undertaking careful planning on how we best use our available resource in the next few months to support both the efforts of the NHS as a whole and the needs of our children and young people in Southampton who most need a mental health service at this time.

We previously wrote to parents/carers on the 18th March through the Re:Minds and Parent/Carer Forum detailing some of the immediate changes to service delivery. Highlighting that as we moved forward with the escalating picture, it was likely we would need to focus our resources to responding to those children and young people with urgent and high risk needs. Some staff may be re deployed to assist in other clinical areas and we are undertaking efforts to upskill colleagues to be ready to do so should they be needed.

We are writing now to update you further on changes to our service delivery as part of our COVID response. The service is now delivering a community pathway for the delivery of urgent assessments (within 24 hours) of young people who may have previously been directed to Southampton General Hospital. This is an extension of our current service and will be provided 7 days a week. We are working closely with our colleagues in the acute sector and across the system to provide this in a joined up manner. There is a triage system in place for this model to ensure that young people whose needs are best met within the hospital are still able to be supported there. Young people whose needs are not best met within a hospital setting will be contacted by our Community CAMHS team who will undertake an initial assessment of need over the phone or through other digital platforms (including video calls) to jointly determine next steps.

We appreciate this is a difficult time and that some families may need additional contact with our team. We have increased our duty capacity to be able to respond to this and would like to encourage families who are already engaged with our service to use this should they be concerned about their child / young persons mental health.

In order to achieve this enhanced service safely, the service will not be in a position to respond to routine referrals over the next few months. What that means is that we will only be in a position to respond to referrals where there is evidence of significant mental illness impacting upon risk and safety.

This change in service involves a change in the way in which we process and manage new referrals. Currently our SPA team contact every family to complete a triage assessment over the phone. Over this time frame we will not be offering this. Referrals will be reviewed daily, based on the information

Solent NHS Trust are proud to be an organisation that promotes and supports clinical research, while maintaining confidentiality. If we carry out a study that we think you might be interested in, we would like to be able to let you know about it. If you would rather that we didn't contact you, please let your clinician know.



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made available to us by the referrer. Those with urgent or crisis levels of need will be contacted on the same, or next working day. Referrals which are connected with routine to moderate level of need will not be accepted and contact will not be made with families over the phone unless we identify a need to clarify some information. We will write back to the young person, their family and the referrer to explain this change in service and where advice, guidance and evidence based self help information can be accessed in the meantime. We will also advise on how parents/carers and young people can self refer to our service should they find that concerns for their mental health are ongoing once the service has returned to it's commissioned service delivery model.

What we need from those referring to our service over this time is detailed referral information of a young person's presenting need. This will be key in helping us to determine the best next steps for the young person and their family. If you are unsure if a referral is appropriate during this period then colleagues from our triage team will still be available to discuss these. They can be contacted on the CAMHS West direct dial number 023 8103 0061 or through the main reception on 0300 123 6661.

The table below gives some examples of what we look for in an urgent referral and therefore what we will be responding to.

Routine to Moderate Level of Need	Urgent to Crisis Intervention Level of Need
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neurodevelopmental differences (ND) such as autism spectrum disorder, tics or attention deficit disorder / ADHD assessments. • Anxiety and/or low mood which is impacting upon functioning and where young people have accessed other avenues for support this could include suicidal thoughts BUT with no intention or planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eating disorders, specifically anorexia nervosa and where there is evidence of physical health being compromised. • Early signs of Psychosis – young person reporting hearing voices and/or seeing things that others can't and unable to be explained in other ways. • Mental health problems leading to suicidal thoughts WITH intention and planning. • Severe self-harm (deep cuts requiring immediate medical attention, burning, attempted suicide)

This is not a decision we have made lightly as we understand that this is a time of uncertainty and worry for many children and families. We hope that you understand that with such unprecedented circumstances our NHS is facing we have to make some unprecedented decisions.

Enclosed with this letter is a pack of self-help resources that you are able to direct to during this time, including an example coping and resilience plan which young peoples and families may find of assistance. In addition you will find many helpful CBT resources at <https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/> and Northumbria University also have a comprehensive set of online self-help, accessible in both through auditory and booklet form. Please access this at <http://www.selfhelpguides.ntw.nhs.uk/northumbria/>

We have also enclosed information on the ThinkNinja App - a free App to support children and young people (11 – 17) with their mental health and emotional wellbeing in this time of uncertainty. We recommend young people and families take up this free resource at this time.

Once again we thank for your partnership, understanding and patience during this unprecedented time for our country and our community. Our apologies in advance for any disruption or uncertainty you may experience in the delivery of our service at this time. I can assure you we will be reviewing the situation on a regular basis and have clear indicators we are looking for to indicate that we are able to return to a position of business as usual. Once we are in that position we shall be writing to you again.

Yours sincerely

Handwritten signature of Chantal Homan in black ink.

Chantal Homan
Service and Quality Manager
CAMHS West

Handwritten signature of Dr Anna Gibson in black ink.

Dr Anna Gibson
Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist
GMC Number: 6130266