

Our Ref: CH/ca
9th May 2020

CAMHS West Team
Child and Family Services

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Millbrook
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SO16 4XE

Tel: 02381 030061

Dear Parents / Carers and Colleagues

www.solent.nhs.uk

Re: CAMHS West COVID-19 Update

I last wrote to you on the 07 April 2020 highlighting some key changes to the Specialist CAMH Service as part of the response to COVID-19.

This resulted in the temporary stoppage of some of our groups and drops in as well as a restriction on face to face contacts. We also closed to routine referrals for a period of time. You will be aware that many of the restrictions due to COVID-19 are likely to remain in place for some time. We are planning for this in the service on a very regular basis and I am writing to you again today to highlight some of the further changes, which include the reinstating of some services, albeit with a different delivery method.

As some of you may know we are offering alternatives to face to face contact with the introduction of appointments via Visionable (an online video consultation program), WhatsApp and telephone consultation. The service is also 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 is being provided 7 days a week. Now that we know that restrictions are likely to continue for some time we have made plans on how we can work differently in order to re-start some of the services that have been postponed and increase our level of face to face appointments. We will continue to gather your feedback and these measures will be regularly reviewed to ensure we are providing the most accessible and highest quality care possible during this difficult time.

The following changes to the service will be implemented:

The majority of appointments for initial assessments will return to being offered as face to face appointments. We are keen to develop strong relationships with young people and their families who require our service and recognise that there is a small risk this is compromised by our first meeting being through a digital platform. Whilst still needing to accommodate the need for large rooms to maintain social distancing and self-isolation as it arises it is not yet possible to offer every assessment as a face to face one. Where it is not possible we will get in touch with you to arrange an alternative way of carrying out the appointment.

All first appointments with a psychiatrist in our team will be face to face. New appointments with Psychiatrists in our team can be for a number of reasons but the most common reasons are for consideration of the use of medication or more detailed assessment of a young person's mental health. Both of which reasons are able to be more easily facilitated in a face to face appointment.

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.

Unless there are specific risks follow up appointments and reviews will be via Visionable or telephone. This is to enable the service to make best use of the larger clinical rooms we have available so that appointments which are needing to be conducted via face to face can be done in accordance with the right social distancing measures and also to ensure that we are doing our part within the wider NHS efforts to ensure that face to face contact is minimised.

As of the 11th May 2020 the service will re-open to referrals for anxiety and depression that meet our service criteria. The service will continue to work to a 7 day provision to support the interim UHS pathway and for this reason we are staging our restoration of referral acceptance to enable us to safely manage the additional requirements of the service at this time. 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.

In the summer term we will be offering virtual workshops via the video platform ZOOM for parents, carers and young people accessing our service. We will be offering them on the following topics:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Emotional Dysregulation and Self-harm
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- Managing Trauma

Also in the summer term we will be starting our therapeutic group program for parents/carers and young people via the video platform ZOOM. We will be staggering the introduction of these to make best use of our clinical capacity in the team. The groups that we are currently planning to include are:

- Cool Kids and Coping Cats for Anxiety
- New Forest Parenting Program for ADHD
- PACE (for support with trauma)

Appointments and Groups via Video Platforms

These appointments are a replacement for attending sessions within the clinic at this time. In the same way as you would with a clinic appointment we will need to be able to speak with and see the young person in these appointments. Please ensure that you are able to fully participate. If you foresee some difficulties in doing so then please let us know. We will assist where we can.

We have had instances where the young person has not been available for their appointment at the time arranged. This has meant that we have not been able to provide the support and intervention that would be most effective. In these difficult times we are keen to maintain our therapeutic relationships with young people and their families.

What we need from you is your assistance to make every contact count; there are a few ways in which you can help us with this.

- Support your son or daughter to prioritise their CAMHS appointments and work them into the plan for their day so they are not out for their walk or engaged in other activities at the time of the appointment.

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Tel: 023 8060 8900 Fax: 023 8053 8740 (safehaven) Website: www.solent.nhs.uk

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- Ensure that where possible you are in a quiet environment where you are less likely to be disturbed. For safeguarding reasons we ask that appointments are not carried out in people's bedrooms.
- We respectfully ask that you do not record your sessions without prior agreement. Unauthorised recording of sessions is a criminal offence.

Contacting Us

To assist us in making the best decisions about our service delivery we ask that you keep us informed of any urgent changes in your child/young person's mental health so that we can assess accordingly with you. Such examples may include increasing risk of harm to self or others, a reporting of any unusual symptoms such as reporting being able to hear or see things that others can't and/or a change in eating habits with food intake being restricted coupled with weight loss and/or excessive exercise.

Please may I take this opportunity to remind you of our direct dial number, 023 8103 0061, and our team email address, SNHS.CAMHSWEST@nhs.net We anticipate that sickness and absence from work will impact upon our availability to answer calls and respond to emails but we will endeavour to do so in as timely a fashion as possible.

We thank you again for your partnership, understanding and patience during this unprecedented time. My apologies in advance for any disruption or uncertainty that you may experience in the delivery of your care during this time. We will be doing our utmost to keep communication clear and unambiguous. We are working closely with Re:Minds (www.reminds.org.uk) to communicate with families and find ways of making our service more accessible and available for question and answer sessions.

Yours sincerely



Chantal Homan
Service and Quality Manager

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