

# Reading Families' Forum

*A voice for families of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities*

## **COFFEE MORNING 13<sup>th</sup> May 2021 VIA ZOOM**

Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust, Children, Young People and Families' Services (CYFS) joined 5 parent carers, a Primary Mental Health worker and Children's Centre and school staff.

From CYFS, we had Mairi Evans - Clinical Director, Mary-Jane Stroud - Neurodiversity Lead (Autism and ADHD), Andrew Royle – mental health practitioner, CAMHS Rapid Response Team and Daryl Nicholas, Participation Lead.

The neurodiversity services are now a separate team to CAMHS but they will work closely together. All services across Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust work with people with neurodiversity.

The neurodiversity team are working on reducing the waiting lists, which have been longer since Covid. The team are advertising for additional clinicians and are using Helios to do some online assessments. This would be for children over 7 where the service felt it would be appropriate.

The neurodiversity team are looking at how they triage new referrals and considering whether children need a joint assessment for Autism and ADHD to avoid time on another waiting list later. It is better if referrals are detailed, including what school resources have been tried and whether there has been any other support such as the Early Help team at Brighter Futures for Children.

### **What to do while on the waiting list for an assessment:**

The neurodiversity team is looking at sending a letter to schools on referral with useful resources. Putting in support while waiting helps. Parents can ask to speak with the SENCo at the child's school to discuss what support their child needs.

The National Autistic Society has lots of advice and information:

<https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance>

If you think your child may have anxiety disorder or ADHD, contact the neurodiversity team and discuss this with them whilst your child is on the waiting list.

### **How to choose a school if a child is still on the waiting list for an assessment:**

Look for what would work best for your child assuming that your child does have autism. If the assessment is that they don't have autism, it won't do any harm and will probably benefit the child even if they turn out not to have autism.

Ask the primary or nursery school SENCo to talk to the SENCo at the school your child may be attending next.

**[www.readingfamiliesforum.co.uk](http://www.readingfamiliesforum.co.uk)**

Registered Charity No. 1166585

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Ask for your child to do extra visits before starting. A transition booklet with pictures and/or maps could also be useful. It is also worth doing a one or two page summary of your child's needs for the new school.

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BHFT want to reduce the barriers to neurodiverse people accessing mental and physical health care. Anxiety and depression are not symptoms of Autism or ADHD but there are systemic problems that make people with these conditions more likely to be anxious.

The Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire integrated care system has been set up to improve health and care.

Some parents said that their child didn't get support until they were diagnosed with autism. Reading is starting to use the Portsmouth Neurodiversity Profile and part of their Autism Growth Project. This includes training teachers.

If you would like to share your experiences or get involved in service development, contact Daryl Nicholas on [daryl.nicholas@berkshire.nhs.uk](mailto:daryl.nicholas@berkshire.nhs.uk)

Andrew spoke briefly about the CAMHS rapid response team which includes neurodiverse children. They aim for a needs led assessment and working with other services to support the child and family. The aim is to reduce the need for a child to be admitted to hospital where possible. He is willing to come to another coffee morning to discuss further, which parents would welcome. The Forum will try to organise this with BHFT in the Autumn

**Next coffee morning: Wednesday, 16<sup>th</sup> June 11:30 with Parenting Special Children on reducing aggressive behaviour from children with additional needs.**

RB 12/06/21

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