

Stakeholder Briefing:

Autism services in southern Staffordshire

6 September 2019

In light of recent posts on social media regarding autism services in south Staffordshire, we would like to reassure patients, carers and their families about the provision.

The current contract for delivering autism services in south Staffordshire is held by Midlands Psychology. The contract is in place until 30 September 2019 and as such the provider is responsible for delivering the service until this time.

Following extensive dialogue between commissioners and the provider, the contract with Midlands Psychology will not be extended beyond its natural expiry date. However, the CCGs are working with alternative local providers to ensure there will be an autism service in place from 1 October, until the new contract can be awarded.

Due to an increasing demand on the current service, the CCGs recently awarded Midlands Psychology additional funding to support assessments and the CCGs expect patients to have these completed by Midlands Psychology.

The CCGs are continuing to work with Midlands Psychology to ensure continuity of care as our priority is to provide safe and effective services for children with autism and their families. We have been assured in writing by Midlands Psychology that they are continuing to operate a service.

As with any service where the contract is due to expire, the CCG is undertaking a formal procurement process to identify a provider for the new contract.

To support the procurement process, the CCGs carried out extensive engagement with patients, parents and their families and a new specification has been drafted to take on board feedback received. This includes extending the service to children up to the age of 25 as per NICE guidance.

Further meetings are planned between the CCGs and Midlands Psychology early next week to ensure delivery of their contractual obligations and to agree more effective lines of communication going forward.

We would like to reassure parents, families and young people that we are working with our NHS colleagues to secure alternative provision to ensure assessments are undertaken for our local young people.

If parents and families have any further concerns, please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on the contact details below:

Freephone: 0800 030 4563 - there is also a 24-hour answer phone service.

Email: MLCSU.PatientServices@nhs.net