

Dear Parent/Carer,

### **Therapy Services from September 2020**

Firstly, we would like to thank you for the support you have shown since the start of the coronavirus pandemic. Our staff have been touched by the messages of thanks, best wishes and understanding from families who access our Therapies Service.

We worked to ensure that children, young people (CYP) and their families could still access advice and support; although that support has been delivered in a different way. We saw a substantial rise in the number of calls to our Therapies Advice Line helping us to support more children and young people. We are continuing to run our Advice Line so if you have concerns about your child or additional queries please contact the Advice Line on 01992 823093.

### **Service Support from September**

CYP Therapy staff have now returned from their redeployed roles and so we are in a position to contact more families and offer more appointments.

Along with the Advice Line we are also delivering:

- Support for CYP who need to be discharged out of hospital
- Support for CYP who may require end of life care or an urgent social care assessment
- Support for CYP with dysphagia (eating and drinking difficulties)
- Urgent moving/handling and access assessments, and advice/review of equipment needs
- Assessments for statutory Education, Health and Care plans
- Contacting families of CYP with therapy provision as part of their EHCP to discuss their child's needs
- Appointments to review a CYP's needs where they have complex or urgent therapy needs or for those CYP whose needs are as yet unclear

We are not currently delivering face to face groups due to the increased risk of transmission that they pose.

### **Appointments**

Each child or young person is an individual with different needs. Our staff will consider each individual's needs and work out how best to meet those needs. Much of our service support is being delivered through telephone or video calls. For those CYP who may need a face to face appointment individual risk assessments will be carried out to ensure everyone's safety. More detail is also available on our website <https://www.hct.nhs.uk/our-services/children-young-peoples-therapies-service/>

We will use video consultations in various ways:

- speaking to you about their progress and explaining helpful activities you can do at home.
- asking you to play or complete an activity with your child so we can see how they are doing, or share a pre-recorded video clip with us.
- Where appropriate we will speak to your child as part of the session.

### **Children and Young People with Education Health and Care Plans**

The provision detailed as part of a CYP's Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) will be delivered. We deliver this in a variety of ways, one of which may be virtual. We will contribute to EHCP assessments, annual reviews and any SEND appeal processes as required, including the provision of written reports. Assessments may be carried out either virtually or face-to-face as appropriate for the child or young person's needs.

### **Face to Face Appointments - Social Distancing and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

Some CYP have needs which require a face to face appointment. This is likely to be when direct Physiotherapy is required, when certain equipment they are using is reviewed, or specific assessments need to be carried out by a therapist. Appointments may be offered in an HCT clinic centre, at your home or in the educational setting. When a face to face appointment is needed, we will send you information about how social distancing will work and what PPE is used. More information about appointments during Covid-19 is available <https://www.hct.nhs.uk/covid-19/more-information-about-appointments-during-covid-19/>

### **Children and Young People who are continuing to isolate at home**

A small number of CYP will be continuing to isolate at home on medical advice. In this case we will work with you to discuss your child's needs and agree a plan for providing continued care and support. For most this will be delivered virtually, therefore interventions can continue whilst isolating. We will also liaise with the education setting to discuss ways of including therapy activities and programmes into home learning being offered by the setting.

### **Working with nurseries, schools and colleges**

We have written to nurseries, schools and colleges to share our plans and guidance with them and will continue to work collaboratively with HCC and settings to develop these as things progress. In line with government's guidance our staff will work with settings to provide interventions and support for pupils whilst minimising contact where possible. You can find a copy of this letter on our website <https://www.hct.nhs.uk/our-services/children-young-peoples-therapies-service/>

## **Children & Young People's Therapies Service**

Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust