

Unit 1a, Howard Court
14 Tewin Road
Welwyn Garden City
AL7 1BW
August 2020

Dear Headteacher,

We are writing to you again to update you on the actions we are taking to support children and young people (CYP) from September and respond to some questions that you have raised.

We have worked to ensure that CYP and their families could continue to 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 a CYP in your setting or additional queries please contact the Advice Line on 01992 823093.

Service Support from September

CYP Therapy staff have now returned from redeployed roles so we are now 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 urgent social care assessment
- Support for CYP with dysphagia (eating and drinking difficulties)
- Urgent moving and handling assessments, access risk assessments and advice/review of equipment needs for CYP
- Assessments for statutory Education, Health and Care assessments and contacting families of CYP with EHCP therapy provision to discuss their child's needs
- Advice and support for CYP and their families through our enhanced Advice Line
- Appointments to review a CYP's needs where they have complex and/or urgent therapy needs or those CYP whose needs are unclear

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

We are currently reviewing our training courses and workshop sessions, so that these can be delivered in a new virtual format. We hope that our new virtual training sessions will become available later in the year. New dates and details will be added to our webpages and shared through HCC newsletters once these are finalised.

Much of our service support is being delivered through a telephone or video calls, although individual risk assessments are carried out for those children and young people who may require a face to face appointment to meet their clinical need. More detail is available on our website <https://www.hct.nhs.uk/our-services/children-young-peoples-therapies-service/>

CYP who are at SEND Support will have their needs met through Universal, Targeted or Specialist tier support, as appropriate to meet their individual needs. As has always been our practice, our support for CYP is needs led. More details of our service offer are available on our website.

Summary of support for CYP and settings

1. Urgent or High-Needs Appointments	2. School/Setting SENCo Liaison	3. Transition Support	4. Postponed Appointments	5. New Referrals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointments are available for Children and Young People (CYP) who need urgent support • Families will be contacted to offer virtual or face-to-face appointment as required • Any additional referrals or equipment recommendations will be completed as required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Settings with higher numbers of CYP who may need our support can request a virtual meeting to discuss support • Special Schools will be contacted to determine need for on-site equipment reviews or urgent advice for CYP • Equipment recommendations and written advice will be provided as required • Staff in schools or settings can ring our Advice Line to seek advice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support is available for CYP transitioning with equipment needs, including setting risk assessments for access (OT and PT) • Parents/carers of CYP transitioning Key Stage or type of setting can ring the Advice Line to request advice and support • We will be working with other Integrated Services for Learning to support CYP and settings through transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will be gradually contacting families whose appointments were postponed - these will usually be virtual appointments with families • We will be contacting families of CYP with provision in their Education Health and Care Plan • Advice will be given either through online resources or a therapy programme, as required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After a referral has been accepted by triage families will usually receive an initial consultation to discuss their child's needs. • Where assessment is required, families will be invited to book appointments, usually delivered virtually • A short written report will be provided and any additional referrals will be completed as required

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. For many CYP we will be able to use video consultations, to speak to you about their progress and explain activities you can complete to help their development. For some CYP we may ask you to play or complete an activity with them during a video call so we can see how they are doing, or to pre-record a video clip and share this with us. For CYP who are able to engage with the video call, we will include speaking to them 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.

Please contact us if you are planning to hold a review meeting for a pupil in your setting so that we can jointly plan our involvement in this process.

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 needs to be reviewed, or specific assessments need to be carried out by a therapist. When an appointment in an educational setting is considered to be necessary then the therapist will contact your setting to agree how and when this appointment can be safely carried out. More information about appointments during Covid-19 is available here <https://www.hct.nhs.uk/covid-19/more-information-about-appointments-during-covid-19/>

The following guidance is applied to face to face appointments:

- Social distancing of 2 metres will be maintained with those individuals present, unless hands-on care is required.
- When hands-on intervention is required staff will wear appropriate PPE.
- We have enhanced cleaning arrangements in place for any equipment used and staff apply robust hand hygiene measures.

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 families and settings to discuss the child's needs and agree a plan for providing continued care and support, including safe face to face appointments when needed. For most CYP intervention will be delivered virtually, therefore support can continue whilst isolating. We will also liaise with their education setting to discuss ways of including therapy activities and programmes into home learning being offered.

We recognise that settings are facing many changes as you reopen in September and will continue to work collaboratively with HCC and settings to develop these as things progress.

Children & Young People's Therapies Service

Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust