

## FOI\_0483\_21/22 – FOI request concerning - Pathological Demand Avoidance

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- 1. Please confirm whether any professionals working at NHS solent acknowledge and provide support and recommendations for a child with autism and significant Pathological Demand Avoidance?**

Solent NHS Trust is commissioned to provide diagnostic assessments for Autism. Within the NHS, Pathological Demand Avoidance is recognised as a subset of symptoms as part of the Autism diagnostic criteria, rather than a diagnosis in itself. Post diagnostic support for families is offered through Autism Hampshire.

- 2. Please provide a copy of the policy that says NHS Solent speech and language therapists are unable to provide recommendations for children with autism and significant Pathological demand avoidance.**

There is no policy within Solent NHS Trust Speech and Language Therapy Services that says therapists are unable to provide recommendations for children who have been diagnosed with Autism. Therapists who have undertaken an assessment of a child would usually make recommendations based on their findings. Their recommendations would not necessarily be directly related to the child's diagnosis of Autism.

- 3. Please confirm whether it is possible for a child, with a diagnosis of autism with significant Pathological demand avoidance and ADHD, who is experiencing significant mental health issues to access CAMHS at the age of 4?**

Our Solent Specialist CAMHS Service in Southampton is commissioned for children age 5-18.

- 4. Which professionals within NHS Solent can help a child who has significant fears and phobias affecting their ability to use the toilet, eat, wash (and other such basic functions) and attend school, if they are age 4 and autistic?**

This would be a clinical decision that would be made based on the referral information for that specific child. There are a number of services that Solent NHS Trust provide that may be involved in this situation. The School Nursing Team may be the most appropriate service initially although it would depend on a number of factors such as which other services were already involved and the specific needs of that child.

- 5. If it has been agreed for a child to have sensory integration therapy, by the CCG and named on the child's EHCP, where does this take place?**

Solent NHS Trust is not currently commissioned to provide Sensory Integration Therapy within the Occupational Therapy Team and therefore this question is best redirected to the CCG.

- 6. Are any of your occupational therapists or speech and language therapists trained in how to deliver therapy or assess a child with autism with the significant PDA profile?**

Solent NHS Trust ensures that employees receive regular training in relation to their specific area of clinical practice and are provided ongoing opportunities for continuing professional development. Some of our therapists do have specialist knowledge and training in Autistic Spectrum Disorders.

- 7. Please confirm whether the diagnosis of autism with significant PDA profile / symptoms is ever made for a child being assessed by professionals working for NHS Solent, and if so, which professionals and please could I have a copy of the recommendations made to parents and education.**

As previously mentioned, Solent NHS Trust is commissioned to provide diagnostic assessments for Autism. Pathological Demand Avoidance is recognised as a subset of symptoms as part of the Autism diagnostic criteria, rather than a diagnosis in itself. The diagnostic pathway for Autism within Solent depends on the age of the child. For children under the age of 5, this would be through our Community Paediatric Medical Service. For children aged 5 and above this would be through our Neurodevelopmental pathway that is part of our Community CAMHS Service. The professionals working in these teams are from a range of clinical backgrounds including Community Paediatricians and Clinical Psychologists. The recommendations made to parents and education following a formal diagnosis are specific to the needs of that child.

- 8. Please confirm whether the NHS Solent speech and language therapists and occupational therapists are able to refer to a child as having autism with significant pathological demand avoidance in their reports to parents or education, or as part of the EHCP process, and to adapt their advice for treatment appropriately to take this diagnosis into consideration?**

Within reports to parents or education as part of the EHCP process, Solent Speech and Language Therapists and Occupational Therapists would be expected to summarise their assessments and any treatment they have undertaken as well as any future recommendations. If the child has already been given a diagnosis of Autism then they may well make reference to this in their report, including any specific

recommendations that relate to this. The decision about what to include would be a clinical one that would be made by the therapist at that time.

9. **Please confirm whether the NHS Solent speech and language therapists and occupational therapists are able to refer to a child as having ADHD in their reports to parents or education, or as part of the EHCP process, and to adapt their advice for treatment appropriately to take this diagnosis into consideration?**

As above.

10. **Please confirm whether the NHS Solent speech and language therapists and occupational therapists are able to refer to a child as having Sensory Processing Disorder in their reports to parents or education, or as part of the EHCP process, and to adapt their advice for treatment appropriately to take this diagnosis into consideration?**

As above

11. **What support is provided for a 4 year child with a diagnosis of ADHD by professionals at NHS Solent, where is it affecting their daily life and ability to learn?**

There are a number of services that Solent NHS Trust provide that may be involved in this situation. Depending on whether they are at school, the School Nursing Team may be the most appropriate service initially although it would depend on a number of factors such as which other services were already involved and the specific needs of that child.

12. **Who provides support to education when a child needs assistance with toileting at school? Is there a policy and any guidance sent that must be followed?**

Within Solent NHS Trust this would usually be something that our School Nursing Team could advise on (depending on the individual needs of the child). There is no specific policy or standard guidance as all advice and guidance would be tailored to the specific needs of the child.

13. **Please confirm whether a 4 year old child can get an assessment and diagnosis for their anxiety when it is life impairing, from any professionals at NHS Solent, and if so who?**

This would depend on the individual needs of the child and whether any existing services were already involved. This may be something that our School Nursing Team could support with although they would be more likely to focus on strategies that could be implemented by the parents rather than a formal assessment and diagnosis. For

any anxiety problems that continue to have a significant impact on a child's functioning after the age of 5, we would recommend seeking a referral to our CAMHS Service for advice and guidance.