

Carelink  
(CAMHS for Looked After and Adopted Children)  
Lister Primary Care Centre  
101 Peckham Road  
London SE15 5LJ  
Telephone: 0203 049 8470  
**SLAM Switchboard: 020 3228 6000**  
**4<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

Dear Referrer,

**Re: Covid-19 Pandemic Update from Southwark CAMHS**

We are writing to update you on our service and to let you know specifically about the current service offer during the Covid-19 outbreak. Throughout the pandemic, we have continued to prioritise urgent mental health appointments and offered face to face appointments as needed. We have also continued to offer ongoing treatment to our children, young people and families who are open to the service, offered assessments 'virtually' to as many as possible on the waiting lists and those who have been referred during this time.

**We are now operating business as usual except that children and families are routinely offered appointments via video link and/or telephone contact unless face to face appointment is clinically needed.**

We continue to prioritise the safety of our young people, families and staff so if children and their families have Covid-19 symptoms we advise that they do not attend appointments, but instead contact us so we can advise about immediate mental health needs.

**Staff and change to working practice**

Most staff are now working remotely and in each clinical site we maintained the minimum number of clinical staff to ensure the safe running of the service. Some staff from the community teams are working from the Crisis Assessment Unit (CAU).

We are awaiting guidance on safety before we know when more staff can return to the clinics and community teams but there are no immediate plans for the whole staff team to return given the need for social distancing. Like many services, we anticipate that we will have staff coming into clinics on specific days and working from home on specific days.

**Referrals**

We are now accepting all referrals and processing them as quickly as possible. Routine referrals will be triaged as is normal practice for assessment and treatment.

Please ensure that we have the most up to date telephone number and where possible email address for all referrals.

## **Appointments**

- Routine appointments (treatment and assessment) continue and staff have notified families about options such as phone reviews, video calls. As the staffing capacity has stabilised this work is now part of the 'new normal' with families having video link appointments and telephone contact.
- As usual urgent appointments are prioritised and essential face to face appointments are taking place.
- We continue to join multi-agency meetings and are keen to be involved with our colleagues planning for and offering support to children, young people and their families.
- We continue to request extra notice (at least 10 days) if children and families get their prescriptions from us and will make arrangements for them to be posted.

## **Clinical Service**

The Southwark CAMHS Early Help team is now functioning as normal and continuing with its work including a telephone consultation service to professionals, assessments and treatment.

The Carelink team based at the Lister Health Centre moved base at the end of March as the Lister Health Centre is now designated as a 'Covid-19 hot site' and have joined the Neurodevelopment team at Sunshine House. However, discussions are underway about the Carelink team returning to the Lister site. We will keep you updated about the timescale.

There are some pieces of work e.g. specific clinical observations and some specialist assessments that we are unable to offer until face to face appointments are possible. We have continued to be in contact with schools and other agencies to gather information as part of our assessment and treatment process to ensure that in spite of the current limitations we can offer as comprehensive a service as possible.

In the initial stages of working remotely there were some technical 'glitches' and we were grateful to the children, young people and their families for their patience in setting this work up. As a service, we have been making notes of the challenges and benefits of video link appointments. While the inability, because of Covid-19, to offer face to face appointments has been challenging staff have found creative solutions to help maintain engagement of children, young people and families. We have also noticed that some families who previously may have struggled to attend a clinic site and might not have engaged with the service, have welcomed a 'virtual' appointment.

## **Southwark CAMHS Duty Number**

Our combined duty team telephone line is operating Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm. If you have an urgent mental health crisis or any clinical query for any of the teams, please call the following number and you will be directed to the Duty staff member.

**020 3228 7777**

## **Mental Health Emergencies**

Because of the anticipated pressure on A&E departments we developed the Crisis Assessment Unit (CAU) as a temporary response for young people who have a mental health emergency but do not need medical assessment. If you are considering attending A&E for mental health reasons, please call us in the first instance on the above duty numbers and we will advise on the best course of action.

**Outside of working hours please call**

Our CAMHS Crisis Line **020 3228 5980** Monday to Friday **5pm – 11pm and weekends 9am – 9pm**

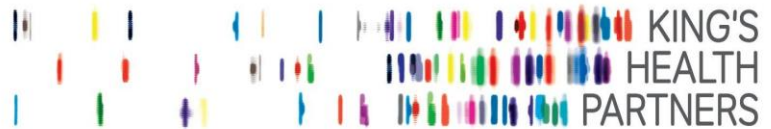
If you need advice outside of those hours we recommend contacting the dedicated SLAM Mental Health Crisis Line on **0800-731-2864** or **NHS 111**.

We are very conscious of the sense of distress and unease in our community at the moment and want to do all we can to respond sensitively and swiftly. During this unusual and uncertain time the multi-agency response and cooperation, despite the pressures on all agencies has been impressive and speaks to the strength of Southwark partnership working. As we move to the next phase of 'new normal' we are confident that in Southwark we'll continue to work creatively to prioritise need.

Yours sincerely,

Elizabeth Murphy, Janet Grimes and Dr Lisa Burke

On behalf of the Southwark CAMHS Senior Management Team



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