The Crown Medical Centre
Venture Way, Taunton, TA2 8QY
Tel: 01823 282151
Fax: 01823 250179

Helping your child with behavioural and or mental health concerns – Advice and guidance to parents

Managing a child with behavioural and or mental health concerns is stressful and we want to help you access the right help in the best way.

STEP 1: SELF HELP
STEP 2: BOOK A PHONE CALL WITH GP
STEP 3: HELP US PREPARE A REFERRAL TO SPECIALIST SERVICES

STEP 1- SELF HELP

Seek advice from your preschool/school/college. They often have links to local parenting groups and family support workers. Schools have access to school nurses and counsellors and links with mental health workers to the child and adolescent mental health services. Concerns at school can be raised with these health care professionals who in turn can seek out resources and advice for your child without coming via the GP surgery. For behaviour related to learning difficulties/needs please talk with your teacher and special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) at school

For preschool GET SET and associated children's centres have good resources on a wide range of issues including managing behavioural difficulties.
www.getsetsomerset.org.uk or email getset-taunton@somerset.gov.uk
Getset services now work with children, young people and their families from 0-19 years or up to 25 if there is a special educational need.
For children up to the age of 5 you can seek help and advice from your Health Visitor – tel. 03003230115

For help with a wide range of health and mental wellbeing issues and links to lots of useful websites look at the Somerset council website and follow links to mental health toolkit
www.somersethealthinschool.co.uk

The Integrated Therapy Service in Taunton has an advice line open to parents every morning from 9 – 12.00 apart from Tuesdays. Tel no is 03030333002
They can help with a range of problems including behaviour/mental health.

For advice and guidance on a number of mental health issues in young people go to www.youngminds.org.uk

Self-harm
Self-harm is a way of dealing with very difficult feelings that build up inside the child or young person and which they find hard to express or deal with in any other way. It can take a number of forms but most commonly presents as cutting or burning, bruising, taking an overdose of tablets, hair pulling or picking skin. It is common in young people. In the first place you should seek help through your school counselling services or school nurse. The local mental health services will only accept referrals where the child has significant underlying mental health issues or the harm is severe or risky. Talk to your school about counselling or access to the school nurse.
If your child has presented with self-harm or self-injury which presents an actual or possible risk to life they should be transferred to accident and emergency immediately
Understanding what is happening in your child's thinking is key to helping a parent understand and help their child find a pathway to managing their emotions in healthier way
Useful resources for both you and your child are available at the following websites: www.youngminds.org.uk or www.nshn.co.uk (national self-harm network) or www.selfharm.co.uk

www.nhs.uk
For information managing children's behaviour issues from toddlers to teenagers…just use the search engine and you will get to the relevant page. For specific concerns about attention deficit hyperactivity and autistic disorders see appendix and look at NHS choices or patient.co.uk or youngminds.org.uk which all give useful information and links. At the back of this leaflet are listed websites and numbers including those specifically designed for young people. If your child's behaviour involves concerns about their safety from others or you have concerns that your child is at risk from or has been or is being sexually, physically or emotionally abused or

emotionally or physically neglected you can contact the children's safeguarding team yourself or ask for help from a carer/teacher/health care professional.

Safeguarding concerns: contact Somerset direct 0845 345 9122

STEP 2- BOOK A PHONE CALL WITH GP

If you still have concerns about your child please book a telephone call to speak with a GP. It is best to discuss with the GP first by phone so a decision can be made about the best way to see you and or your child alone or together. An initial phone call helps make any follow up face to face consultation a lot more constructive for all parties.
Following this phone call the GP may feel a direct referral to another health care professional is best before follow up again by phone or face to face. They may arrange a hearing test, occupational therapy assessment or get advice from the child and adolescent mental health services. They may ask you to gather further written information from your preschool or school before seeing you to review.

The GP may wish you to complete a concern form (see appendix) to send in prior to arranging to meet face to face

STEP 3- HELP US MAKE A REFERRAL TO SPECIALIST SERVICES

Following discussion with GP by phone please send in concern form in appendix and any other written reports from school or college for the GP to collate and send to CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health services)

For information about CAMHS look at:
www.sompar.nhs.uk/what-we-do/children-and-young-people/children-and-adolescent-mental-health-services-camhs/

CAMHS accept referrals based on the level of **need**, **severity** and **risk** of the problem to your child
They will take into account
1. The bigger picture of what is going on in your child's life now and what has gone on in the past
2. Family history of mental health problems
3. How long the problems have been going on for
4. What things have been done to help so far and any school counsellors/other professionals involved

Emergency assessments can by requested with CAMHS for a child with

1. symptoms of severe depression with current suicidal thoughts, intention or history of suicide attempts
2. concerns about psychosis

Psychosis is a symptom of a serious mental illness. A person experiencing psychosis loses touch with what is accepted as reality, they may feel paranoid, hallucinate, hear voices or have delusions. It is associated with severe stress or depression, with a family history of serious mental illness and can be triggered by drug and/or alcohol use.
People who develop psychosis usually have their first episode in their teens or early 20s
Professionals concerned that a young person may be experiencing a psychosis can contact the **S**omerset **T**eam for **E**arly intervention **P**sychosis. **STEP team**

Appendix

1. Concerns about Attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder

ADHD is a condition in which children find it very difficult to focus their attention or control their behaviour. They often act on impulse without thinking. All children behave in this way sometimes but with ADHD this behaviour is persistent, happens in every setting the child is in and starts usually when the child is a toddler and always before the age of six or seven.
The diagnosis is based usually based upon a persistence of 3 main issues:

INATTENTION, IMPULSIVENESS AND HYPERACTIVITY

There may be other reasons a child acts in this way. The child may be anxious or there may be problems at home or school

Children aged 0-11 are referred to the Paediatric Team (children's specialist) at Musgrove Park Hospital

Young people aged 11-18 are referred to CAMHS for assessment

2. Concerns about autistic spectrum disorder

The main features of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) are problems with

SOCIAL COMMUNICATION AND INTERACTION.

Signs of ASD in pre-school children

- **Spoken language**
  Delayed speech development (for example, speaking less than 50 different words by the age of two), or not speaking at all ,frequent repetition of set words and phrases, speech that sounds very monotonous or flat ,preferring to communicate using single words, despite being able to speak in sentences
- **Responding to others**
  Not responding to their name being called, despite having normal hearing, rejecting cuddles initiated by a parent or carer (although they may initiate cuddles themselves), reacting unusually negatively when asked to do something by someone else
- **Interacting with others**
  Not being aware of other people's personal space, or being unusually intolerant of people entering their own personal space, little interest in interacting with other people, including children of a similar age not enjoying situations that most children of their age like, such as birthday parties, preferring to play alone, rather than asking others to play with them rarely using gestures or facial expressions when communicating, avoiding eye contact
- **Behaviour**
  Having repetitive movements, such as flapping their hands, rocking back and forth, or flicking their fingers
  Playing with toys in a repetitive and unimaginative way, such as lining blocks up in order of size or colour, rather than using them to build something
  Preferring to have a familiar routine and getting very upset if there are changes to this routine
  Having a strong like or dislike of certain foods based on the texture or colour of the food as much as the taste, unusual sensory interests – for example, children with ASD may sniff toys, objects or people inappropriately

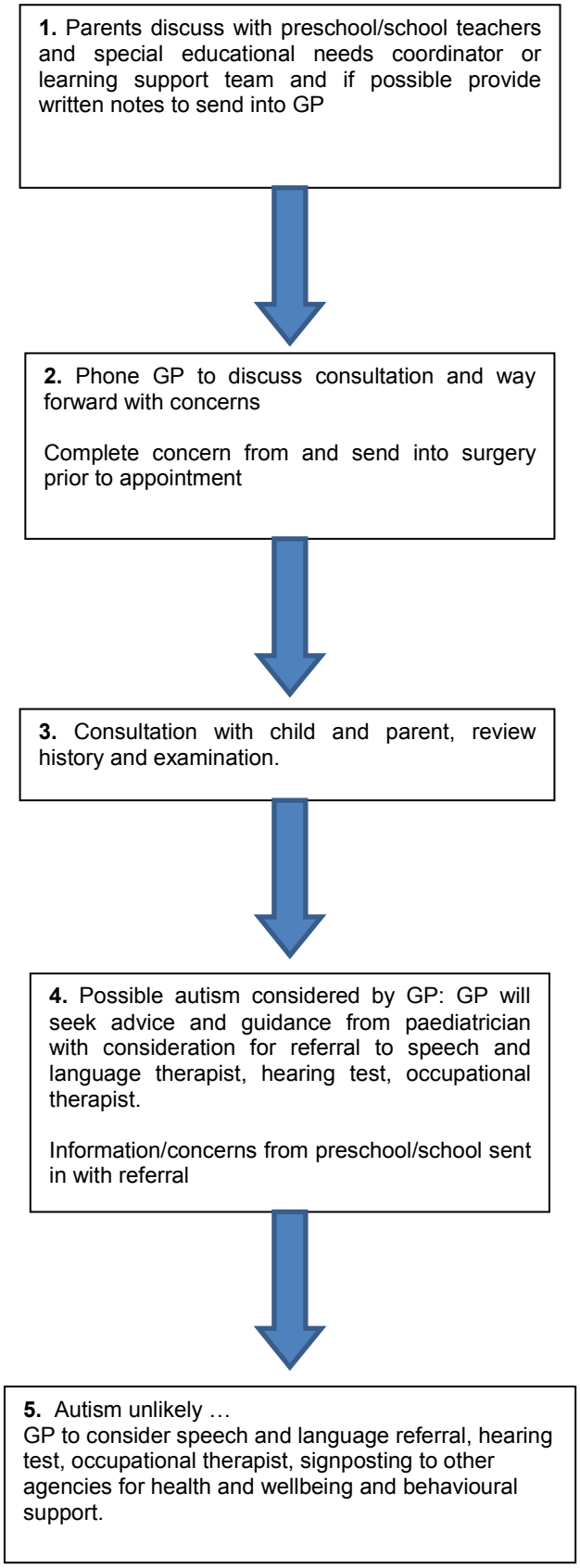
Signs and symptoms of ASD in school-age children

- **Spoken language**
  Preferring to avoid using spoken language, speech that sounds very monotonous or flat, speaking in pre-learned phrases, rather than putting together individual words to form new sentences, seeming to talk "at" people, rather than sharing a two-way conversation
- **Responding to others**
  Taking people's speech literally and being unable to understand sarcasm, metaphors or figures of speech
  Reacting unusually negatively when asked to do something by someone else
- **Interacting with others**
  Not being aware of other people's personal space, or being unusually intolerant of people entering their own personal space, little interest in interacting with other people, including children of a similar age, or having few close friends, despite attempts to form friendships
  Not understanding how people normally interact socially, such as greeting people or wishing them farewell
  Being unable to adapt the tone and content of their speech to different social situations – for example, speaking very formally at a party and then speaking to total strangers in a familiar way
  Not enjoying situations and activities that most children of their age enjoy

Rarely using gestures or facial expressions when communicating, avoiding eye contact

- **Behaviour**
  Repetitive movements, such as flapping their hands, rocking back and forth, or flicking their fingers
  Playing in a repetitive and unimaginative way, often preferring to play with objects rather than people
  Developing a highly specific interest in a particular subject or activity
  Preferring to have a familiar routine and getting very upset if there are changes to their normal routine
  Having a strong like or dislike of certain foods based on the texture or colour of the food as much as the taste, unusual sensory interests – for example, children with ASD may sniff toys, objects or people inappropriately

Pathway to potential diagnosis



Appendix:
3.Resources: Numbers and Websites

Somerset parent carer forum
A parent led website giving help, advice and support for parents with children with disability or additional needs
Tel: 01458 259384
Mob: 07543 680365
Email: Help@SomersetParentCarerForum.org.uk

For help and advice with children facing emotional or psychological upset in response to a life threatening illness contact the compass team on 01823 344693

For help with prolonged or abnormal reactions to grief ring Barnados Mandala project 07584 347291

For difficulties in with adopted children contact Somerset consultation service 0800 587 9900

2BU Somerset
www.2bu-somerset.co.uk
Offers a range of youth support services to young people in Somerset who are coming to terms with their sexual or gender identity

ADFAM
www.adfam.org.uk
Tel: 020 7553 7640
Offers information, support groups and advice for families affected by drugs and alcohol

Beat
www.b-eat.co.uk
Youth line: 0845 634 7650
Adult line: 0845 634 1414
Information, support and advice around eating disorders

The Bridge
www.turntothebridge.org
Tel: 0117 342 6999
Local sexual assault support service for men, women and young people

Charlie Waller Memorial Trust
www.cwmt.org.uk
Free mental health resources and training

Childline
www.ChildLine.org.uk
Tel: 0800 1111
Free and confidential helpline for children & young adults in the UK

Gamcare
www.gamcare.org.uk
Tel: 0808 8020 133
Provides confidential counselling advice, information and support for anyone affected by a gambling problem

iHop – Supporting all professionals to work with offender's children and their families
i-HOP is a one-stop information and advice service to support all professionals in working with children and families of offenders, bringing together useful information in one place.
www.i-hop.org.uk

Somerset Integrated Domestic Abuse Services (SIDAS)
0800 6949999

24 hour National Domestic Violence Helpline
Tel: 0808 2000 247

Mental Health Foundation
www.mentalhealth.org.uk
The Mental Health Foundation have published a guide for youth workers which is designed to help embed effective mental wellbeing improvement practices

Mindfull online counselling
www.mindfull.org

National self-harm network
www.nshn.co.uk

PAPYRUS
(Parents Association for the Prevention of Young Suicide)
www.papyrus-uk.org
Helpline: 0870 170 4000

Parentline Plus
www.parentlineplus.org.uk
Tel: 0808 800 2222 (24 hours)
Provides a wide range of information, support and advice to parents, including email support through the website

Rethink
www.rethink.org
Tel: 020 8974 6814
Information, advice and support to people affected by serious mental health problems

Royal College of Psychiatrists
www.rcpsych.ac.uk/expertadvice/treatmentswellbeing.aspx
Treatments and Wellbeing index: readable, user friendly and evidence based information about mental health treatments.

Safe use of the Internet
www.netaware.org

The Safe Network
Provides information and resources to help keep children safe
www.safenetwork.org.uk

The Samaritans
www.samaritans.org.uk
Helpline: 08457 909090
Available 24 hours a day to listen to people in distress and to provide emotional support

The Somerset Team for Early Psychosis (STEPS Team) 14-35 years.
Tel: 01823 368350

Somerset Parent Carer Forum
www.somersetpcf.org.uk

Somerset and Avon Rape and Sexual Abuse Support
www.sarsas.org.uk
SARSAS have created an online tool to help professionals and concerned others signpost people living with the consequences of rape and sexual abuse to access the excellent specialist organisations across the region
www.survivorpathway.org.uk

Somerset & Wessex Eating Disorders Association
www.sweda.org

Talk to Frank
www.talktofrank.com
Tel: 0800 776 600
Provides free and confidential information and advice about drugs

Young Minds
www.youngminds.org.uk
Tel: 0800 018 2138
Website provides information and advice for parents, children and young people, and professionals

Websites for young people

Rise Above
www.riseabove.org.uk
Advice and guidance on sex and relationships, acne, parents, growing up, pressures of school and much more

www.thesite.org
Covering topics on sex, your body, drink, drugs, school, work, money, travel, lifestyle
Free phone number: 0808 808 4994

RU OK?
www.ru-ok.org.uk
self-help exercises to look at how and why you think the way you do and coping with common mental health issues