

Dear Parent/Carer,

Re: Children's Integrated Therapies (CIT) update due to COVID-19

As we approach this most unusual ending to the academic year, we would like to update you on how the North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT) Children's Integrated Therapies (CIT) service will be providing support to the children and young people in Barnet.

NELFT, Barnet CCG and the London Borough of Barnet/Cambridge Education continue to work hard to ensure that the children who are most at risk and vulnerable receive support from the Barnet Children's Integrated Therapy (CIT) Team.

In response to the challenges we have all faced in responding to COVID 19, over the past 3 months we have been following the NHS England and NHS Improvement guidance for Community Therapies to:

- Prioritise urgent care needs
- Stop medium and lower priority work so that the workforce can be redeployed and realigned to support COVID-19 emergencies and other essential and critical services elsewhere in our health system.

NHS England and NHS Improvement have recently published guidance on restoring some of the medium priority work and we are working to ensure that we are following the latest national guidance.

For children on our caseload with an EHCP, we will use 'reasonable endeavours' as recommended in the published changes in the legislation to deliver the service. This legislation came into effect on 1st May and will continue until 25th September 2020. This may result in a child or young person's provision being adjusted from that which is set out in their EHC plan, for some, or all, of the time.

What does this mean for our children, young people and their families?

Barnet CIT will continue to provide critical services to children with and without EHCP who have the highest need and are most at risk. This includes:

- Swallowing and feeding difficulties requiring urgent assessment or review,
- Referrals to service Post-surgical interventions where Physiotherapy or Occupational therapy is required,
- Children who have had Botox interventions,
- Hospital discharge requiring Equipment for health needs (Physio / OT),
- Acute Neurological patients - at risk of hospital admission.

At this time, most of the support will continue to be offered virtually. We will review this on a regular basis.

What has changed in the last term?

In addition to the critical services we have continued to deliver, we have also developed a number of innovations to support children and young people during these unprecedented times by delivering the services listed below virtually, using video sessions, phone calls and delivering virtual training sessions including:

- Virtual Parent workshops with tele-presentations, advice and information given via email to parents following referral,
- Tele assessments for EHCP requests within the 6 week time frame where possible using telephone and video appointments,
- Dysphagia - parental advice and observations of eating and drinking when family has access and ability to use technology,
- Utilising electronic methods to give advice, securely send documents and gather information,
- Training Sessions via Zoom/Webex /WhatsApp /Teams and other digital platforms to schools

What will be New for the rest of the Term?

We have carried out a review of what we are offering, including seeking feedback from families who have accessed our services virtually. Where these virtual services have been identified as best practise we will continue to use these innovations when we move back to business as usual and examples of these areas include:

- Virtual parent workshops for new referrals,
- Partial tele-assessments for EHCP requests,
- Reports, programmes and other documents sent securely via email
- Virtual Advice for parents and school staff and Virtual Parent coaching
- Designated slots for staff in Special Schools and Additional Resourced Provisions to contact our service to seek advice.
- Designated telephone surgeries for Nursery Schools, PVI's and Mainstream Schools to contact our service to seek advice.
- Designated telephone surgeries for parents with urgent queries for SLT / OT / Physio to contact our service and seek advice.

What Availability will there be over the Summer holidays?

The team have been working extremely hard under challenging circumstances, often carrying out unfamiliar work and have adapted to new ways of working. Like most NHS colleagues, our staff have gone above and beyond their duties to continue to support our Children and Young Persons in the community. Many therapists have also cancelled annual leave plans to support the NHS during these unprecedented times. The team will be encouraged to take their annual leave over the summer holidays to allow for some well earned rest and relaxation and to allow them to come back refreshed

and ready to support in the continued recovery and restoration of Barnet CIT Services. We will continue to offer a reduced service over the summer as outlined above.

We would like to thank you for your continued support and understanding at this challenging time, which is significantly impacting our National Health Service. If you need advice on the services offered by the Children's integrated therapies you can contact the Barnet CIT service on Tel: 03003001821.

We are regularly reviewing our offer, and will continue to provide further updates to schools and Families which will be on the NELFT Barnet CIT Service webpage www.nelft.nhs.uk/barnet-childrens-integrated-therapies This information will also be available on the Barnet Local Offer website.

All patients, parents and carers can access advice and guidance on Covid-19 and what to do on the NHS111 online, <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19/> Public Health England and NHS England websites for up to date information on Covid-19.