**TRAFFORD CHILDREN’S THERAPY SERVICE**

**Changes to Children’s Occupational Therapy Referral Criteria**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

From 1st April 2017 we are redesigning the way in which we accept referrals from schools and early year’s settings in Trafford. This is in line with the Graduated Approach to Special Education Needs and Disability.

* **Which settings will these changes apply to?**
  + Early years settings in Trafford
  + All schools in Trafford (mainstream and special schools)
* **How did we identify the changes that needed to take place?** 
  + Demand was increasing on the service with no extra investment available, therefore needed to reorganise the process of referral to therapy services to ensure equity to all service users.
* **How did we go about making the change?** 
  + We have developed a screening tool and advice guide for appropriate referral to therapy services.
* **What will be these changes?**
* Referral criteria for the following will change:
  + Seating Assessments
  + Toileting Assessments
  + Gross And Fine Motor Coordination Assessment
  + Handwriting Assessments
* **What does our service currently provide?** 
  + At present we assess all children who are referred for seating , toileting, motor coordination, or handwriting assessment.

**REFERRALS FOR ASSESSMENT OF SEATING AND TOILETING NEEDS**

* **New criteria for requesting seating & toileting assessments:**
  + If the child is independently mobile without any complex complex/neurological conditions the referrer will need to demonstrate evidence that the school/nursery has implemented strategies in the following prior to the referral being accepted.
  + *Seating in classroom: Pre-referral advice for schools & early years settings*
  + *Toileting Strategies: Pre-referral advice for schools & early years settings*
* **What will be the implications of the new SEATING assessment criteria?** 
  + Schools / early years settings will have to make reasonable adjustments to ensure good posture of children who are independently mobile
  + This will include buying appropriate furniture & basic seating to promote good sitting posture in classrooms / dining hall. For e.g.
    - Breezi chairs
    - Heathfield chairs
    - Foxdenton chairs
    - Corgi class chairs
    - Foot rest / modular steps
    - Height adjustable tables
* **What will be the implications of the new TOILETING assessment criteria?** 
  + Schools / early years settings will have to make reasonable adjustments to ensure good posture of children who are independently mobile
  + This will include buying appropriate aids to promote access to toileting facilities. For e.g.
    - Paediatric height adjustable toilet surrounds
    - Paediatric height adjustable commodes
    - Heathfield potty chairs
    - Toilet inserts
    - Wide modular steps
* **Which children can be referred to therapy services straightaway for a seating / toileting assessment?**
  + Are not independently mobile
  + Are independently mobile but have a recognised complex physical / neurological condition which significantly impacts on their posture. for e.g. hemiplegia, cerebral Palsy, Muscular dystrophy, Achondroplasia, etc.
* **Who will PROVIDE seating/toileting for children who are not independently mobile?**
* **Who will PROVIDE seating/toileting for children who are independently mobile but have a complex physical/neurological condition which significantly impacts on their balance?**
  + If following our assessment the child needs a complex seating / toileting system, a statement of case will be completed by OTs and a request will be made to fund this through the SEN Auxiliary Aids and Equipment Budget.
  + If following our assessment it is identified that the child’s needs can be met by basic seating/toileting equipment , it will have to be bought by school / early years setting.
* **Who will be responsible for maintaining and adjusting the equipment?**
  + For equipment bought by school – it will be school's responsibility (contact the manufacturer directly for repair issues)
  + For complex seating/toileting aids that have been funded by Trafford SEN Auxilliary Aids & Equipment Budget–Regular checks will be done by Therapy team. Therapy department can be contacted for any repair issues or if the child outgrows the chair / toileting aid.
* **What will happen when the child grows or gets diagnosed with a complex condition?**
  + If the child meets our assessment criteria, school can re-refer for a review assessment. If following assessment the child needs complex seating it will be provided by Trafford SEN Auxilliary Aids & Equipment Budget. If the child needs the next size basic seating, it will have to be bought by school.
  + If the child does not meet our assessment criteria, school will have to contact the seating companies directly for advice about next size chair.
* **Will schools/ early year’s settings get any training on doing basic seating/ toileting assessments for children who will not meet the new criteria?** 
  + To support the schools/ early year’s settings, we will be conducting Twilight sessions to explain basic seating / toileting assessments in detail. A demonstration of a variety of low level seating will be included along with manufacturer details.
* **What are the recommendations for school / early years settings to facilitate this change?**
  + It is advised that each setting has their own postural coordinator who can be trained to do basic seating/toileting assessments and liaise with manufacturers for quotations and provision of basic equipment.

**REFERRALS FOR ASSESSMENT OF GROSS & FINE MOTOR COORDINATION SKILLS**

**&**

**HANDWRITING**

From 1st April 2017, referrals for gross and/or fine motor skills difficulties from all primary and secondary schools will only be accepted if the child has completed 12 weeks of intervention at school.

Children attending school nurseries / early years setting can still be referred directly for gross/fine motor skills assessment and will not have to follow the above process.

**NEW PATHWAY FROM 1ST APRIL 2017**

Child is identified with a motor skills /handwriting difficulty

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School to complete the NEW checklist for the relevant age group which will highlight the areas of difficulty

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School to implement strategies from the motor skills pack and advice sheets web link for a minimum of 12 weeks

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If after 12 week trial of activities the child has still not made progress , school can then make referral to Therapy team via the school nurse

**Please note school will be asked to provide completed evidence sheets before the child will be seen without which referrals will not be accepted. Please note that the child’s difficulties must be significant and persistently interfere with functional activities that have not improved with practice.**

**Re-referrals will only be accepted if there is a new functional need.**

* To support schools in delivering this, we have developed FREE advice sheets on motor skills and handwriting, which can be downloaded from our website from 1st April 2017
* You may already have your own fine motor or handwriting programme in place and running well. You will be able to refer to our website for more ideas about specific difficulties.
* **Will primary / secondary schools get any training on using the new pathway for children who have motor skills / handwriting difficulties?** 
  + To support the schools we will be conducting a twilight session to explain the new referral pathway and how to use our checklist and advice sheets. Details of the sessions will be sent nearer the time.