

Cognus Therapies Update

Winter 2021/2022

Dear all,

Welcome to our Winter Update! We hope the Autumn term was good to you and we are looking forward to continuing our work with you in 2022.

This is what has been happening in the Cognus Therapies teams.

Recruiting and retaining our lovely therapists

As you may know, the Cognus Therapies team usually comprises a large number of therapists both from the UK and overseas. However, as COVID-19 continues to affect us all, a number of overseas therapists have returned to their home countries, and they, together with the therapists whom we usually recruit from overseas, have not been able or willing to travel back to the UK. As a result, we have had to continue with teletherapy in some schools. However, we know that face-to-face work is both needed and preferable for many of the children and young people we support, and recruitment remains a very high priority for us as we would like to return to face to face therapy for wherever it is more appropriate as soon as possible.

We are also building strong relationships with university courses so we can attract and then cultivate/grow our own workforce for the future.

Retaining the therapists that we currently employ is also of paramount importance to us. We strive to ensure that the wellbeing of staff is maintained so that they remain in our employment and are comfortable working in the settings they are deployed to work in.

We currently have a proactive recruitment campaign underway with NHS Jobs and on the Cognus Website, and from these we are hoping that we will be able to recruit new and dynamic members of staff to join our team. Our terms are flexible, with both part-time and term-time contracts on offer, with the option of working additional hours to support us at this time. In addition to this we offer sponsorship visas to attract overseas staff.

Therapy delivery this term

We have been really pleased that we have been able to maintain a face-to-face approach for the majority of those we support in their therapy sessions delivered this term. However, where we can't recruit qualified therapists, either permanent or locum (agency) within the local area for face-to-face therapy, we need to continue to offer teletherapy. This approach is in line with Royal College guidelines and can be just as effective as face-to-face therapy. This does not mean we only wish to use teletherapy, just that it is needed at times where we cannot provide face-to-face therapy.

We are working with schools and settings to make sure we are matching the right therapists to settings; this is based on the needs of the children and young people and the skills that individual therapists can bring. We will always aim where possible to have a consistent therapist working with you and your setting, so therapists can build strong relationships with the school team and students. You should have received an update from the therapists at the setting (or the setting itself) that your child attends, with information on who is working there and how therapy is being delivered. Please get in touch if you haven't received this / would like a further update.



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The teams would like to reassure parents and carers that all the therapy requirements in Education Health and Care Plans will be delivered over the year. This may mean that your child's therapy is delivered in a different way, for example, in a block of therapy or via teletherapy. We are also working flexibly to support schools and families, including offering drop-in sessions to support schools and to ensure every child's therapy programme is up to date and effective.

How teletherapy works in Sutton

Teletherapy is where delivery of OT and/or SaLT interventions are delivered remotely via electronic device (PC, Laptop, 'tablet' or phones). The techniques and approaches used are the same as if the therapist is in the room and are in line with the expected inputs and outcomes for each child. This approach has been well researched by the Royal Colleges and is endorsed as a suitable method of delivery where necessary. Having been using this method since lockdown commenced, we have been very pleased that all children continue to make progress against some or all of their targets when in receipt of teletherapy. Using this approach, Sutton/Cognus remain in line with the approach taken by many local authorities and are ahead of the vast majority when it comes to delivering therapy in the past 18 months.

If you want to find out more, here are some useful links:

- [Telehealth in the COVID-19 context working with children | RCSLT](#)
- [The Multi-faceted Implementation of Telepractice to Service Individuals with Autism \(nih.gov\)](#)
- [Delivery-of-specialist-1-1-and-group-interventions-for-children-and-young-people-in-education-settings.pdf \(rcslt.org\)](#)
- <https://wfot.org/resources/telehealth-archived>
- <https://www.rcot.co.uk/coronavirus-covid-19-0> (then select - Working remotely/differently)

What else have we been doing this term?

We are currently co-designing an early intervention model with schools, so that together we can support more children with therapy needs at the right time.

- We are working in partnership with NHS and Sutton colleagues to use feedback received from parents and young people to further develop the experience families gain from the local therapy offer;
- We are working with Sutton Parent Carers' Forum, Sutton Council, and SENDCOs in schools to ensure communication about our services improves for everyone;
- The Cognus Therapies team are using social media, podcasts and partnering with national agencies to deliver key messages in the most effective ways;
- The team continues to follow national best practice guidelines to develop the therapy service

Below, we have captured just some of the examples of great work and practice that our team is involved in. We continue to look forward with confidence and are excited about what the future commission and partnership working holds for the future.

Should you have any questions relating to the services Cognus are providing please do not hesitate to get in contact with the therapies team.

We hope you all have and/or have had an amazing festive season and we look forward to seeing you all again in the new year.

Kind regards,



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The Cognus Therapies Team

A list of key team members can be found here:

Patsy Winkley – Team Manager
Julie Kiely – Assistant Team Manager
Alex Benjamin – Principal OT
Alison Rees – Highly Specialist SaLT – Early Years and ASD
Ashlea Stephens – Highly Specialist SaLT – POST 16
Emily Harnett - Highly Specialist SaLT – Down Syndrome
Emma Perridge - Highly Specialist OT – POST 16
Helen Gardner - Highly Specialist OT – ASD and MLD
Helen Raby - Highly Specialist SaLT – DLD
Jessica Brown - Highly Specialist OT – Mainstream
Jo Wells - Highly Specialist SaLT – Mainstream and Verbal Dyspraxia
Lisa Ogden - Highly Specialist SaLT – SEMH, Young Offenders and Trauma
Rachel Wilson-Dickson - Highly Specialist SaLT – SEMH
Rose Fletcher - Highly Specialist SaLT - ASD
Tamara Rainsley - Highly Specialist SaLT – HI specialist
Tessa O’Brien - Highly Specialist SaLT – AAC specialist

Please contact your therapist directly via name.surname@cognus.org.uk or email the team inbox at cognustherapies@cognus.org.uk and your query/feedback will be forwarded to the appropriate member of staff.

Working with Learning Establishments and Positive Feedback

1. Our Post-16 service has been thanked by colleges who have recorded 100% attendance from students at online therapy sessions compared with a usual 80-85% attendance at face to face sessions.
2. The Royal Colleges have established a strong evidence base for the use of remote therapy and remote assessments and although we prefer face to face delivery, the use of remote therapy is enabling us to reach more children at this challenging time (please see section below for more information).
3. Over the past year Cognus Therapies team have been developing The Graduated Response for Therapeutic Support, which has been designed as a tool kit for education settings, and accessible to families, and includes guidance and free therapy resources across key areas relating to SaLT and OT. These can be accessed via the Cognus Limited Website access here. [Graduated Response for education based therapeutic support – Cognus](#)
4. Cognus Therapies have been given an exciting but limited opportunity in the Borough to offer some schools free training and intervention packs for the ‘Talk Boost’ language intervention programme, run by the children’s communication charity I CAN. The intervention is most beneficial for children with delayed language, but who wouldn’t typically meet the criteria for more specialist support. The aim is to narrow the gap between children with delayed language and their peers. This is especially relevant post lockdown. I CAN delivers the training via zoom, the training will be arranged for after October half term.
5. Over the past year we have been capturing data from termly therapy target reviews which form the basis of the small steps towards children/young people’s wider EHCP outcomes. To date, on average 95% of children/young people have demonstrated progress with these each term.
6. In addition to targets and EHCP outcomes, we are working with the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists to capture SaLT and OT outcome data using their standardised tool, The Therapy Outcome



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Measure (TOMS). To date, on average 85% of children are demonstrating progress on the TOMS scales relating to impairment, activity, participation, and well-being.

7. We recently received a certificate of thanks from Reading University for the support we provide to students on placements. We pride ourselves on supporting students and therefore were humbled to receive this acknowledgment.
8. We are very proud of our ongoing work with Downs syndrome project – led by Emily Harnett, Highly Specialist Speech and Language Therapist working with the local Get On Downs group with Jo Cassey our Managing Director. We look forward to keeping you posted with future developments.
9. Emma Perridge POST 16 Lead OT has developed a relationship with the Epsom Surrey Super 1's, The Lord Taverners Cricket Team as part of supporting a student transition from the Sunnybank's Trust. Cognus therapies are looking to develop this relationship and work in partnership with them.

Transition from The NHS to Cognus

We continue to have regular meetings with our colleagues from Health to ensure that a smooth transition, if required, takes place for therapy delivery.

Twitter Account

We have a Twitter account that is regularly updated with news from the Therapy Team. Please follow us at [@cognustherapies](https://twitter.com/cognustherapies)

Podcasts

One of our recent podcasts (as part of Cognus' Education Untapped series) features two of our therapists Emily Harnett and Tamara Rainsley who spoke to two families who are active members of the Down Syndrome community, both locally and nationally as part of Down Syndrome Awareness Week. The episode highlights some of their personal experiences and how we can all work towards raising our awareness and attitudes.

Take a listen here: [Down Syndrome Awareness - Cognus Therapies \(buzzsprout.com\)](https://buzzsprout.com/podcasts/1234567890)



Tamara Rainsley (Highly Specialist Speech and Language Therapist) and **Jess Wood** (Speech and Language Therapist) created a podcast, 'The journey of becoming a fully Qualified Speech and Language Therapist' which offers an interesting insight into some of the challenges and benefits Jess experience when she of became a qualified SaLT during the pandemic.

You can listen to our podcasts here [Podcasts – Cognus](#)

Staff News

Ashlea Stephens (Highly Specialist Speech and Language Therapist and Post 16 Lead for Cognus Therapies) interviewed **Luke Fox**, an autistic adult with a language disorder from Sutton in the latest episode of our podcast, *Education Untapped*. Luke speaks about his experiences in education as well as his huge achievements in disability football and theatre. He is passionate about ensuring people with disabilities receive the relevant recognition for their talents and are included in society in a positive and respectful way. The finished product is proof that there should be 'No Limits on Learning' for the young people we work with!



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Sutton Parents Forum

2 hrs · 🌐

Here is a wonderful podcast from Ashlea Stephens and Luke Fox. Our Steering Group at SPCF has been watching Luke's blossoming developments in the drama world with pride. It is an inspiring listen with an important message from Luke about diversity and treating children and young people with SEND as valued individuals.

<https://cognus.org.uk/education-untapped-podcast-encouragi.../>

Cognus OT completed Oxfam 100km (62 miles) Trailwalker Challenge

Another superhero, Emma Perridge (Highly Specialist Occupational Therapist from the Therapies team), completed the 100km walk on 25 and 26 September 2021 with and was successful in completing the Challenge in 30 hours through the beautiful South Downs. This was a massive personal challenge for Emma and team as well as a brilliant opportunity to raise money for Oxfam and the Gurkha Welfare Trust.

