

Children and Family Health Devon News

January 2026

Welcome to CFHD News, CFHD's monthly newsletter.

Whether you're a parent, caregiver, or healthcare professional, we aim to provide you with the latest information from Children and Family Health Devon (CFHD), with each issue including expert advice, career opportunities and our latest news.

To find out more about CFHD, visit our website or [CLICK HERE](#)

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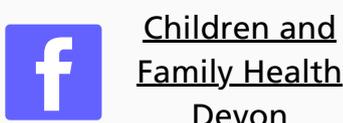
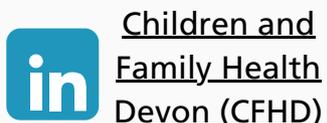
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Follow CFHD on social media!



Autism assessment waiting times- information update

We understand how difficult it can be to wait for an autism assessment, and we want to reassure families that reducing waiting times is a priority. The information below outlines the actions we are taking across the system to increase capacity, work collaboratively with partners, and ensure children are assessed as quickly and fairly as possible.

We are doing everything possible to reduce waiting times for autism assessments. This includes working closely with other NHS trusts and, where appropriate, commissioning assessments from NHS approved private providers to increase capacity. Our approach prioritises children who have been waiting the longest and those who live closest to NHS services that are able to offer appointments more quickly. No child will ever be referred to a privately commissioned provider without the full knowledge and consent of their family.

We would also like to reassure you that if you do not receive a phone call or letter about your child being offered an assessment with a private provider or another NHS trust, this does not mean that your child will be waiting longer. In fact, as more children receive assessments across our partnership of organisations, this helps to reduce the overall waiting list and means that those remaining on the CFHD waiting list are likely to be seen more quickly. Our aim is to work collaboratively across the system to reduce waiting times and ensure that every child receives an assessment as soon as possible.

We have been working closely with Devon County Council to ensure a joined-up approach for families who have chosen to access a private autism assessment. Devon County Council (DCC) can confirm that children living within the DCC footprint who have already received a private autism diagnosis (or are about to) will not be required to undergo a second assessment with the NHS and the private diagnosis will be accepted for all school/SEND/EHCP related support and activity.

We will be writing to families across Devon over the next few months to understand whether any children have already had a private diagnosis and, where this is the case, to offer appropriate signposting and recommendations. With family's consent, we can also attach the private diagnostic report to the child's NHS record to support ongoing care and planning. This is not yet in place for Torbay's local authority footprint.

We appreciate your patience whilst we work to reduce the length of time families are waiting for an assessment and we want to assure you that we will offer your child an assessment as quickly as we can.

For more information, please visit our website, [**Autism assessment waiting times: FAQs - Children and Family Health Devon**](#)



Your voice in action

Your voice in action: Listening to you, improving together

Welcome to our 'Your voice in action' page. This space has been created to share the work CFHD is doing in partnership with young advisors, parents, carers, service users and staff.

We want to celebrate the ways your feedback shapes our services and highlight the changes we make together.

By listening, learning and acting on what matters to you, we aim to continually improve the support we provide.

If you would like to find out more, you can visit our website [HERE](#).



Why being part of CFHD's participation work is so important

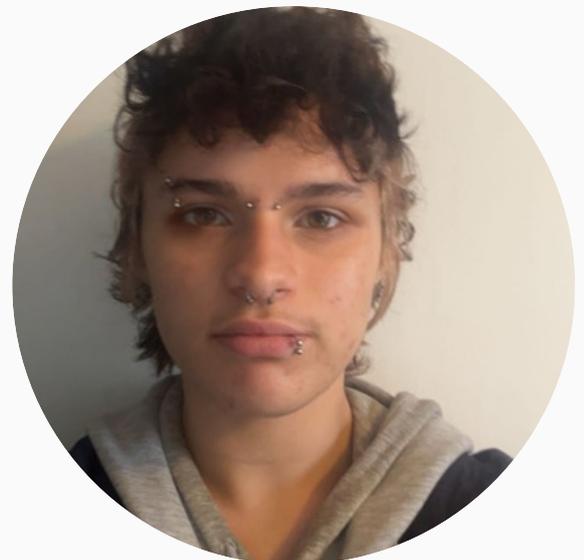
We caught up with one of our experts by experience to understand why being part of CFHD's participation group is so important to them.

Hear from Zero about how offering fresh new perspectives is met with sincere appreciation...

"The reason I feel that the use of young participation workers is so incredibly valued is due to one simple thing, perspective. Working with professionals I've noticed that the most prominent difference between us is just that, perspective! The professionals working with CFHD may have a more clinical approach to interviewing, while as a young advisor I think for many of us we go in from the basis of our lived experiences. Of course we don't just go off the basis of how personable the candidate is (although that is still a huge factor that I personally consider) we learn as we go, and we sometimes find ourselves reassuring professionals on their ideas or even challenging their opinions in a positive and constructive way! Throughout my time as a young advisor I have heard the phrase,

"We appreciate your help so much"

To continue reading, [CLICK HERE](#)



Lumi Nova



LUMI NOVA
TALES OF COURAGE

Digital therapy enabling children to build confidence and manage their worries.

Get instant access:
luminova.app/devon

Powered by **BfB LABS**

In partnership with **cfhd**
Children & Family Health Devon

Recommended by **NICE**
National Institute for Health and Care Excellence

Challenge Complete!
You watched a 100% video of sleeping away from home!
Okay

We're excited to share that Lumi Nova is available to families across Devon in partnership with Children & Family Health Devon. Lumi Nova supports children and young people to build confidence and learn lifelong skills to manage their fears and worries through an intergalactic adventure game!

The offer is instantly accessible to families by visiting luminova.app/devon Powered by science, backed by the NHS: Lumi Nova combines Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) with responsible, age appropriate mobile gaming to provide early intervention, therapeutic support for childhood fears and worries. Lumi Nova is:

- Designed for children aged 7-12 years
- Provides Exposure Therapy & Psychoeducation (CBT)
- Safe & Secure
- Recommended by the National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE)

Watch this short animated video: [Lumi Nova Introduction Video](#)

Learn More: Take a deep dive into Lumi Nova and join a live Lumi Nova Discovery session for professionals. Multiple dates are available: [Lumi Nova Discovery Registration](#)

Spread the word: Request the Lumi Nova Resource Kit for assets to support you to share information about Lumi Nova with families.

Stay connected: [Subscribe to the Lumi Nova Newsletter](#) and follow us on social media to stay up to date with new resources and updates that you can share with your community.



The Balanced System® Transformation

Children and families across Devon and Torbay are now seeing significant improvements in access to speech, language and communication support for under-fives, following Children and Family Health Devon's (CFHD) introduction of the Balanced System®.

Just nine months ago, families of children under 5 faced waiting times of more than two years for a speech, language and communication assessment with CFHD. Today, drop in assessment sessions for under-fives are well under way, providing faster, easier access to support through a network of easy-access drop-ins across Devon and Torbay.

As a result of this new approach, it is projected that by April 2026 there will be no waiting list for under-fives needing an assessment. Crucially, these drop-in sessions are open access, meaning families are able to attend without needing a prior appointment or referral

Sharon Martin, Professional and Clinical Lead for Paediatric Speech and Language Therapy, Children and Family Health Devon, said: "The Balanced System® has fundamentally changed how we support children and families. Moving to open-access drop-ins has removed barriers, reduced waiting times, and allowed us to focus on early intervention. We are already seeing the positive impact this is having for families across Devon and Torbay."

A Balanced, Tiered Approach to Support

The Balanced System® offers different tiers of support, ensuring children and families receive the right help at the right time:

- Advice, guidance and signposting
- Targeted support for emerging needs
- Further, direct therapy input, with waits currently around four weeks

This structured approach enables earlier intervention, reduces unnecessary delays, and ensures specialist resources are used where they are needed most.

Alongside improvements for under fives, Link Therapists are being rolled out across Devon and Torbay schools. This model supports collaborative working between schools and speech and language therapists, helping staff to build skills and confidence in supporting children's communication needs.

While waits for children older than five remain, this work is still in its early stages and continues to develop. A menu of support is available for families, with options providing advice, reassurance and early support while longer-term pathways continue to be strengthened.

To find out more, visit our website, [CLICK HERE](#).





New health resources page for children and young people with learning disabilities

We are pleased to share that we've launched new pages and resources on our website, dedicated to supporting the health and wellbeing of children and young people with learning disabilities.

These new resources are part of our Specialist Learning Disability Health Pathway, which provides tailored support for children and young people aged 0–18 across Devon and Torbay who have a diagnosis of moderate to profound learning disability.

If you would like to find out more, you can visit our website, [**CLICK HERE**](#)

CFHD Occupational Therapy advice line

Children and Family Health Devon (CFHD) has launched an Occupational Therapy telephone advice line. This can be accessed by all, whether that is the young person themselves, family members or carers, education staff, social care staff, voluntary organisations or other health professionals. The phone line provides access to advice and support around helping children and young people develop everyday skills.

When you call the advice line you will speak directly to a Children's Occupational Therapist. The team specialises in helping children and young people participate and gain independence in daily activities such as dressing, toileting skills, using cutlery, helping you child feel ready to participate and more.

If the young person is aged between 0-18 years and has a GP in Devon or Torbay, please call 03332 341123

- Tuesdays 1:30pm – 4:00pm
- Fridays 9:30am – 12:00pm

To find out more, visit our website, [**CLICK HERE**](#)

Our waiting times

We publish the waiting times for each pathway on our website every three months and are working hard to reduce the length of time families wait for our services.

The average wait time and the longest wait time are published per pathway to help people understand how long they may be waiting. We provide some information about why people wait different lengths of time depending on the urgency of their situation.

You can find our waiting times here: [**Our waiting times - Children and Family Health Devon**](#)

Parental Minds: Supporting Someone Who Causes Harm to Themselves

Parental Minds online skills workshop, Supporting Someone Who Causes Harm to Themselves.

The sessions will take place on:

- 2nd February 2026, 7.00pm - 9.00pm
- 9th February 2026, 7.00pm - 9.00pm
- 16th February 2026, 7.00pm - 9.00pm

(Online via Zoom)

This workshop is designed to provide guidance and support for parents and caregivers whose young people hurt themselves when overwhelmed by their emotions. Across three sessions, we'll explore practical ways to help you support your young person and ways to look after yourself.

To get the most out of the experience, we strongly encourage participants to attend all sessions.

Sign up link:

<https://forms.office.com/e/tZqEFdnBzZ>

SUPPORTING SOMEONE WHO CAUSES HARM TO THEMSELVES
Parental Minds Skills Workshop for Parents

This workshop is designed to provide guidance and support for parents and caregivers whose young people hurt themselves when overwhelmed by their emotions. Join us as we explore practical techniques and navigate the complexities of support.

Online, Zoom

Part 1 2nd February 2026 7.00pm - 9.00pm

Part 2 9th February 2026 7.00pm - 9.00pm

Part 3 16th February 2026 7.00pm - 9.00pm

NEW DATES!

To get the most out of this experience, we strongly encourage participants to attend all days.

Parental Minds Community Interest Company: Developed through families' experiences, with insight from professionals & researchers.

Sign up: forms.office.com/e/tZqEFdnBzZ

Devon County Council logo: We are able to offer these sessions thanks to funding from DCC

Our resources

Children and Family Health Devon (CFHD) provides integrated care and treatment across physical and mental health for children, young people and their families in Devon.

Our focus is on prevention and early help. Our **self help tools and resources library** is a self service approach to help you get the right help and support.



CFHD Careers

We offer a huge range of exciting and challenging opportunities for people who are passionate about making a difference.

You can view a list of our current vacancies below or visit NHS Jobs where CFHD vacancies and latest opportunities are advertised.

CFHD encourages creativity, is forward thinking and leaders are compassionate in the way they lead and support teams. CFHD understands the value of trust, partnership and collaboration at all levels of the organisation. Clinicians are proud of being part of such an innovative organisation.

CFHD staff are experienced, committed and dedicated, always placing children and family at the centre of what they do. Clinicians strive to improve their practice and welcome new ideas whilst always keeping NICE guidance at the centre of what we do.

For more information and a list of our current vacancies, please [**CLICK HERE**](#)



Need urgent help?

We know it can seem really difficult to seek help when you are worried, stressed or lonely but getting the help you need and deserve can make a big difference.

Visit the urgent help page on our website to find out what help and support is available to you.

Visit our website for information and support: [**CLICK HERE**](#)

<p>GOT A CARE PLAN OR DISCHARGE PLAN?</p>  <p>That will tell you who to contact</p>	<p>KOOTH Digital support</p>  <p>Online mental wellbeing community. Safe, anonymous support free to people under 18.</p> <p>kooth www.kooth.com</p>	<p>ARE YOU IN A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS?</p> 
<p>Deaf? Need urgent help? Contact us using InterpretersLive! (8am to 8pm) or NHS 111 (SignVideo) 24/7</p>		