

What difference does the Parenting Special Children Sleep Service make for families?

Sarah and Jake's story

"Great knowledge that helped improve my understanding greatly, now I fully understand what the issues are for Jake and how I should respond to them. Really worthwhile course and sleep clinic, that has helped me out a lot, it is something I would highly recommend."

Feedback from Jake's mother Sarah.

Sarah was referred to the Sleep Service by the CAMHS ADHD team. Her son Jake was 10 at the time. He had been diagnosed with Autism, ADHD and dyspraxia several years previously. Jake's sleep difficulties were persistent early morning waking and difficulty settling to sleep some evenings. Over the past few months his sleep problems and his ADHD symptoms were getting worse. The CAMHS team were considering increasing Jake's dose of ADHD medication and possibly starting him on melatonin medication

During the sleep course Sarah learnt about the importance of sleep for the whole family's health and wellbeing. She was particularly interested to hear that lack of sleep can lead to a worsening of ADHD symptoms. At the end of the Sleep course Sarah spent some 1:1 time with one of the specialist Sleep Practitioners to work on a Sleep Plan for Jake. In the weeks following the course, Sarah and her partner implemented the Sleep Plan. They made a number of changes to Jake's after-school and evening routine. As a result Jake's disruptive behaviour at bed-time was reduced and he was settling to sleep within 30 minutes of 'lights out'. However, Jake was still getting up before 6:00am most mornings and disturbing the rest of the family's sleep. At their follow-up phone call Sarah mentioned that this was still a problem. Sarah was offered a Sleep Clinic appointment with one of our specialist Sleep Practitioner to address Jake's ongoing early morning waking.

Both Sarah and her partner attended the Sleep Clinic appointment. They both agreed they would use a reward chart system to encourage Jake to stay in his bedroom until 7:00am. Two months later the Sleep Practitioner phoned the family. Jake's sleeping had improved significantly and he was now sleeping until about 7:00am most days. Sarah reported that Jake's behaviour had also settled down and that CAMHS were no longer considering an increase in his ADHD medication dose and were no longer suggesting artificial melatonin. Jake was due to be going on his year 6 residential trip a few weeks later and Sarah was much more confident that this would be a successful experience for Jake as he was now sleeping much better.