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 **10 march 2016**

**Children’s Centre in Tunbridge Wells OFFERS PIONEERING TREATMENT TO BOY WITH AUTISM from gibraltar**

Starjumpz Children’s Centre in Tunbridge Wells, has been offering intensive therapy over the past two weeks, to a five-year-old boy with autism from Gibraltar.

Jay Ritchie and his parents Jason and Katharine and seven-year-old sister Ally, have been staying in the town and visiting the centre in Speldhurst Place on a daily basis, enabling Jay to receive combined Speech & Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy and pioneering Neurofeedback treatment over a two week period.

Jay, whose ability to communicate and interact with people and his surroundings are affected by his autism and strong sensory needs, first came to the centre with his family last August after Katharine came across Starjumpz on the internet. With not enough help and support offered by the Gibraltarian Government and no private centres like Starjumpz available on the peninsula, Katharine searched the worldwide web for places in Europe that could offer the treatments and therapies he so desperately needs. Starjumpz caught their eye due to the Neurofeedback treatment it offered, a treatment they believe has been hugely influential in the astounding developments they have seen in their son.

This is Jay’s third visit to the centre, which is being supported by two charities in Gibraltar - Wobbles and William Tilly Lodge. A fourth visit is planned for August.

Jay’s mother, Katharine has praised the work of the staff at the Tunbridge Wells centre and said: “The progress we saw in Jay during and after his first ever visit was astounding. A boy who couldn’t speak or show willingness to communicate, was transforming before our eyes. After his first stint at the centre, Jay was making more eye contact, started saying a few words and interacting with people around him, especially his sister. He was also using picture cards correctly to illustrate needs, which was something he wasn’t able to do before. We are so happy to have found Starjumpz. Their work with Jay has been life changing.”

Later on that year, Jay started having bad tantrums, which motivated his family to book a second visit. Neurofeedback has a very calming effect on the nervous system and within four days of having the treatment, the tantrums stopped.

Director of Starjumpz Joanna Brett, commented: “We've been using Neurofeedback to calm and to regulate Jay’s nervous system, to stimulate language development and to improve sensory and auditory processing. As well as being much calmer, Jay is more able to make sense of sensory input and to engage in communication and learning. He can now spontaneously say words to communicate including a few three word phrases, ask for food and drink, count to ten and identify different parts of his body. Placing the electrodes used in Neurofeedback on different areas of the head means we can tailor the treatment to his specific needs.”

Neurofeedback is direct training of brain function, by which the brain learns to function more efficiently. Three small electrodes are placed on the head which detect the electrical activity in the brain which then affects the display of a video playing which is being watched. Good patterns of electrical activity are rewarded by the video playing really well, being brighter, louder etc, with the aim of increasing this and diminishing poor patterns. The electrodes are put on different areas of the head depending on the symptoms being treated.

The treatment can help a variety of childhood problems including ASD, ADHD, Dyslexia, dyspraxia, anxiety and numerous forms of disruptive and disturbing behaviours. It is also available at the centre for adults struggling with anxiety and depression, migraines or PTSD. The centre is seeing a rise in adopted children using the treatment who have attachment issues and suffer from anxiety, hypervigilance and sensory issues.

Starjumpz offers pioneering services and treatments to children with learning, developmental, motor and behavioural challenges. The centre can diagnose, treat and support children with difficulties such as ASD, ADHD, Sensory Processing Disorder, Dyslexia and Dyspraxia. It is the only centre in the South East to offer Neurofeedback treatment, in combination with other intensive therapies.

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For more press information, including interviews and high resolution photography to accompany the story, please contact Sarah Jones at Wilderness PR on sarah@wildernesspr.co.uk or 07775 582 497.

**Notes to Editors**

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Starjumpz History: Starjumpz Chidren’s Centre has a 25 year history of providing Occupational Therapy and Speech and Language Therapy for children in the South East, having been established by Jill Christmas in 1989 as the Christmas Children’s Clinic. Collaboration with London’s leading sensory integration centre, Hopscotch of Harley Street, led in 2011 to the establishment of the Starjumpz Centre as it is today. Starjumpz is co-directed by Joanna Brett (OT) and Dimitrios Mylonadis (OT & Director of Hopscotch).

Neurofeedback: In October 2012, the American Academy of Paediatrics gave Neurofeedback their top evidence based rating as an intervention in the treatment of Attention and Hyperactivity Behavioural Problems such as ADHD.

Neurofeedback treatment is widely used in the US and paid for by insurance companies as an effective treatment for ADHD, and is a safe alternative to drugs such as Ritalin.