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Community Resources and Approaches for Parents with Learning Disabilities

**What is the project about?**

Parents with learning disabilities often need extra support to remain part of their children’s lives. This support may come informally from resources in the parents’ own communities as well as from health and social care services.

The aim of this research project is to explore how community resources and community-centred approaches can help parents with learning disabilities. We want to find out about community resources that are available in York, Calderdale, Kirklees and about the characteristics of community resources and community-centred approaches that are useful for parents.

This information will help a range of organisations adapt their services for parents with learning disabilities. In the longer term, this project will inform future research to identify evidence-based approaches to support parents with learning disabilities.

**How will the project be carried out?**

We want to interview parents with learning disabilities, and practitioners who have worked with parents with learning disabilities to find out about their perceptions and experiences of community resources and support. We also want to talk to practitioners who may not have worked with parents with learning disabilities directly, but who do use community centred approaches in their practice. These interviews will take place online or over the phone.

We are also planning to run focus groups with practitioners, which will involve mapping community resources in their area.

**Who is running the project?**

This project is funded by the National Institute for Health Research and has been ethically approved by the NHS Research Ethics Committee.

It is being run by researchers at the University of York, in collaboration with self-advocacy groups for people with learning disabilities.

**What will the project produce?**

This project will produce two practice resources. These will be i) local community maps of the resources available to parents with learning disabilities in the research sites, and ii) a good practice guide that will make our findings available nationally. The guide will provide information about how to make community resources and community-centred approaches accessible for parents with learning disabilities.

At the end of our project, we will hold an event in which we will bring together our partners and others who are interested in supporting parents with learning disabilities. We will share our learning from our project and discuss next steps for research and practice with parents with learning disabilities.

**How can I find out more or get involved?**

If you are a professional who works with or has worked with parents with learning disabilities, and/or uses community-centred approaches as part of your work, please get in touch. We’d love to speak to you about your experiences via interview and/or as part of a focus group.

We’d also like to hear about any parents you know who you think would be interested in taking part. We are especially wanting to talk to parents who still live with or have regular contact with their child(ren). For the purpose of this project, we are taking a broad definition of ‘learning disability’ which includes all parents who self-identify as having difficulties with understanding information, learning and communication. Parents do not have to have received formal support in relation to their disability or been formally labelled/diagnosed with a learning disability to take part in the project.

The project number is 07385422588 and the email is assetsforparents-project@york.ac.uk