Better Communication supporting change

THE BALANCED SYSTEM®

University of Essex

Queen Mary University of London

MOdelling Therapies for Improved Futures

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Meeting the needs of children and young people (0-18) with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities: modelling the Allied Health Professional therapy workforce within integrated children's services

The MOdelling Therapies for Improved Futures (MOTIF) study aims to provide workforce modelling that estimates the workforce needed to meet the needs of a population of CYP including those with SEND using the Balanced System

What is the problem?

There are many children and young people who need support to learn at school and to achieve their potential. Speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and physiotherapists are part of the team that can help. The way support happens now isn't working for many children and young people who have special educational needs and disabilities. The way we deliver therapy must change.

Why is this topic important?

The government wants to understand how many therapists are needed to provide the right support and therapy for children and young people. We want to understand if we need more therapists in some areas of the country.

What is the research aim?

Our aim is to help plan therapy that supports children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. We want to make sure they get support that will make a difference. This will help us decide what support should be paid for and given.

What is the research plan?

1. Look at reports from the government and other organisations that pay for special educational needs services and published research. This will help us to understand who needs what type of support and if services are helping children and young people in the ways they need.

2. Send surveys to health professionals asking them what they think currently works well and what things aren't happening right now that should be happening. We will also talk to people who decide how much money should be spent on what services.

3. Talk to children and young people as well as their families to learn what works for them. We will ask them what they think of working in different ways – for example, working in a group with other children, or getting help in the class at school, or changing things that will help a lot of children such as training school staff.

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Who will do the research?

The research is being led by Better Communication CIC with the Universities of Essex, Reading and QMUL.

Our team includes health professionals and researchers who are experts in occupational therapy, physiotherapy and speech and language therapy for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

How will children and parents be involved?

A young person with lived experience of special educational needs and therapies is on our team and has helped to develop this application. We will have a group of parents and children and young people who will help us to design and deliver the project from start to finish.

How will we share the results?

We will work with children and young people and parents to create easy-to-understand ways to share the findings, like a video or podcast. We will also share results through scientific papers, charities, or other channels, for example, parent/carer forums.