

# PROJECT IDEA

## Better Mental Health Help for Children with Learning Disabilities



March 2026

## PROJECT TEAM



### **Anita** Z Goldschmied

Anita teaches Learning Disability Nursing at Sheffield Hallam University.

She knows a lot about mental health support for children with learning disabilities.

She will lead the project and make sure children's voices are heard.



### **Valerie** Houghton

Valerie teaches Learning Disability Nursing at Edinburgh Napier University.

She knows a lot about learning disability and mental health services.

She will help us talk to people and make sure we work together.



### **Rachael** Spencer

Rachael is an experienced researcher.

She supports this project and helps the team work well together.

She will check the plan and give us good advice.



### **James** Harrison

James is a learning disability nurse.

He knows how children get referred to mental health services and what happens in practice.

He will help make a new way useful for nurses and families.

## THE PEOPLE WHO HELP OUR PROJECT



### **Experts by Experience**

They are young people and adults with learning disabilities.

They have their lived experience of mental health and services.

They will help design the project, check the questions and make sure everything is easy to understand.



### **Nurses and Mental Health Workers**

They are learning disability nurses and mental health workers.

They work with children with learning disabilities every day. They know how referrals to mental health services happen.

They will help to create new way to get help.



### **Children and Young People**

They are children and young people (aged 13 to 25) with learning disabilities and mental health experience.

They will tell their experience, test the ideas and make sure the final plan is good for children.



### **Our Partner Services**

They are mental health and learning disability nurses and workers. They tell us how services work.

They join our meetings to check our ideas. They help us test the new way to get help.

# THE PROJECT

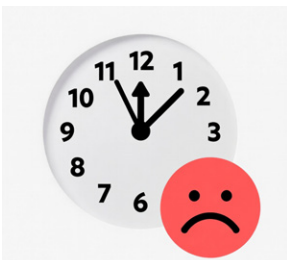
Better Mental Health Help for Children with Learning Disabilities

## Why this project is important



Some children with learning disabilities also have mental health problems.

For example: feeling very worried, sad, angry, or not sleeping well.



It is often hard for them to get the right help quickly.



This is not fair. All children and young people should get good mental health help.

## Our idea



We will look at services where it works well.

We will look at services where it does not work well.

We want to find the best ways to help children and young people.



We want to create a clear, easy-to-use nurse-led way.

We want to create tools to help nurses to give good mental health support faster.

## Where we will work



We will look at very different places.

Some places have lots of money problems.

Some places have people from many cultures.



Some places are in the countryside where it is harder to get help.

This helps us understand what works best and why.

## What we will do



Talk to children with learning disabilities and their families.

Talk to nurses and mental health workers.

Find out how mental health support work. Find out which ways work well and which ways do not work well.

## What we will create



A simple plan that nurses can use.

A checklist of what is needed.

An Easy-Read information for families.

Clear ways to measure if it is working.

## Our Plan



The project will take **12 months** and starts in Spring 2026.

### **Months 1–3**

Get permission and prepare

Find children and adults to help us

### **Months 4–6**

Visit the places

Talk to children, families and staff

### **Months 7–9**

Look at all the information

Start making the new way to get help

### **Months 10–12**

Finish the plan and checklist

Make Easy-Read information

Share the results with everyone

## What we hope will happen



In the short term: NHS and mental health services will read our reports and start using the new plan.

In the middle: 2 to 5 services will try the new way to give mental health support.



In the long term: Children with learning disabilities will wait less time and get better mental health support.

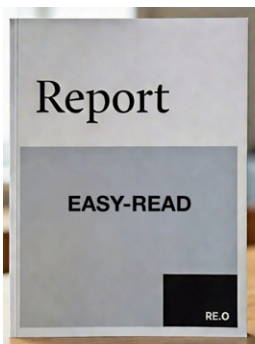
## How we will check if it works



We will ask nurses, doctors, children and families what they think.

We will look at numbers like how long people wait before and after the project.

## How we will share the results



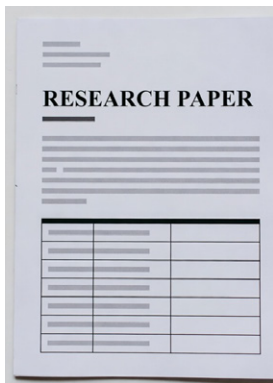
We want as many people as possible to know about our work.

We will create a simple Easy-Read summary for families and services.



We will show a presentation at the big RCN nursing conference.

We will send short reports for NHS and people who work for mental health services.



We will write one proper research paper that everyone can read for free.

We will make sure the information is clear and easy for everyone to understand.



We will create internet posts and video film with children and adults who helped.

## How We Will Use the Money



Paying children, families and adults with learning disabilities for their time and ideas.

Paying the people who run the project and help with the work.

Travelling to the places we are studying.

Making Easy-Read information, pictures and booklets.



## Keeping Everyone Safe



Before we start, we will get official permission.

We will follow strict rules to keep everyone safe and respected.



Children and families will get a simple information sheet with phone numbers they can call if they need support.

Children will always have an adult helper with them if they want one.



If anyone feels worried or upset, we will stop and get them the right help.

Children and families can say "yes" or "no" at any time.

## Making Sure Everyone is Treated Fairly



We will make sure children's voices are heard loud and clear.

We will make everything easy to understand.

We will check that the new plan works fairly for everyone.

Children and adults with learning disabilities will help us at every step.

## Looking After the Planet



Most meetings will be online so we do not travel much.

When we do travel, we will use the train or bus.

We will use as little paper as possible.

Thank you for reading our idea.

We want every child and young person with a learning disability to get the right help quickly.

We hope you will support us.

*Anita, Valerie, Rachael and James*