

IT'S MY LIFE - MAKING IT OUR REALITY

Best practice guidelines for health, social care and education practitioners regarding relationships and sexuality education programmes for children and young adults with intellectual disabilities



RESIDE

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY IN
INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY EDUCATION



THE ISSUES

Children and young people with intellectual disabilities experience specific and distinct barriers regarding developing and sustaining relationships and in the expression of their sexuality. However, while some Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) programmes do exist for this population, it is unclear what content is currently being delivered in special schools and if and how it is evaluated. RSE programmes should be consistently evaluated to ensure they effectively meet the needs of children and young people with intellectual disabilities and address the concerns of parents.



WHAT WE DID

- **Eight special schools across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales participated in the study.**
- **In-depth qualitative and focus group interviews were undertaken including children and young people, parents, health, social care and education practitioners, collectively referred to as 'professionals', who consented to participate.**
- **Thirty-seven pupils with intellectual disabilities aged between 12 and 19 years participated in an individual or group interview.**
- **Semi-structured individual interviews took place with 11 parents of children and young people with intellectual disabilities and seven with healthcare and other professionals.**
- **Two focus groups took place with nine healthcare and education professionals.**

The findings and experiences of good practice and content and methods of programme delivery were used to develop best practice guidelines for professionals regarding RSE content and delivery to meet the needs of children and young adults with intellectual disabilities.



WHAT WE FOUND

- Children and young people with intellectual disabilities want education and information to develop their knowledge and understanding regarding friendships, relationships and the expression of their sexuality.
- Parents of children and young people with intellectual disabilities recognise the need for their children to have access to education that is tailored and specific to their individual needs.
- A range of professionals are involved in the development and delivery of RSE programmes, adopting creative teaching and learning approaches.

WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN

- The best practice guidelines should be used to enable health and other professionals to develop, implement and evaluate RSE programmes specific to the needs of children and young people with intellectual disabilities.
- All RSE programmes need to be developed and delivered around clearly defined learning aims, objectives and outcomes.
- A formal evaluation of the impact and outcomes achieved as a result of participation in a RSE programme should be undertaken.



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THE STUDY REPORT IT'S MY LIFE - MAKING IT OUR REALITY CAN BE ACCESSED HERE:



<https://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofNursingandMidwifery/Research/research-themes/education-practice/Projects/RESIDE-RelationshipsandSexualityinIntellectualDisabilityEducation/>

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