LD-CAMHS Models and Outcomes: a study on mental health services for children with learning disabilities

There are high rates of mental health problems among children with learning disabilities. Although improvements have been made in the availability of child and adolescent mental health services for children with LD (LD-CAMHS) in recent years, services vary across Scottish health boards. Different approaches to service delivery are taken in different parts of Scotland, resulting in a variable and complex picture. The LD-CAMHS Network has worked with the Scottish Government to support service development and this is moved forward with Commitment 10 in the Mental Health Strategy (2013):

Commitment 10: We will work with clinicians in Scotland to identify good models of Learning Disability (LD) CAMH service delivery in use in different areas of Scotland or other parts of the UK which could become or lead to prototypes for future testing and evaluation.

A survey was undertaken looking at the CAMH services accessed by children and young people with learning disabilities in Scotland. This collected information on e.g. staffing profiles, links with multi-agency services, and availability of specialist mental health services. Following this, two innovative models of service will be selected for further examination. The first of these is an intensive treatment model. A survey will be used to collect data systematically on intensive treatment services across the UK. Focus groups will then be set up involving staff from intensive treatment services. The aim of the focus groups is to examine professional experiences of the facilitators and barriers to providing effective mental health services to children and young people with a learning disability. Finally, an analysis of outcome data from UK services will be carried out to give an indication of how service models relate to outcomes for service users. A steering group, consisting of representatives from charitable organisations, parents, education, respite, paediatrics, carers and social work, advises on the project.

For further information, please see:
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/Services/Mental-Health/Strategy/Child-Adolescent-Services/C10

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