**Research Project: Improving Communication for Adults with Learning Disabilities (ICALD)**

**Invitation to take part in our Consultation Groups**

Dear Staff Member,

We would like to invite you to participate in an important research project. The project focuses on improving communication for adults with learning disabilities. This part of the research project is led by University of Kent and London School of Economics and Political Science and Kings College London. Your expertise and experience in this area are invaluable to us, and we would greatly appreciate your input.

***Background to the project***

People with learning disabilities may be unable to communicate easily with others. This might lead them to behave in ways that people find challenging, which may impact on their ability to communicate with staff and/or have their needs met.

In order to support people with learning disabilities to experience a good quality of life, staff require the skills and resources to do so. There are many interventions aimed at supporting communication, but we do not know enough about what works, for who and in what circumstances.

***About the Research Project***

Our research aims to enhance communication strategies for adults with learning disabilities. We have conducted an extensive literature review (a realist review) to gather all available evidence on existing communication interventions. Based on this review, we have developed several interim programme theories (IPTs) about why communication is important, including views on communication strategies from people with learning disabilities and the staff that support them. We have also conducted consultations with people with learning disabilities and staff members to gain their views on why communication is important.

***What is an Interim Programme Theory (IPT)?***

An interim programme theory (IPT) is a preliminary explanation how and why a specific intervention is expected to work as well as the importance of communication in the lives of people with learning disabilities and the staff that support them.

Our IPTs represent our initial understanding based on the existing literature and our consultations thus far and are meant to guide our research and evaluation process. We have also developed some narratives (short descriptions) which help to explain the IPTs.

***Purpose of the Consultation Groups***

We are organising consultation groups with staff members who support adults with learning disabilities.

The purpose of these consultation groups is to:

1. Review the Narratives: We will present the narratives of the IPTs developed from our realist review and consultations;
2. Gather Feedback: We will ask you to comment on these narratives based on your experiences;
3. Identify Evidence Gaps: Your feedback will help us identify any missing elements or areas where further evidence is needed.

We will share the narrative descriptions and ask you:

* What do you think this means for the person/ how does/ would it make you feel?
* Why do you think does this not always happen?
* How could it be achieved?

***How You Can Help***

We value your participation and feedback in refining our interim programme theories. Your insights will help ensure that our research is grounded in real-world experiences and is comprehensive in addressing the communication needs of adults with learning disabilities.

As a thank you for taking part, we will be giving you a £25 voucher.

**Consultation Group Details**

Date and Times: 3rd October 10am or 12pm OR 11th October 10am or 12pm

Location: Online via MS Teams

Duration: 60 minutes

Please confirm your participation and preferred slot by X by contacting Lizzie Gale, Research Associate at [ICALD@kent.ac.uk](mailto:ICALD@kent.ac.uk)

We look forward to your valuable contribution to this crucial research.

Kind Regards,

Dr Lizzie Gale

Research Associate - ICALD

Tizard Centre, University of Kent

Email: E.E.Gale@kent.ac.uk

[www.kcl.ac.uk/research/icald](http://www.kcl.ac.uk/research/icald)

**Thank you for thinking about taking part in our consultations. Your thoughts and experiences are important, and they can help us learn more about people with learning disabilities and their communication needs.**