



An Interdisciplinary Research Initiative at
Queen's University Belfast



Information Pack

PhD Studentships (x6)

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Overview

These six full-time PhD Studentships will be jointly supervised across various Schools in Queen's with the aim of encouraging innovative and high quality interdisciplinary research relating to children and young people. The studentships are available from October 2009, and cover University fees up to £3,390 per annum and a maintenance allowance of £13,290 per annum, for three years. To be eligible for consideration for funding, applicants must:

- have, or expect to obtain, at least a 2.1 honours degree (or its equivalent); and
- be ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands (since 1 October 2006). For (non-UK) EU applicants, ordinary residency can include full-time education.

Note: Further details on residency and nationality / citizenship criteria are available at: www.qub.ac.uk/postgraduate.

The closing date for applications is Friday 26 June 2009.

The Studentships

Applicants are invited to apply for up to a maximum of three studentships from the list of eight below:

- (1) Employing virtual reality (VR) simulation in the development of movement centred therapies for children and young people with complex trauma.
- (2) Quality of life and participation in adolescents with chronic health conditions.
- (3) The impact of school placement on the lives of children with cerebral palsy: An exploratory study of the views of children and their parents.
- (4) Developing a psychosocial intervention to improve self-management behaviours and glycaemic control among children with type 1 diabetes.
- (5) Prevalence of Adverse Childhood Experiences in a university student population: Associations with education pathways and future social and economic outcomes.
- (6) Peer influences on teenage substance use and antisocial behaviour in Northern Ireland.
- (7) Promoting respect for diversity: Conceptualising its meaning in a post-conflict society and implications for curriculum development.
- (8) An epidemiological study of young children's awareness of and attitudes towards disability.

Application Procedure

Applicants should apply for admission electronically at <https://pg.apply.qub.ac.uk/home/> A separate application form needs to be completed for each studentship applied for.

Applicants should read carefully the following guidance notes before creating their application.

1. **My details:** Please follow instructions for Step 1
2. **Create research application:** Bypass Step 2 by clicking directly on the create research application link halfway down left hand side. Please enter the School where principal supervisor is based under 'School' and the title of Research Studentship as listed above under 'title of research area' and then click 'Create Application'.
3. **Research Details:** Enter research details as specified:

- **School/Department** – select School where Principal Supervisor is based
 - **Title of Research Area** – select relevant Studentship title
 - **Proposed Supervisor** – type name of Principal Supervisor as it appears in relevant Studentship title
 - **Research Type** – select PhD
 - **Mode of Attendance** – select Full-Time
 - **Proposed Date of Enrolment** – October 2009
4. **Funding:** click 'other' and type in *Improving Children's Lives*.
5. **Upload research proposal:** Please upload your personal statement. Your personal statement should incorporate the following:
- How do your existing qualifications and experience relate to the proposed area of research? (250 words)
 - Critically evaluate the proposed project by identifying potential research difficulties and suggest some ways to solve these problems. (750 words)
 - Discuss any changes that you would like to make to the proposal and provide an account of your reasons for these changes. (250 words)
 - Discuss how the proposed project is likely to make an original contribution to existing research findings in this area (adding to the information already contained in the project summaries). (250 words)
- Remember to include your full name and application number on your personal statement.*
6. **Referee details:** Please add
7. **Submit Application**
8. **Award application:** leave blank

Applicants who apply for admission by the closing date of Friday 26 June will be considered automatically for funding.

Please contact David Piekaar, Project Administrator, d.piekaar@qub.ac.uk, (telephone: 028 9097 5956) for further information.

Further Details of Studentships

(1) Employing virtual reality (VR) simulation in the development of movement centred therapies for children and young people with complex trauma.

Principal Supervisor: Dr Mark Linden (School of Nursing and Midwifery)

Second Supervisor: Dr Cathy Craig (School of Psychology)

Aim

To develop and evaluate a movement based intervention to promote self-regulation in children who have experienced complex trauma.

Method

The methodology of the research will naturally evolve given the challenges of the project and the combining of the student and supervisors' intent. However, it is envisaged to consist of five stages. Stage 1 will involve the design and creation of the VR movement scenarios. This environment will provide the opportunity for the children to perform and master a series of movements and will provide feedback on performance. These movements may be based around a series of balance based exercises, yoga or Tai Chi. The success of the intervention will be assessed through outcome measures of self regulation, self-efficacy and motor control. Stage 1 will be informed through a systematic review of the literature and from consultation with appropriate clinical psychology services. Stage 2 will trial this environment among a group (n = 10) of care-experienced children with complex trauma to gain their views on its usability, degree of engagement and suggested alterations. Stage 3 will utilise this feedback to further refine the VR environment and movement scenarios. Stage 4 will then test these on a larger sample (n = 50) of care-experienced children to determine its effectiveness in promoting self-regulation, measured before, during, and after the intervention. Comparison will be made against a group of age matched controls recruited from children outside the care system. Stage 5 will then evaluate the effectiveness of the procedure.

Original contribution

Complex trauma is a term used to describe the effects of multiple, prolonged adverse events, along a developmental trajectory, which can result in impairments in domains including: attachment, emotional regulation, behavioural control, cognition, and self-identity (Cook et al., 2007). These impairments can eventually lead to dysfunctional behaviours such as suicidality (Zlotnick et al., 1997), impulse control problems (Herpertz et al., 1997) and substance abuse (Grilo et al., 1997). It is increasingly recognised that traditional talking therapies are of limited use in treating individuals who have experienced complex trauma (Van der Kolk, 1994). This is largely due to their inability to self-regulate, control their behaviour and engage with the therapist at the necessary level of self awareness. The proposed work would significantly contribute to the research on complex trauma by exploring ways to promote self-regulation through movement. We suggest that the mechanism through which this can be achieved is observational learning. Our ability to observe and store a new movement allows the construction of a cognitive representation which is subsequently used as an internal standard against which future actions are compared (Bandura, 1969, 1971, 1986). If the individual is given the opportunity to self-observe their movements they will be able to actively regulate their own motor learning (Ferrari, 1996). Therefore, learning a new motor skill and observing the subsequent performance can teach a child to regulate an important aspect of their behaviour. VR simulation offers the unique opportunity to create a range of challenging scenarios, whilst providing complete safety for the participants, and rigorous experimental control for the researcher/therapist.

(2) Quality of life and participation in adolescents with chronic health conditions.

Principal Supervisor: Dr Jackie Parkes (School of Nursing and Midwifery)

Second Supervisor: Professor Mike Shields (School of Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences)

Third Supervisor: Dr Madeleine Rooney (School of Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences)

Introduction

Adolescence is a time of rapid physical and psychological growth and may be a particularly challenging time for young people with health problems and/or disability. As adolescents with chronic health problems move from paediatric to adult services, the holistic approach taken by child health, education and social services may become fragmented and available resources may be limited. This may exacerbate the young person's psychological vulnerability and create additional stress for families.

Original contribution to existing literature

Little is known about the views of young people with chronic health conditions in terms of their subjective experiences and perceptions of their life (quality of life) or about their objective experiences related to involvement in everyday life situations (participation). Furthermore it is unclear the extent to which pain, impairment, psychological health and parenting stress influences adolescent's quality of life and participation. Children with different clinical conditions may be able to achieve greater or lesser quality of life and participation partly as a result of the care they or their family receive which may have implications for how services could be improved.

Aim

This study aims to describe the quality of life and participation of adolescents with various chronic health conditions, to compare their experiences and explore factors that predict better/poorer outcomes.

Research questions

- (1) How does the quality of life and participation of adolescents with chronic health conditions compare with that of the general population and what factors predict differences?
- (2) To what extent do pain, impairment, psychological health and parenting stress predict quality of life and participation?
- (3) Are there differences in the quality of life and participation between groups of adolescents with different clinical conditions? If so can these differences be explained by variations in health and social services they receive?

Method

Study design – the study will be a cross-sectional survey of adolescents (aged 13-18 years) with chronic conditions and their parent/s or carer/s.

Sample – the young people will be identified, approached and recruited through the clinical caseloads of paediatricians providing regional services to children with asthma, peanut allergy, spina bifida and juvenile arthritis. Where possible a sample of 50-60 young people will be recruited from each clinical group.

Measures – a series of valid and reliable measures will be used including a measure of quality of life (Kidscreen instrument); participation (Life Habits Questionnaire) as well as measures of psychological adjustment and parenting stress. Comparisons with the general child population will be made through pre-existing datasets for the same measures.

Data collection – will involve visiting families at home or with permission, the young person at another that is convenient for them place like school. The questionnaires will be administered to the young people as far as possible with some additional data being obtained from parents including parenting stress; service use and completion of a socio-demographic profile.

Statistical analysis – descriptive and inferential statistics will be provided for children in the different clinical groups for all instruments used. Predictors of outcomes of quality of life and participation will be undertaken using multivariable analysis which will adjust for parenting stress and amount of caregiver assistance required.

(3) The impact of school placement on the lives of children with cerebral palsy: An exploratory study of the views of children and their parents.

Principal Supervisor: Dr Laura Lundy (School of Education)

Second Supervisor: Dr Jackie Parkes (School of Nursing and Midwifery)

Third Supervisor: Dr Joanne Jordan (School of Nursing and Midwifery)

Introduction

Cerebral palsy (CP) is a disorder of posture and movement which includes a broad spectrum of disability for which there is no cure. During the last three decades there have been increasing efforts to integrate children with disabilities into mainstream education. This shift away from special education has been partly in response to the wishes of parents and the 'disability movement' who believe that the benefits of special education are offset by the effects of segregation as well as the impetus provided by international children's rights standards which place emphasis on the integration of children with disabilities. However, the perceived advantages of inclusive education are offset by larger classes, reports of bullying and poorer self esteem among children with special needs in mainstream and also problems for parents co-ordinating health and education services.

Original contribution to the existing literature

This study will adopt an explicit children's rights perspective to the investigation of placement of children with CP in mainstream schools. It will engage actively with children and young people as well as their parents to find out the extent to which educational integration is taking place, the impact that school placement has on the educational, health and social care needs of children and young people with disability and the extent to which their needs and rights are being met in the context of their school placement.

Aim of the study

The aim of this study is to evaluate the experience of children with CP in different educational settings and parental experience of decision-making about school placement and issues in transition against international children's rights standards with a view to making recommendations for future education, health and social care policy and practice.

Method

Design – the study will adopt a children's participatory research approach where eight children with and without CP will be invited to form a project steering committee which will guide the research enquiry. In addition parents of children with cerebral palsy will be invited to take part in an in-depth qualitative interview.

Sample – between 10 and 20 children aged 8-18 years with cerebral palsy will be sampled from the Northern Ireland Cerebral Palsy Register and invited to take part in the study. In particular children with similar levels of disability but in different school systems will be selected and invited to take part. Also the sample will include children known to have moved between the school systems e.g. mainstream and special education. Up to 10 parents of children included in the study will also be invited to take part.

Data collection – the study will be an in-depth study of up to 20 children with CP, using a range of qualitative enquiry techniques generated in conjunction with the steering committee and perceived as relevant by children with and without CP. This will also guide the parent interviews although additional questions about decision-making regarding school placement, parents' perception of the impact of school placement on their child's outcomes and issues in transition will also be explored.

Analysis – (i) thematic content analysis of the child and parent interview transcripts using the key qualitative methods of analytic induction, comprehensive data treatment, the constant comparative method and deviant-case analysis will be undertaken and (ii) the application of a children's rights perspective to the experiences of children with CP and their parents to assess the match between experience and recognised quality standards as delineated by the Conventions on the Rights of the Child.

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(4) Developing a psychosocial intervention to improve self-management behaviours and glycaemic control among children with type 1 diabetes.

Principal Supervisor: Dr Martin Dempster (School of Psychology)

Second Supervisor: Dr Michael Donnelly (School of Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences)

Third Supervisor: Dr Noleen McCorry (School of Psychology)

Aims and Objectives

Type 1 diabetes is the third most common chronic illness affecting children and young people in the UK. Although the importance of good glycaemic control to prevent long term complications is well recognised, currently in the UK fewer than 20% of children and young adults achieve the target for long-term glycaemic control. Glycaemic control is influenced (in addition to biological factors) by complex self-management behaviours.

The proposed project aims to develop, design and pilot an empirically-based intervention for children with diabetes which will focus on self-management behaviours and hence improve the potential for good glycaemic control, therefore contributing to better physical and psychological health outcomes.

The project will explicitly take cognisance of children's rights by considering the impact of any proposed intervention on the children to whom it is offered. Particularly, the project will seek to understand the child's perspective in the design and evaluation of the intervention.

Objectives

Phase 1: Systematic review of the literature addressing the relationships between psychosocial variables and self-management behaviours, and glycaemic control among children with diabetes and their parents.

Phase 2: Design of an empirically-based intervention to promote diabetes management behaviours for children with diabetes, informed by the results of the previous review.

Phase 3: Pilot evaluation of the intervention among children with diabetes addressing: behavioural and clinical effectiveness; acceptability; satisfaction (among children and their parents); and a cost analysis.

Proposed Methodology

Phase 1: The systematic review will follow the guidelines devised for reviews of the effectiveness of interventions, with some modifications to allow for a greater range of study types to be included (including correlational and qualitative designs), commensurate with the objective of the review.

Phase 2: Developmentally appropriate focus groups will be conducted with children, their parents, and health professionals. Focus group and review findings will inform the design of an intervention for children with diabetes.

Phase 3: The intervention will be piloted among children with diabetes using a randomised controlled trial (RCT) design, and its effectiveness for behavioural and glycaemic outcomes evaluated. This stage of the project will also involve an evaluation of acceptability and satisfaction among children and parents participating in the RCT.

Original Contribution to existing literature

There has been no comprehensive review of the literature addressing the relationships between all relevant psychosocial variables and behavioural and glycaemic outcomes among children with diabetes. Existing literature reports effect sizes for interventions as low / moderate, and much of the variance in outcomes (using current interventions) remains unaccounted for. This may be partly due to the limited focus of existing interventions, and the failure to consider the evidence available from the wealth of correlational and qualitative research, especially among younger children (pre-adolescents). In addition, few interventions are theoretically grounded. The proposed project will address this gap in the existing literature by providing a comprehensive model of psychosocial associations with behavioural and glycaemic outcomes among children with diabetes, and by developing an empirically-based intervention. Importantly, the proposed project will consider the population of younger pre-adolescent children, both within the systematic review and intervention design. The project will also consider the acceptability of the proposed intervention for children (and their parents), as their voices are largely absent in the design of developmentally appropriate diabetes services.

(5) Prevalence of Adverse Childhood Experiences in a university student population: Associations with education pathways and future social and economic outcomes.

Principal Supervisor: Dr Trevor Spratt (School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work)
Second Supervisor: Dr Emma Larkin (School of Education)

The aim of this study is to ascertain the prevalence of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) amongst university students and examine associations with educational achievement *and* contact with social services and use these, together with current lifestyle information, to indicate pathways to future health, social and economic outcomes. The objectives are to: (i) Administer the ACE questionnaire, an educational attainment/experience and social services contact questionnaire and a questionnaire examining current lifestyle choices to a stratified sample of university students. (ii) Use the data to ascertain if there is a graded relationship between ACE scores and educational attainment. (iii) Use the data to ascertain if there is a graded relationship between ACE scores and contact with social services. (iv) Use the data to ascertain if there is a graded relationship between ACE scores, educational attainment and current lifestyle choices. (v) Use the data to ascertain if there is a graded relationship between ACE scores, contact with social services and current lifestyle choices (vi) Link the results with data from other studies indicating poor health, social and economic outcomes for those with high ACE scores. (vi) Draw out the implications for social and education policies.

The methodology proposed is a cross sectional survey of first year university students. It is proposed the student sample is stratified across subject areas to achieve representative samples of the entire first year student population and subject sub populations. However, there is a commitment to exploring alternative sampling strategies with a view to achieving a more representative sample of the wider population. The questionnaire will be an amalgam of standardised instruments and those developed for the study. The questionnaire will be administered by the researcher, with follow up interviews of a sub sample to explore emerging themes.

The results of this study will make a significant original contribution to the existing literature. There is a growing literature on the impact of multiple Adverse Childhood Experiences upon functioning in adulthood, as measured variously by, physical and mental health, experience of the criminal justice system and poor social circumstances, including uptake of social services and unemployment. The pathways joining the experiences of multiple adversities in childhood and multiple problems in adulthood are not well understood and there have been no studies to date which examine ACE scores and educational experience and social services contact. This study will help address this gap by establishing if there is a graded relationship between ACE scores and previous educational attainment (as measured by performance indicators i.e. exam results), previous educational experiences (as measured by subjective experience of education) and current education achievement (i.e. is there a graded relationship between high ACE scores and participation in courses with lower entry tariffs). This charting of educational pathways together with data on contact with social services and current lifestyle choice should provide indication of the future course of such pathways, i.e. the collation of data on ACE scores, education and, for example, prevalence of smoking acting as indicators for future health outcomes. This will be of interest to educationalists seeking to identify early predictors of poor educational attainment and social policy analysts interested in designing preventative intervention strategies.

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(6) Peer influences on teenage substance use and antisocial behaviour in Northern Ireland.

Principal Supervisor: Dr Patrick McCrystal (School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work)

Second Supervisor: Dr Duncan McVicar (Management School)

Aims and Objectives

The peer influences on a range of adolescent behaviours (substance use and antisocial behaviour) measured by the BYDS from age 11-16 years will be assessed. In particular the research will aim

- To test for the existence of peer effects – the influence of friends' behaviour on their own behaviour – in teenage substance use and antisocial behaviour;
- To establish the direction (sign) of such peer effects and to measure their extent (size) in a range of teenage behaviours;
- To explore the mechanisms that underpin peer effects, i.e. to address the question of why friends' behaviour on these dimensions influences their own behaviour;
- To explore whether such peer effects vary for different groups of young people (by gender, by socioeconomic status; location/town/neighbourhood).

Proposed Methodology

The proposed project will draw upon the Belfast Youth Development Study (BYDS) dataset, i.e. secondary data analysis of existing BYDS quantitative and qualitative data. The BYDS has been tracking a sample of young people (approximately 4000) living in Northern Ireland from age 11 to (currently) 20. The proposed research will focus upon the first five years of the BYDS when the young people were aged 11-16 years for the following reasons. First, it contains detailed information on substance use, criminal and other antisocial behaviour for the study cohort. Second, it contains information on friendship links between participating young people. Third, the study is longitudinal, i.e. it tracks a single cohort over five annual datasweeps. Fourth, BYDS has undertaken additional in-depth interviews with targeted subsamples. Finally, the potential of the BYDS dataset has yet to be widely exploited for research purposes in the area of adolescent development.

The quantitative strand of the research will focus upon two econometric analyses of peer effects: in substance use and in antisocial behaviour. Statistical identification of such peer effects – in all contexts not just teenage behaviours – has challenged researchers for a number of reasons, including limited availability of appropriate data sets. As a consequence, the mere existence of peer effects continues to be the subject of intense debate in quantitative social science literatures, as well as their directions and magnitudes. The nature of the BYDS offers a rare opportunity to overcome many of these statistical difficulties. The qualitative strand of the research will explore what young people themselves say about how their friends' behaviours influence their own (and vice versa). This can include a wider range of behaviours beyond substance use and antisocial behaviour (e.g. participation in leisure activities). This will require analysis of existing transcripts of in-depth interviews with BYDS respondents and may, depending on the extent of relevant information in these existing transcripts, involve a small number of additional in-depth interviews with young people drawn from the BYDS. As far as possible any such interviews would be conducted with those young people that have already given in-depth interviews as part of the BYDS, allowing the newly collected (largely retrospective) data to complement the existing qualitative data.

Contribution to Literature

The literature on peer effects spans the disciplines of sociology, economics and psychology but there continue to be difficulties in unambiguously identifying the size and range of peer effects. In this respect the theoretical literature is well ahead of the empirical literature, and it is to the empirical literature that the proposed project will make its contribution. First, the innovative nature of the data will enable the research to contribute estimates of peer effects in these teenage behaviours to the international literature. Second, the qualitative aspect of the project will contribute to the empirical literature by looking 'inside the black box' at the mechanisms that lie behind peer effects in teenage behaviours. Third, the project will be able to explore localised peer effects to the area of adolescent development generally.

(7) Promoting respect for diversity: Conceptualising its meaning in a post-conflict society and implications for curriculum development.

Principal Supervisor: Professor Evanthia Lyons (School of Psychology)
Second Supervisor: Dr Ulrike Niens (School of Education)

Aims

The proposed research firstly explores the construct of 'respect', its understandings amongst teachers and pupils and its application in the NI primary curriculum. Secondly, it considers the implications of the findings for devising and evaluating educational programmes to encourage more positive inter-group relations between children and in the wider society in the long-term.

The research addresses the following objectives:

1. To explore and compare how the term "respect" is understood in the international and interdisciplinary literature, the NI curriculum as well as by educationalists, parents and pupils.
2. To conceptualise respect theoretically by considering the following questions:
 - i. To what degree are affect, cognition and behaviour elements of respect?
 - ii. How is respect differentiated from other related concepts?
 - iii. How relevant is the concept for respect based programmes in post-conflict education?
3. To develop and pilot an instrument to measure respect for use in future interventions and evaluations

Methodology

In line with its aims, the research employs a mixed-method and rights-based approach. Based on a systematic review of the educational and psychological literature and related curricula approaches, the research examines understandings of respect and its role in promoting inclusion and long-term peace. For the qualitative element, sampling is driven theoretically and involves a small number of semi-structured interviews and focus groups with main adult stakeholders of the primary curriculum, including parents, teachers and educational policy-makers. Additionally, six group discussions with Year 4 and Year 7 pupils explore their understandings of 'respect' as well as reasons why they may or may not respect members of other groups. The quantitative element is based on the findings of the interviews and focus groups and involves the development of a measurement of respect and a pilot study including Year 4 and Year 7 pupils from a small number of schools in the main primary education sectors.

Following Article 12 of the UNCRC, children's rights to consultation is acknowledged by obtaining their views of everyday school experiences and involving an advisory group in the design of the research materials and interpretation of findings.

Original contribution to literature

The term 'respect' has gained prominence in international curricular developments aimed at promoting diversity and inclusion and the NI primary school curriculum reflects its perceived central role in relation to personal development and mutual understanding in particular. Despite its popularity, there have been limited attempts to conceptualise the term 'respect' and attempts to address the issue within the psychological literature seem to have remained relatively isolated and contradictory. Conceptualisations of respect refer to specific intergroup relationships and range from trust to the opposite of stereotyping and prejudice and it is seen as a mediating factor of reconciliation, though some authors conflate the terms 'respect' and 'reconciliation' (Janoff-Bullman & Werther, 2008). Others look at "unconditional respect", which is directed towards the acceptance of everyone as a human being (Lalljee, Laham & Tam, 2007). The meaning and applicability of 'respect' in the context of societies with a legacy of political conflict has received little attention and the proposed research intends to address this gap.

(8) An epidemiological study of young children's awareness of and attitudes towards disability.

Principal Supervisor: Professor Paul Connolly (School of Education)

Second Supervisor: Dr Berni Kelly (School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work)

This study aims to contribute to our understanding of young children's awareness of and attitudes towards disability. In particular, the study will focus on 7-8 year old children and has the following objectives: 1) to determine the extent to which children of this age are aware of disability and the range of impairment types (physical, cognitive and sensory); 2) to identify the range of attitudes that such children have towards children with differing types of disability; 3) to ascertain whether children's awareness of and attitudes towards disability are associated with a range of socio-demographic factors (such as sex, socio-economic background, level of contact with others with disability, educational ability, school effects); and 4) to consider the implications of these findings for teaching about disability and for the development of socially inclusive practices in primary schools.

The study will be organized into three stages: 1) a series of qualitative, semi-structured interviews with a purposive sample of children to help determine the level of awareness and the range of attitudes that exist among children of this age towards disability; 2) to devise and pilot appropriate measures of children's attitudes towards disability that can be used in self-complete questionnaires; and 3) to undertake a survey of 7-8 year old children in a stratified random sample of 30 primary schools. An epidemiological approach to the analysis of the survey data will be undertaken, including the use of multilevel modeling to correct for the clustered nature of the sample and also to explore possible school effects. A Children's Advisory Group (CAG) will be established to encourage children's participation in the research study. The CAG will consist of up to six children aged 10-11 years old and, with appropriate support, will be used to provide advice on the design of the qualitative interviews, the focus for the measures to include in the broader survey and to contribute to the interpretation of the findings.

Of the studies of children's attitudes towards disability that do exist, most of these have been qualitative in nature and have focused on older children and young people. Of the quantitative studies that have been conducted to date, these have tended to: focus on attitudes to physical disability; reflect medical models of thinking; and use measures developed in the 1970s/1980s. This study seeks to address these gaps in the literature by: utilizing an epidemiological approach informed by qualitative methods and grounded in social model thinking; focusing on attitudes towards a range of disabilities; and focusing on younger children.