

Effective Service Provision and Multi-Agency Working in Service Providers for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities: A Mixed Methods Systematic Review

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Abstract : It is widely recognised in policy and research that the provision of services for children and young people (CYP) with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) is enhanced when health and social care, and education services collaborate and interact effectively. In the UK, there have been significant changes to policy and provisions which support and improve collaboration. However, professionals responsible for implementing these changes face multiple challenges, including a lack of specific implementation guidance or framework to illustrate how effective multi-agency working could or should work. This systematic review will identify the key components of effective multi-agency working in services for CYP with SEND; and the most effective forms of partnership working in this setting. The review highlights interventions that lead to service improvements; and the conditions in the local area that support and encourage success. A protocol was written and registered with PROSPERO registration: CRD42022352194. Searches were conducted on several health, care, education, and applied social science databases from the year 2012 onwards. Citation chaining has been undertaken, as well as broader grey literature searching to enrich the findings. Qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods studies and systematic reviews were included, assessed independently, and critically appraised or assessed for risk of bias using appropriate tools based on study design. Data were extracted in NVivo software and checked by a more experienced researcher. A convergent segregated approach to synthesis and integration was used in which the quantitative and qualitative data were synthesised independently and then integrated using a joint display integration matrix. Findings demonstrate the key ingredients for effective partnership working for services delivering SEND. Interventions deemed effective are described, and lessons learned across interventions are summarised. Results will be of interest to educators and health and social care professionals that provide services to those with SEND. These will also be used to develop policy recommendations for how UK healthcare, social care, and education services for CYP with SEND aged 0-25 can most effectively collaborate and achieve service improvement. The review will also identify any gaps in the literature to recommend areas for future research. Funding for this review was provided by the Department for Education.

Keywords : collaboration, joint commissioning, service delivery, service improvement

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