

Project Title

Caregivers' and service providers' perspectives of continuity of care for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder following discharge from Early Intervention Services

Description of the Project

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a complex neurodevelopmental disorder. As a result, provision of care for children with ASD, along with support for their caregivers, involves engagement with a variety of services which cross many professional and organisational boundaries. Whilst the need for integration of services is considered critical to ensuring a seamless care experience for the child and family, problems with coordination of services within teams are consistently reported.

There is, however, a dearth of research focussing on caregivers' experiences of continuity of care when children with ASD transition from Early Intervention Services to a new team of professionals situated in a different physical and infrastructural context. This qualitative study aims to address this gap in knowledge, specifically exploring caregivers' perspectives of continuity of care following discharge from Early Intervention Teams to multidisciplinary, Primary, Community and Continuing Care Teams and/or School-Age Disability Teams. Whilst the central focus will be on caregivers' experiences, service providers' perspectives will also be explored in an attempt to contextualise caregivers' accounts and explore solutions to any problematic experiences reported.

This project will be led by Dr. Niamh Gallagher, Centre for Research in the Social Professions, Sligo Institute of Technology and will involve collaborations with National University of Ireland, Galway and Imperial College, London.

Profile of suitable candidate

Applicants should hold a First or Upper Second Class Honours Degree in a relevant health, early years care/education or social care discipline and an interest in the area of ASD.

They should demonstrate excellent interpersonal and written communication skills and the ability to work as part of a team.