



**Newcastle**  
University



## The LIVELY Study: Language intervention in the early years



Cristina McKean, Christine Jack, Emily Preston, Kate Benson

## Why are we here?

We would like to:

- Let you know about a research study we will be conducting over the next 3 years, examining the effectiveness of language interventions in the early years.
- Explain the benefits of joining the study.
- Answer your questions about what participating in the study would involve.
- Give you an opportunity to express your interest in joining the project.

## What is the study?

In a nutshell we will...

Compare 3 interventions for children aged between 3.5 and 4.5 years old with language difficulties

- Adapted Derbyshire Language Scheme – DLS
- Building Early Sentences Therapy – BEST
- Continued Classroom Support – CCS

To find out:

- Which approach works best
- Whether different children benefit more from one intervention or another

## When and where will it happen?

- Recruit schools in Autumn 2019
- Data collection and interventions will run from January/February 2020 to September 2021
- 24 schools across 2 geographical clusters – 2 or more Local Authorities
- Schools will be randomised to different treatment ‘arms’

## The interventions

### Adapted Derbyshire Language Scheme (DLS)

- one of the most widely used intervention approaches in the UK
- moves children through stages, increasing their understanding and use of sentences with 1, 2, 3 and 4 Information Carrying Words
- one research study has shown it is effective in improving understanding of sentences
- we want to test an adapted version of it further and compare it to other approaches



## The interventions

### Building Early Sentences Therapy (BEST)

- a new intervention
- aims to improve children's use and understanding of sentences with 2, 3 and 4 clause elements
- aims to change children's underlying linguistic representations of the elements of a sentence so they can use sentences more flexibly
- this could then increase their rate of language progress
- pilot study comparing BEST to CCS just completed – data yet to be fully analysed but promising first results for improving children's expressive language



## The interventions

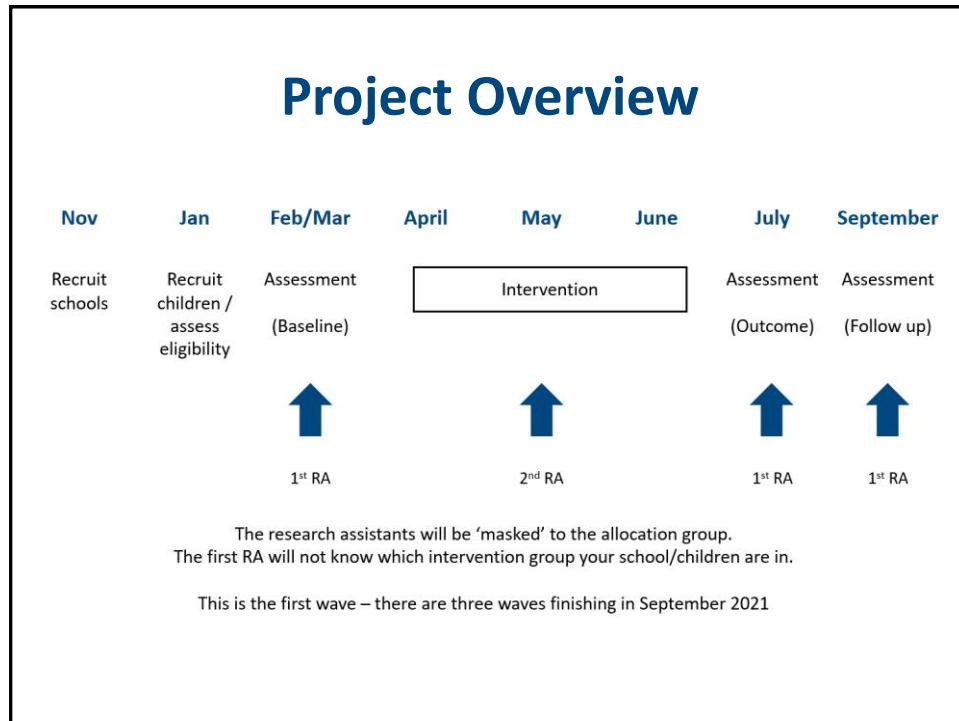
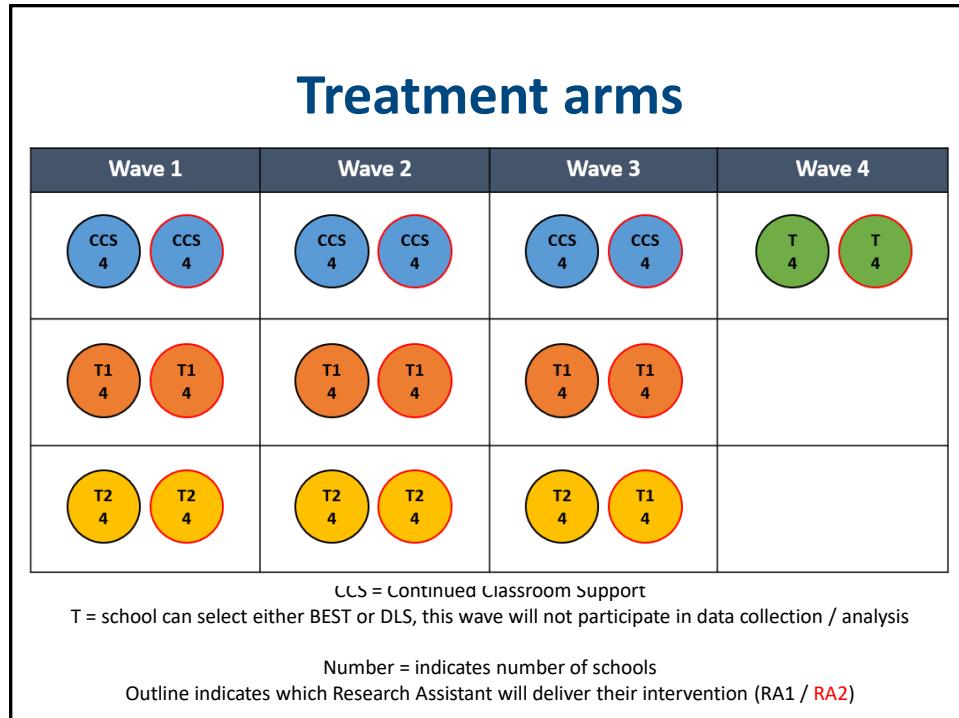
### Continued Classroom Support (CSS)

- this is the support schools are already putting in place to help children who have been identified as not meeting expectations in their language development
- schools will carry on as usual and we will ask them what support the children are receiving
- schools are already offering high quality support – it is possible that BEST and DLS are not needed
- we want to check this and describe the good work schools are doing



## Some detail

- 288 children aged 3.5 – 4.5 years with language difficulties from 24 schools will be randomised to BEST, DLS or CCS.
- We will deliver BEST and DLS interventions in partnership with schools for 3 waves. A school will either be in the BEST, DLS or CCS arm of the study.
- The children's language and functional communication will be assessed pre and post-intervention and at follow-up.
- At the end of the study we will deliver either BEST or DLS into the CCS schools, at their request.



## Eligible children

- Most children benefit from a language enriching pre-school environment.
- A small subgroup need a more structured input to progress.
- This study is looking at this subgroup of children and deciding what that structured input should be.

## Eligible children

- Monolingual speakers of English not reaching age-related expectations
- Score  $\leq$  16th centile on the New Reynell Developmental Language Scales (NRDLS) expressive and/or receptive subscales
- Have no reported sensorineural hearing impairment, severe visual impairment or diagnosed learning disability.

## Some detail

- We anticipate between 2 and 6 children will receive the intervention in each school each term
- Schools from socially disadvantaged areas are likely to have more children who would benefit
- Children with low language abilities whose families consent will be seen 2x per week by our research speech and language therapists
- Children will be seen in small groups which last up to 30 minutes
- We will ask a TA to support the groups and work with the SLT for some of these sessions
- Simple homework activities (talking about pictures) will be sent home to parents

## Benefits

- Identified children will be assessed by a speech and language therapist who will discuss the assessments with the children's class teacher. Parents will be able to request a meeting with the therapist to discuss their child's assessment.
- All participating schools will benefit from receiving a language intervention. 'Continued Classroom Support' schools will be offered the intervention at the end of the study.
- All schools will have access to a series of CPD sessions focused on supporting children with language difficulties.
- All schools will receive a certificate in recognition of their work as a research participant and their engagement with the speech and language CPD.

## CPD offering



- Cristina McKean – **Promoting robust language development for all children**
- Helen Stringer – **Phonological awareness**
- Sean Pert / Carolyn Letts – **Supporting bilingual children**
- Christine Jack – **Using educational technology to support language and communication**



Sessions will also provide opportunities to share best practice and to learn about the interventions and the outcomes of the research

## Expectations

If your school agrees to take part you will need to:

- Sign a consent form
- Identify children who are falling behind age related expectations in their language development and who are likely to be eligible for the intervention
- Provide these children's parents and carers with information about the study and collect consent forms from those who want to participate
- Provide the researchers with information about your usual provision to support children's language development

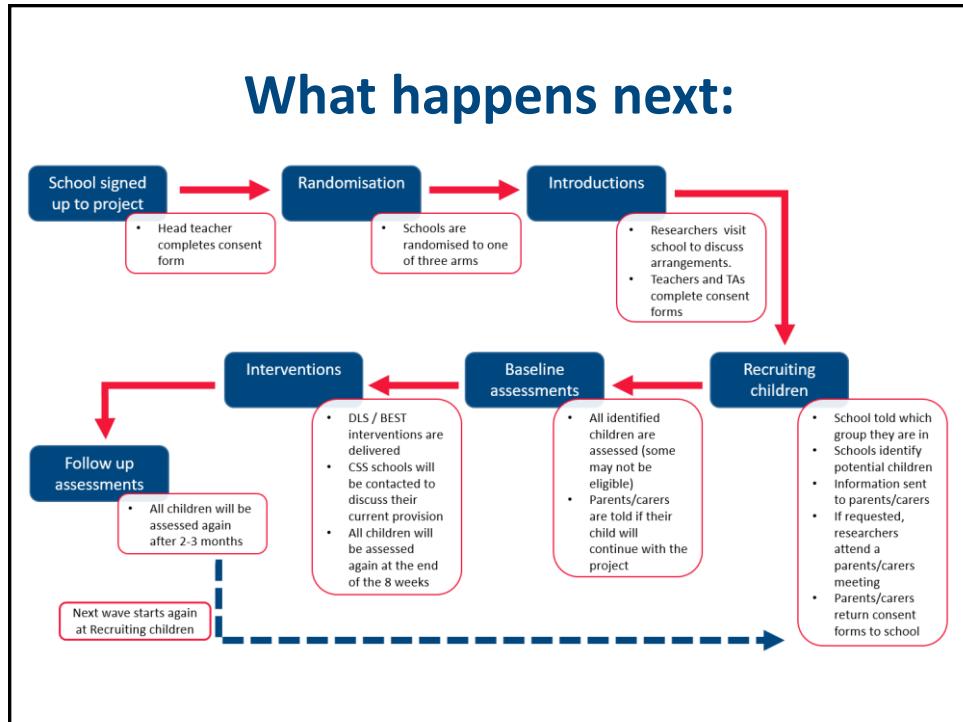
## Expectations

If your school agrees to take part you will need to:

- Ensure class teachers / teaching assistants complete a short questionnaire about each identified child
- Provide a quiet space for the intervention to be delivered and assessments to be completed
- Release a teaching assistant to work alongside the researcher, for two of the 30 minutes sessions and to video record at least one session during the eight weeks
- Provide parents with information about homework activities and send them a short questionnaire for them to complete

## A final stage of the study

- We are also testing whether we can successfully adapt BEST for use in Languages other than English (LOTE)
- We will conduct 8 single case studies with children with language difficulties in a LOTE
- We will adapt BEST to their home language and they will receive BEST delivered in partnership with parents and/or bilingual co-workers.



## What happens next:

**Language Intervention in the Early Years**  
Expression of Interest

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Your School:</b>                               |  |
| School name:                                      |  |
| Postcode:   |  |
| Local authority:                                  |  |
| % pupil premium                                   |  |
| % EAL   |  |
| Main languages /heritages your children come from |  |
| Do any of your staff speak these languages?       |  |
| Number of children in EYES                        |  |
| Estimated number of children eligible for project |  |
| Reason for interest in LIVELY study               |  |
| <b>Key contact:</b>                               |  |
| Name:   |  |
| Role:   |  |
| Email:  |  |

## What happens next:

Fill in the expression of interest form and return it to a member of the LIVELY team – or take it back to your school to discuss and email it to [christine.jack@newcastle.ac.uk](mailto:christine.jack@newcastle.ac.uk)

Please return the form by **Friday 6<sup>th</sup> December**

## Any questions?

<https://research.ncl.ac.uk/lively>