

SCHEMA Plain English Summary.

Why is this research important?

A large number of people in the UK criminal justice system have learning disabilities or learning difficulties. Around one in three prisoners report having these needs. Some of these individuals receive care in secure forensic hospitals because they have mental health problems, personality disorders, and/or learning disabilities. They are often detained under the Mental Health Act or are subject to restrictions set by the Ministry of Justice.

Some people with a learning disability can find it difficult to fully access psychological therapies, sometimes called 'talking therapies', and can they can be helped when visual and creative approaches are included. Interpersonal art psychotherapy was developed in secure care settings to provide a more accessible form of therapy for adults with mild learning disabilities or borderline intellectual functioning. An earlier study showed that this therapy was acceptable to patients and staff and that it was practical to run a larger study.

What is the aim of the study?

The aim of this study is to find out whether interpersonal art psychotherapy improves outcomes for people with learning disabilities or borderline intellectual functioning who are receiving care in secure forensic hospitals. The study also assessed whether the therapy provides good value for money compared with usual care alone.

What did the researchers do?

The study was a randomised controlled trial within NHS and independent secure forensic hospitals across the UK. We aimed to recruit 150 patients to this study. Recruited participants were randomly allocated to receive either:

- Interpersonal art psychotherapy alongside their usual care, or
- Usual care alone.

How have patients and the public been involved?

People with learning disabilities and borderline intellectual functioning were involved in designing and setting up the study. Their views helped shape the research and ensure that study materials and procedures are accessible and acceptable to participants.

What stage is the study at?

The study is complete.

What happened?

Fifty participants were recruited across 8 secure-care sites and 47 were randomised to receive either usual care or intrapersonal art psychotherapy. We gained an understanding of performance of outcome measures with people with learning disabilities and borderline intellectual functioning in secure care and completed an economic analysis.