

Lay summary for end of study report

## **Person-centred child and adolescent physiotherapy for musculoskeletal pain**

Thank you to everyone who took part in this research. Your ideas, time and experiences helped us develop a new approach to support children and young people receiving physiotherapy.

### **About the Research**

This research programme was led by Dr Rhiannon Joslin at the University of Southampton as part of a fellowship funded by the Medical Research Foundation and Arthritis UK.

The aim of the research was to develop a new approach to physiotherapy that helps make care more personalised for children and young people. This approach included training and resources for physiotherapists. The research focused on musculoskeletal conditions, which affect the muscles, bones, joints and ligaments.

### **Who Was Involved?**

Eleven children and young people who had experience of physiotherapy for musculoskeletal conditions helped design the new approach. Ten different young people and a parent or carer then helped test and improve it. Thirteen physiotherapists helped make sure the approach would work in real healthcare settings and co-designed the training resources they would need. The interviews took place between August 2024 and October 2025.

### **What Happened During the Research?**

Children, young people, parents, carers and physiotherapists worked together to create and improve a new person-centred approach to physiotherapy care. This included developing resources to help children and young people take a more active role in their care and creating training materials for physiotherapists.

### **What Were the Results?**

The research has:

1. Developed a new intervention to support children and young people to take part in their physiotherapy care.
2. Co-designed resources to help physiotherapists provide person-centred care.
3. Co-designed training resources to support the physiotherapy workforce.
4. Established a pathway to support future testing of this new approach.

The full findings are not available yet because they are currently being reviewed for publication. Once this process is complete, we will share the full results and an animation co-designed with young people that explains the findings in an easy-to-understand way.

### **How Could This Help in the Future?**

The next stage of research will explore whether this new approach can be used successfully in physiotherapy services and whether a larger study is possible. The research team hopes that this approach could help children and young people take a more active role in their physiotherapy and support goals that are important to them. If the approach can be used successfully, future studies will investigate whether it improves outcomes for children and young people and provides good value for healthcare services.