

Standing frames for children with cerebral palsy: a mixed-methods feasibility study

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Plain English summary

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Standing frames help people with cerebral palsy (CP) to stand when they cannot do this by themselves. They may also be useful for improving body position, digestion, bone strength and helping young people to join in with others. However, there is very little scientific evidence (or proof) that they are helpful.

Standing frames are expensive and can be painful to use. The NHS wants to find out if standing frames really work. This study aimed to work out if people would take part in a research trial to find this out. We interviewed young people with CP and asked parents and professionals who work with young people with CP (who use a standing frame) to answer questions in surveys. We also asked parents and professionals to take part in focus groups.

We found that lots of things make using a standing frame difficult, such as a lack of time, space or support. Young people want their standing frames to help them take part in things. Some parents and professionals, such as physiotherapists, think that it is dangerous to stop using a standing frame for a long time but may stop for a short time for a research trial.

The people who took part in the study believe that standing frames help in lots of different ways, although most think that more research is needed.

This study shows that in a future trial the most important things to find out are:

- Does using a standing frame help a young person to feel more satisfied, healthier or happier?
- Do they make it easier for them to take part in activities?
- Can they help with body functions (like breathing and digestion) and body structure (like bones and muscles)?

A research trial needs to be carefully planned to help people to take part.

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