



Interview Schedule for Parents

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Interview Questions for Parents

1. This is one of the first interviews so we aren't 100% sure of how long the interviews will take. Is there a specific time you need to go/would like to be finished by? I will make sure I keep my eye on the time.
2. Apologies if this sounds like I am just reading off my notepad, there are just some things I need to remember to say before we properly start.

Once again, thank you so much for being involved in this research. As you will have read in the information letter, we are doing some research on the impact of the changes in post-16 education for autistic young people in England since the introduction of the Children and Families Act 2014.

During these interviews, we want to hear about **your** experience of the reforms and post-16 education. We are going to discuss your experience of receiving support, getting a say in your child's education and helping them to achieve better outcomes. By understanding this, we hope we can get a bigger picture about the impact the Children and Families Act has made on young, autistic individuals.

The interview is split into 3 main themes of help and support, having a say and getting better outcomes. There will be time at the end to discuss anything you feel we haven't covered or share anything that you wanted to say

Just before we start, I was wondering whether it would be OK to record the discussion? This is just so I have an accurate record of what you say, as I find it really hard to write everything down quickly! The recording will only be listened to by myself and other members of our research team. After the interview, it will be transcribed – we'll take out any information that could identify you – and then we'll delete it.

Also, if you want to stop the interview at any point, you can do that without giving me a reason. And if there are any questions that you'd rather not answer, that's fine too.

Do you have any questions before we start?

OK, let's start.

ABOUT YOUR CHILD

1. **OK, just to start, I thought we could talk a little bit about [NAME] and what s/he is up to at the moment. What sort of education or training is s/he doing at the moment?**
 - How are they finding it?

2. **And could you give me just a quick overview of his/her educational journey so far? (e.g. what did they do for post-16 education, what did they do for post-19 education, is it different? Have they had to move around a lot? Etc.)**

TOPIC ONE: HELP AND SUPPORT

I want to start by asking you some questions about the kind of help and support you and your child got during their post-16 education. Post-16 education is compulsory education or training that all young people *must* complete between the ages of 16 and 18 years old; so for [NAME] that would be....

1. **Tell me a bit about the support [NAME] got support in deciding what to do after they finished secondary education...**
 - What kind?
 - Are you happy with the amount of support they received? What was good/not-so-good about it?
 - Was there any way this support could have been improved? If so, how?
 - If they changed school/type of education, did they get support in this transition? How did they find it? Could this process have been improved?

2. **What about the support available to you during your [NAME]'s post-16 education? (e.g. from the school/council)**
 - Did you know where or how to access such support? If not, how could this be made clearer?
 - Was it easy to access this support? What made it easy/hard?
 - Have you received any particularly useful support during their post-16 education? Why was it useful?
 - Was there any way this support could have been improved? Or anything else you would have like to have had?

In 2014, the Children and Families Act came into place. This gave young people with special educational needs or disabilities, and their families, more rights in terms of support they get access to during their education and transition into adulthood. We want to know whether you understand what these rights mean for you and your child and whether you get access to what is promised.

The act says that every young person and their parents should be provided with a list of all of the support that is on offer in their local area. This is called their "Local Offer".

3. **Do you know what is in your Local Offer?**
 - Are you happy with what is in your Local Offer?
 - Have you, or your child, received any of the additional support that is offered to you, through your Local Offer?
 - Is there anything that is particularly helpful, in your Local Offer? Why is it helpful?
 - Is there any way you think your Local Offer can be improved?

****ONLY ASK THESE QUESTIONS TO PARTICIPANTS WITH CHILDREN AGED BETWEEN 19 AND 25****

Now I am going to ask you some questions about the support you and your child received during their post-19 education. By this, I mean the education or training that some young people complete between the ages of 19 and 25 years old; so for [NAME] that would be...

- 1. Tell me about the support [NAME] got during their transition from post-16 to post-19 education...**
 - If they changed school/type of education, how did they find it?
 - Is there any way this transition could have been improved?

- 2. Tell me about the support you got during [NAME]'s transition from post-16 to post-19 education...**
 - Is there any way this could have been improved?

- 3. And what about the support you have received during their post-19 education?**
 - Did/do you know where or how to access such support? If not, how could this have been made clearer?
 - Is it easy to access this support? What makes it easy/hard?
 - Have you received any particularly useful support during their post-19 education? Why was it useful?
 - Is there any way this support could have been improved? Or anything else you would have liked to have had?

TOPIC TWO: HAVING A SAY

The Children and Families Act (2014) sets out a list of rights that young people with special educational needs, and their families, should have access to. For example, your wishes and feelings must be taken into account before making decisions, all problems should be taken seriously and fixed and all young people and their families should get a say in the support that they are offered.

1. What is your experience with this?

- Do you know your rights? How could this be made clearer?
- Do you feel listened to? Why not?
- If you bring up problems, are they taken seriously and fixed? Why not? How could this be improved?
- Do you feel you and [NAME] get some choice in the support that is offered to them? Why not? How could this be improved?
- Could this process be improved? If so, how?

As part of the Children and Families Act, Education, Health and Care Plans were introduced. I just wondered, does [NAME] have one?

If no:

1. Do you know what an EHCP entails?

[It is a plan for people aged up to 25 who need more support than is available through mainstream special educational needs support. They identify different educational, health and social needs and set out the additional support that is needed to meet those needs.]

2. Is there a specific reason why they don't have one?

3. Do you think it may have been useful for [NAME] to have had one?

- Why/why not?

If yes:

1. Would you be able to tell me a little bit about your experience with the Education, Health and Care Plans?

- Do you know what is in it?
- Did you get a say in what went in it? How was this process? Could it have been improved?
- Has it been updated?
- Has the process of updating been helpful?
- If it hasn't been updated, do you think it needs to be? Why hasn't it been updated?
- Is there anything that has been particularly good about it?
- Is there anything that hasn't been so good about it? How could this be improved?

TOPIC THREE: GETTING BETTER OUTCOMES

Finally, I just want to know how satisfied you are overall with your child's educational experiences after finishing secondary education, and what they are doing now.

- 1. Overall, are you happy with [NAME]'s education since they were 16?**
 - Was there anything that was particularly good?
 - Was there anything not so good?
 - How could it have been improved?

- 2. Do you think their educational outcomes align with their ambitions? Are they doing what they want to be doing?**
 - Do you think they were given enough support to get to where they want to be?
 - Do you think the people that work/ed with your child (e.g. teachers, teaching assistants etc.) had the right skills to help them progress and achieve their ambitions?
 - What skills do the teachers need?

QUESTION TIME AND THANK YOU

This is the end of the interview! Thank you very much for sharing your thoughts with me. Before you go, do you have any questions for me or anything you want to add?

Once we have finished interviewing everyone, we will try to put everything together and write a report and if you like, I can send this to you.

In the meantime, if you have any further questions or would like to contact me for anything else, feel free to send me an email. I know that some of what we have discussed is quite personal and might have been quite difficult for you to talk about, if you feel you need to speak to somebody about anything we have discussed today, you can contact the National Autistic Society, or the Samaritans for additional support. The contact details for these are in the information sheet I sent to you before the interview and I can resend them to you as well.

Thanks again.