Young people's views concerning their voice in Education, Health and Care planning meetings: A participatory Q-study

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Contents

Abstract

A recent Code of Practice (DfE & DoH, 2015) for working with children and young people (YP) described as having special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) has been published in the UK. It extends the rights of children and YP and their parents, to have a say in their education and demands greater collaboration between agencies.

This research explores the experiences of YP described as having SEND participating in Education, Health and Care (EHC) planning meetings. It focusses particularly on ideas around the voice of the child.

- What are young people's views concerning their voice in Education, Health and Care planning meetings?
- What are the implications of young people's views concerning their voice in Education, Health and Care planning meetings for Educational Psychology Practice?

The study included 21 YP aged between 11 and 19. To limit the reliance on language skills (Hughes 2016), Q-methodology has been used to support them to think about their experience. Q-methodology offers statements encompassing the range of things YP might say about having a say in EHC planning meetings and asks participants to arrange them based on how much they agree or disagree with the statements. The research is participatory in that young people were involved in the study as co-researchers and helped to develop and pilot the statements.

The study found that despite many similarities in participants' descriptions of meetings, there was considerable variation in how YP experienced them. Some expressed having little or no voice while others had some level of voice. Implications for Educational Psychology practice and possible future directions for research are discussed.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Over several decades there have been repeated attempts to increase user participation in public services through the development of legislation. This has included promoting the voice and choice of young people (YP) described as having special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) when planning their education, health and social care needs. The intention of the recent SEND Code of Practice (DfE & DoH, 2015) is to shift the balance of power further towards families and away from professionals and Local Authority (LA) managers. However, it is unclear how such changes in legislation affect practice (HMIE, 2007) or how these changes translate to how statutory processes are experienced by YP.

While there is considerable research exploring parents' participation in statutory SEND processes (Bajwa-Patel and Devecchi, 2014; Flewitt & Nind, 2007; Hartas, 2008; Hess, Molina & Kozleski, 2006; Kaehne & Beyer, 2008; Maddison & Beresford, 2012; McNerney, Hill & Pellicano, 2015; Parsons, Lewis, & Ellins, 2009), very little is known about the views of YP. Where research has been completed with YP it has generally involved consulting them on their views about what they want rather than their views about what the process is like for them.

As well as increasing the voice of families, the new Code of Practice (DfE & DoH, 2015) extends a multi-agency agenda. In this research, I have explored the views of YP regarding the extent to which they felt they had a voice when participating in statutory SEND processes. I have focussed on ideas around the voice of YP in Education, Health and Care (EHC) review and planning meetings. These meetings are discrete events which are experienced by most YP who have an EHC. They often involve professionals from multiple agencies and are instances when issues around voice are likely to be particularly evident. The research is novel, timely and relevant to the practice of EPs and other professionals working in LAs and schools.

1.2 The study

To explore the views of YP, I have used Q-methodology. This was chosen over other methods as it offered YP who may have limited verbal and reflexive skills, an experience of interacting with a set of prompts to help them formulate and articulate their view.   The research was participatory in nature.   YP were recruited as co-researchers with the aim of conducting the study with YP rather than on YP.

1.3 Thesis outline

I have begun by developing a broad definition of voice for the purposes of this thesis. This leads on to a review of literature exploring the background to the current legislation relating to the voice of CYP in SEND processes and previous research in the field. I have written a rationale for the research and outlined the procedure undertaken, and followed this with a presentation of the results including interpretations of factors identified. I have then discussed differences and similarities between the views of YP and how they relate to and contribute to the literature. Finally, I have presented some possible implications for EP practice, possible limitations of the study and directions for future research and offered some concluding remarks.

2 Towards a definition of 'voice'

Throughout this thesis, I have primarily used the term 'voice' and have understood this to have multiple levels. The terms 'choice' and 'participation' have also been used as they are frequently used in the literature. The National Consumer Council Policy Commission on Public Services (2004) for example distinguishes between voice and choice in terms of the degree of power implied by each. Voice is the right to be heard and for the CYP's or parents' views to be taken into account, and then the decision is taken by professionals. Choice implies the power to make decisions including to choose between service providers perhaps through the generation of quasi-market structures (Clarke et al., 2007). To a degree, this distinction reflects Hirschman's (1970) distinction between loyalty, voice and exit, in which exit implies the power to reject the organisation and leave. Hirschman supposed that this opportunity to opt out was the only way individuals could have any real power, and predicted that organisations would therefore seek to avoid exit by creating ways of institutionalising voice.

It could be argued that much of what is thought of as choice in EHC processes takes place within strict procedural boundaries within the system, and that it is only the access to personal budgets giving families the potential to commission their own services stipulated in the new Code of Practice (DfE & DoH, 2015), that provides families the opportunity for exit. In this sense, many of the choices in EHC processes (eg. agreeing outcomes or deciding between competing service providers) might be considered to be forms of institutionalised voice. It is therefore unclear how to separate what appear to be overlapping concepts of voice and choice. As such, I have adopted the term 'voice' in its broadest possible sense, reflecting both of Hirschman's (1970) notions of voice and exit. To aid the readability of the thesis, I have also used the term 'choice' on occasion as a short-hand for higher levels of voice, while accepting it is a contested concept and one that may often not be real. Lower levels of voice might be considered to include receiving information and having one's views heard and taken into account.

The term 'participation' is also frequently used in the literature and is highly associated with the constructs of voice and choice. Some writers for example,

cite the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989) which focusses on the voice of the child, as the main driving force for the rise of interest in the participation of CYP (Cele & Van der Burgt, 2015; Hinton, et al., 2008). In essence, the term participation implies a notion of engaging in an action *with* someone. Hart (1992) defines it as 'the process of sharing decisions which affect one's life and the life of the community in which one lives' (p.5). For Clarke et al. (2007) participatory forms of governance are the mechanisms by which parents and service users have voice and choice. Or to put it another way, through participating in the EHC process, YP have the possibility of having a voice.

Hart (1992) considered a spectrum of practices from those which might be viewed as non-participation (tokenism, decoration and manipulation) through multiple levels of participation including imagining a scenario in which CYP are equal partners with adults in the decision-making process. Similarly, Fleming (2013) observes that the term participation has been used to describe a wide range of activities from simply gathering the views of CYP to them being involved in the whole decision making and change process. Cele and Van der Burgt (2015) found that in practice when professionals talk about the participation of CYP, they were generally referring to activities at the lower end of this spectrum in which children's views were heard.

I have charted different levels of voice alongside different levels of participation as the process by which CYP have a voice. I have drawn parallels between different definitions of voice, choice and participation, and related these to the current SEND Code of Practice (2015) in Table 1 (p.11).

Hart (1992)		Hirschman (1970)	National Consumer Council (2004)	SEND Code of Practice (2015)	This Thesis
Child-initiated shared decisions with adults	Degrees of Participation — Leading to…	Exit	Choice	Access to a personal budget, giving the potential to choose an alternative provider.	Levels of voice
Child-initiated and directed		Voice	Voice	CYP have a right to have their views taken into account. Their views should be given due weight according to their age, maturity and capability.	
Adult-initiated shared decisions with CYP					
Consulted and informed				CYP have a right to express an opinion	
Assigned but Informed				CYP have a right to receive information	
Tokenism	Non-participation — Leading to…	Loyalty			No voice
Decoration					
Manipulation					

Table 1 - Levels of voice seen through Hart's model of participation (1992), Hirschman's Loyalty, Voice and Exit (1970), the National Consumer Council's distinction between voice and choice (2004) and the SEND Code of Practice (2015).

3 Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

I shall begin with a review of the literature. This will include an overview of the recent historical and political context to the SEND Code of Practice (DfE & DoH, 2015) and an attempt to define the terms used. I will then consider how these might translate to practice by considering multi-agency meetings in general, EHC meetings specifically and one approach to involving CYP in this process. I will then briefly describe the existing literature, focussing on parents' interactions with statutory SEND processes before exploring in more depth literature which included CYP as participants. Finally, I have discussed literature related to EP practice.

3.2 Search terms

I conducted an initial search on Primo Central using the string (special AND need*) AND (voice* OR choice*). I refined this to the topics special needs, special educational needs, disability, disabilities, schools, inclusion, parents, children, education and special education, resulting in 611 articles. I read all titles and abstracts and 44 articles were selected as being potentially relevant to the topic. Following reading these 44 articles, a further 16 were discarded due to lack of relevance. I then identified and read additional articles by scanning bibliographies of selected articles and by contacting some of the key authors. Not all these articles were research. I have included ideas from non-research articles in the introductory sections and research papers have been discussed separately.

Additional searches were conducted including:
- participat* AND ((education AND health AND care) OR EHC OR statement*) AND special* AND need* AND (child* OR (young AND pe*))
- ("person centred planning" OR "person cent* planning") AND (child* OR young)
- (power OR dynamic*) AND multi AND (agency OR disciplinary) AND (meeting* OR team*)

3.3 Historical and Legal context

As early as 1978 in the UK, the Warnock Report articulated a view that parental voice in education provision was valuable, but cautioned that 'parents can be effective partners only if professionals take notice of what they say and of how they express their needs and treat their contribution as intrinsically important' (DES, 1978, p.151). A decade later, Article 12(1) of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child required States to 'assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child' (UNCRC, 1989). Around this time in the UK, the notion of parental choice became enshrined in UK law with the Education Reform Act (DfE, 1988).

Since then, the march towards parents and CYP having greater say in their education in the UK as in other countries (eg. see Stein & Sharkey (2015) for comment on similar processes in the United States), has been pursued unabated by political parties from across the political spectrum. Parents of children described as having special educational needs (SEN) were given the right to express a preference for a school in the Education Act (DfE, 1996) and the right to appeal in the SEN and Disability Act (DfES, 2001). A strategy report in 2005 further stressed the importance of 'family choice and control over the support and services they receive' (DfES, 2005, p.14). However, a green paper in 2011 argued that parents still do not have a real choice and that further reform is required (DfE, 2011). In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, a recent step has been taken in this process through the development of a new Code of Practice (DfE & DoH, 2015). This legislation has extended the rights of parents, granting access to a personal budget, giving the potential for parents to choose an alternative provider. However, as O'Mahoney (2008) points out, if it is parents' voice which has statutory authority rather than children's, then there is the potential for parents' wishes to conflict with the principle of the best interests of the child (UNCRC, 1989, Article 3). Or further, if parents are viewed as consumers, it could be argued that children are then commodities with different values (Bowe, et al, 1994).

With regards to CYP described as having SEN, in Scotland the wording of Article 12 (UNCRC, 1989) has long been adopted in national legislation (SEED,

2000). More recently, the Code of Practice (DfE & DoH, 2015) for the rest of the UK means that statute now reflects Articles 12 and 13 of the UNCRC (1989), in offering

> *A right to receive and impart information, to express an opinion and to have that opinion taken into account in any matters affecting them from the early years. Their views should be given due weight according to their age, maturity and capability* (DfE & DoH, 2015, section 1.6)*.*

For YP over the age of 16, these rights are extended further such that

> *Local Authorities and other agencies should normally engage directly with the young person rather than their parents* (ibid, section 1.8).

For this group of YP, the Mental Capacity Act (DoH, 2005) also applies. This stipulates that a person may be understood as lacking capacity for reasons such as limited functioning (Section 2.1). However, the Act states that assumptions about capacity should not be made on the basis of age or behaviour (Section 2.3), nor on the basis of lack of understanding if the information has not been presented in an 'appropriate' way (Section 3.2). However, it is possible as Harris (2009) argues, that YP described as having SEND are likely to be considered to have limited capacity and their views may therefore be easily ignored.

3.4 Intentions of raising voices

This drive towards ever increasing voice for families could be viewed as reflecting a range of conflicting ideals. These include equality (or inequality) of access to services, changing intransigent institutions, personalising provision for individual needs, and engaging service users and families.

3.4.1 Voice leading to equality of access…

Some authors suggest that offering families greater voice in statutory SEND processes enables them to realise their right to an effective education for their child (Harris, 2009). For some it is a social justice issue in which powerless CYP described as having SEND and their parents, are given a voice so that they have equality of access to mainstream education rather than being excluded (Gibson, 2006).

3.4.2 …Or voice leading to inequality

However, others are concerned that amplifying the voices of families only exacerbates current inequalities (Lewis, 2010). They consider the ideas of equity and choice as opposing political ideas deriving from collectivist state-driven and individualistic free-market ideals (Clarke, 2010). Some (Keslair and MacNally, 2009) have shown that when compared to all CYP described as having SEND, there are several positive correlations between the probability of having a Statement and a variety of factors including parent's higher socio-economic status and level of education. This has led these authors to wonder whether some parents are more able to articulate their concerns in a manner which could increase their chance of being granted an EHC plan. Others, however, have suggested that even if this leads to greater inequality, it may be that there are advantages to keeping affluent families within the system where they might contribute to its ongoing development, rather than having them choosing to leave the system and pursue private services (Clarke, Smith and Vidler, 2006). It may be that this is one example of Hirschman's (1970) notion of the institutionalisation of voice. By generating choice within the system, the exit of affluent families may be avoided. The recent Code of Practice (DfE & DoH, 2015) however, leans further towards exit for parents through the use of personal budgets to enable them to commission private service providers.

3.4.2.1 The voice of individual parents or groups of parents

Gray (2010) argues that promoting choice for individuals leads to the development of a system which is either inequitable or unaffordable. As there are limited funds with which to pay for services, it cannot be the case that all families are able to secure access to the very best and potentially most expensive education, health and care provision. If some families are able to exercise their voice to achieve the costly services they desire, this will necessarily be at the expense of services for other families. Mittler (2008) asserts that while resources go to children whose parents are willing and able to fight for their needs, this is tempered because bringing parents into closer partnership with schools will reduce these inequalities. However, he does not explain how this might work in practice. Gray (2010) therefore proposes a form of collective consumerism in which parents of children described as having SEND have power as a group to drive change. However, others have

suggested that there may be a risk associated with the idea of collective voice, acting under the false assumption that CYP described as having SEND are a homogeneous group rather than a diverse population with unique experiences (McKay, 2014). Alternatively, it may be that collective voice merely exacerbates inequalities as certain group of families, such as those with CYP described as having an Autism Spectrum Disorder or Dyslexia, may be more likely than others to access this opportunity (Lewis, 2010).

3.4.3 Voice to promote institutional change

Perhaps the choice agenda is aimed at making schools more accountable (Hartas, 2008), making them answerable to parents for their actions towards their children. Perhaps it helps to ensure services are delivered collaboratively with parents and children and provides an opportunity for parents to act as advocate for their child (Hartas, 2008; Hess, Molina & Kozleski, 2006). Some go further, arguing that it is premised on the notion that public sector managers and professionals are resistant to change and that the aim of giving parents more power might be to destabilise intransigent educational institutions to create the conditions in which change is necessary (Clarke, 2010; Gray, 2010). One possible result of this destabilisation might be an increase in competition and privatisation of education services, and this has led some to suggest that this is one of the main aims of the choice agenda (Clarke, 2010).

3.4.4 Voice to amplify the goals of CYP and parents

Observing that parents are more likely to hope that their children described as having SEND are happy and able to live satisfying lives, some have suggested that amplifying the voice of parents in the planning process can serve to emphasise the importance of personal/social values as well as just focussing on academic values (Bagley & Woods, 1988; Hallett, Hallett & McAteer, 2007). Similarly, with regards to the choice between a CYP attending a special school or a mainstream school, it has been argued that this often represents a choice between academic and social inclusion (Lauchlan & Greig, 2015). A special school might be more likely to provide an academically suitable curriculum and greater access to specialist support, but CYP might also feel that they are socially excluded (Frederickson and Cline, 2009). It is possible that this is an

oversimplification as it is possible to imagine CYP feeling excluded within a mainstream school and special schools offering variable quality of provision.

3.4.5 Voice to personalise provision

Some have argued that the main purpose of voice is to promote individualisation (Clarke, 2010) as it enables provision to be personalised to the needs of individual CYP (DoH, 2010). Sebba (2011) supposes that this process of personalisation of provision can offer families greater power, but argues that relinquishing this power involves considerable risk for school staff which they are often understandably reluctant to undertake. She suggests promoting a form of personalisation which emphasises participation and responsibility of families rather than individualisation.

3.4.6 Voice to increase engagement

It has been argued that increasing the engagement of adults and CYP in the process of planning SEND provision increases engagement in education (Goepel, 2009). Following a literature review of the impact of parental involvement on children's achievement, Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) conclude that increased parental involvement can significantly contribute to children's attainment even when accounting for a range of other factors (eg. social class, maternal education and poverty). This increased involvement is also thought to lead to greater satisfaction (Harris, 2009).

3.4.7 Choice because all options are the same

Finally, and specifically with regard to the location in which a child is educated, the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) have concluded that 'no one model – such as special schools, full inclusion in mainstream settings, or specialist units co-located within mainstream settings worked better than any other' (OFSTED, 2010, p.3). If indeed all types of provision are equally effective then it could be argued that there is limited reason not to give parents and children the choice. However, what OFSTED found was a lack of evidence for any one type of school being more effective than any other which is not necessarily the same as there being no difference.

3.5 Voice of CYP in practice

The extent to which legislating for greater involvement of CYP affects practice, is unclear. A review in Scotland found that in practice, CYP were rarely consulted in statutory processes (HMIE, 2007). More recently, a UK parliamentary report concluded that despite the advance of laws regarding the voice of CYP, their 'views are not sought, listened to or acted upon consistently' (The Children's Commissioners, 2011, p.7).

This raises the question of why practice may not reflect legislation. It may be that schools can be viewed as having modernist institutional cultures in which the social construction of 'valid' knowledge by the dominant group can lead to the voices of minority groups becoming excluded. In this context, it is easy to imagine that when the voices of CYP conflict with dominant discourses, they are considered to be wrong and are quickly rejected (Gibson, 2006). Exploring one particular case, McKay (2014) concluded that the process of seeking the child's voice had highlighted differences in views between the adults and the child. The child's views had been considered to be incorrect and had therefore been superseded by those of the adults. McKay wonders if over time, such processes may contribute to the eroding of the adult-child relationships and might actually reinforce the marginalisation of children. Furthermore, as Harris (2009) points out, children described as having SEND are the most likely to be viewed as not having capacity and their views may be particularly easy to ignore.

3.6 Voice in EHC planning meetings

Returning to my broad definition of voice in Table 1 (p.11), one might conclude that to comply with all aspects of the SEND Code of Practice (2015), the experience of CYP in EHC planning meetings should be that they are involved in the decision-making process to some degree depending on their age, maturity and capacity. To further consider what might be involved in this in practice, I shall consider the place of CYP within multi-agency meetings in general and describe what an EHC planning meeting specifically might look like. I will then briefly discuss one array of approaches (person-centred planning) which aim to increase the participation of CYP in such meetings.

3.6.1 Multi-agency meetings

As already mentioned, the new legislation extends a multi-agency agenda. While previous legislation has referred to Statements of Special Educational Needs, the new Code of Practice (DfE & DoH, 2015) refers to Education, Health and Care plans. It raises the bar in its requirement for all agencies to plan for CYP together.

In practice, multi-agency working is not always straight forward. When different professionals work together in teams, some have suggested that it can lead to a blurring of boundaries between roles and professional knowledge, which can result in conflict (Robinson & Cottrell, 2005). While some teams find ways of working collaboratively and harmoniously, some of these strategies may include avoiding discussion of conflict-inducing topics (ibid.). Cheshire and Pilgrim (2004) go further, suggesting professionals can tend to exacerbate these tensions by working to expand their professional influence and status within the team. Added to these potential challenges, there is the role of the family in these interactions to consider. Wellner (2010) found that parents can feel inferior to experts and be disempowered by the complexity of the language and procedures used. It is likely that this is even more acute for CYP described as having SEND.

Therefore, there may be a need to think more carefully about how different agencies work together. Rose and Norwich's (2014) model to conceptualise multi-agency working includes the importance of having group goals and how these are constructed and owned. While the purpose of an EHC planning meeting might generally be considered to be the reviewing and developing of an EHC plan, it is possible that different roles and foci (Villeneuve & Hutchinson, 2012) adopted by those present lead to subtly different goals. The goal of one might be to ensure that the paperwork is completed properly, while another might have the goal of making sure the CYP is heard, and another may be concerned with making sure outcomes generated reflect the family's aspirations. For CYP, we might assume that their goal is to contribute to a plan, but it may be that this view reflects adults' assumptions that the goals of YP are in line with their own. It may be that YP are actually more motivated by other

things in EHC planning meetings such as missing lessons, spending time with family members or being listened to.

3.6.2 EHC planning meetings

EHC planning and review meetings generally involve a range of people. In a secondary school, this usually includes the school's Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) and one or two other members of school staff who know the CYP well such as their head of year or a teaching assistant. CYP and their parent(s) or guardian(s) are normally present, though sometimes CYP are not present for the whole meeting. Others present may include education, health and social care professionals who are involved in supporting the CYP, such as an EP. There may be a representative for the Local Authority (LA) who might be the person responsible for drafting the EHC plan.

In the LA in which the research was conducted, the EHC planning process includes the development of a My Support Plan, the paperwork of which mirrors the paperwork for the EHC. It includes the views and aspirations of CYP, their parents and the professionals involved, a description of needs, and 'outcomes' which are long-term goals for the CYP. These are generally agreed in the meeting.

3.6.3 Person-centred planning

The new Code of Practice (DfE & DoH, 2015) stipulates that the process for developing EHC plans should be person-centred. The Department of Health in the UK described person-centred-planning (PCP) as being 'central to delivering personalisation and maximising choice and control' (DoH, 2010, p.3). Approaches such as use of the PATH (planning alternative tomorrows with hope) or MAPS (making action plans) tools (O'Brien, Pearpoint, & Kahn, 2010) are advocated. It has been asserted that use of these tools 'can bring immediate changes to people's lives and to the way professionals and staff supporting people work (DoH, 2010, p.14). However, the research evidence of the effectiveness of PCP is equivocal. A recent systematic literature review explored the use of PCP with service users of all ages described as having intellectual disabilities (Ratti, et al., 2016). It found conflicting evidence from the

studies included, and concluded that while there was some evidence that use of PCP may result in service users becoming

> *more involved in everyday choices…there is no significant evidence of people gaining greater control in shaping their lives, driving decision-making and planning their care* (ibid, p.78).

These findings reflected those of an earlier review of the impact of PCP (Rudkin & Rowe, 1999).

3.7 Previous research

Research exploring voice in planning education provision for CYP described as having SEND has primarily focussed on the voice of parents and other people's attitudes towards this. I shall briefly discuss parent-focussed research before reviewing research on and with CYP in greater detail.

3.7.1 Research focussed on parents

3.7.1.1 Choice of provision

Previous research has included consideration of factors which appear to influence parents' choice of provision for their child described as having SEND. A review by Byrne (2013) found several possible factors influencing parental choice including: within-child variables, socio-economic factors, the school's philosophy and perceived commitment to SEND, and beliefs about mainstream teachers' skills. Bajwa-Patel and Devecchi (2014) considered how equipped parents felt to make decisions about their child's education. They found that around half of their participants felt they had received insufficient information. Some of these also felt that the LA were 'obstructive' and 'unwilling to listen' to them (p.125). Parents in other studies have similarly often reported not having enough information on which to base a decision (McNerney, Hill & Pellicano, 2015; Parsons, Lewis, & Ellins, 2009). In another study, parents reported finding choices about placement particularly difficult when given conflicting advice by health and educational professionals (Flewitt & Nind, 2007).

3.7.1.2 Parents' views about their voice

Other research has focussed on parents' views about their voice. Kaehne & Beyer's (2008) study describes parents as fairly autonomous decision-makers with fewer than 10% citing professional advice as a major factor in their

decision-making process. Similarly, Maddison and Beresford (2012) viewed the parents they interviewed as being largely in control of the decision-making process. The parents in Hartas' (2008) study are described as having agency and they acknowledged what they perceived to be good practice but also challenged professional views and practices and raised issues about professional boundaries, confidentiality, and evidence-based decisions regarding SEND provision. These parents were also considered to have an important role in advocating for their child. Other studies have found that parents can feel less empowered and worry that if they do not comply with the views of professionals, they will become distanced from the decision-making process with decisions being made on their behalf (Hess, Molina & Kozleski, 2006).

Some studies found groups of parents who appeared to have particularly limited power. Kozleski, et al. (2008) found that Spanish-speaking parents in the United States often appeared especially disempowered, in part because they often had to ask for an interpreter if they required one as school did not provide one automatically. Among Byrne's (2010) small sample (parents of five children), parents whose children went to mainstream secondary provisions felt that they had had a choice, while those whose children had gone to special schools felt that they did not have a choice and that they were advised to choose special provision by professionals and by staff at their primary school.

3.7.1.3 Parents' views on working collaboratively with professionals

In a study by Hess, Molina and Kozleski (2006) parents saw their role in part as advocate for their child but at times struggled to balance this with trying to work with the school. Parents interviewed by O'Connor (2008) were often pleased with the relationships and sense of partnership they felt with teachers (such as teachers asking them about their knowledge) but also spoke of the challenge of learning to be assertive within the school without coming across as aggressive. In McNerney, Hill and Pellicano's (2015) study, parents reported feeling that developing a good relationship with school staff was at least partially their responsibility.

3.7.1.4 Professionals' attitudes towards parents' voice

Clarke et al. (2007) interviewed public service managers as well as service users. They found public service managers were generally comfortable with the shift in responsibility towards service users but did not always like the challenges that service users made to them about the services they ran. Pearson, Mitchell and Rapti (2015) conducted a survey of SENCOs following the introduction of the new SEND Code of Practice (DfE & DoH, 2015). They found that SENCOs expected their role would shift more towards becoming a facilitator who develops partnerships with parents and offers advice. Some expressed concern that it may be difficult to involve parents meaningfully. A few were concerned that giving parents control over a personal budget as stipulated in the Code of Practice, was a negative move that would take funding away from schools, perhaps even threatening the jobs of school staff.

3.7.2 Research focussed on CYP

There has been far less research conducted with and on CYP than there has been focussed on parents. One possible reason for this is that there are difficulties conducting research with CYP. Among the research that has been conducted, some research has grappled with the challenges associated with seeking the voices of CYP. Other research has begun to explore their views about education. Research has also been conducted which identified a lack of options for some CYP. One of these articles has been described which explores some potential barriers to access and inclusion. Recently, two studies have aimed to answer similar questions to those posed by this study and I have discussed these in more detail below.

3.7.2.1 Difficulties with seeking the voices of CYP

Although it may be as Smith (2010) suggests, that CYP are increasingly viewed as competent social actors who inevitably have an interest in their own experience, very little research has focussed on them directly. This may reflect the legal situation in which it is parents who primarily have statutory rights (Harris, 2009), or that it is difficult to gather children's views. Lewis, Newton & Vials (2008) suggest that because of the difficulties associated with CYP described as having SEND being able to express their views, there is a risk that their views are overlooked or assumed by adults, and suggest it is the

responsibility of adults to find ways of enabling all CYP to have their views heard.

Whitehurst (2006) points out that it is particularly challenging to elicit the views of some groups of CYP and they are therefore less likely to be heard. Specifically, she explores some of the issues with obtaining the voice of young people described as having profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). Whitehurst interviewed six young people described as having PMLD but who were deemed capable of adapting to function alongside mainstream children for a drama session. She used Cameron, Watson and Murphy's (2004) 'Talking Mats' to offer concrete visual responses along with observations of non-verbal communication such as facial expression. Whitehurst concluded that using such a tool, it is possible to gather the views of CYP often deemed unable to express views. Most of the young people expressed enjoying working with young people from a mainstream school but some did not like the noise levels in the theatre such as the music being too loud.

These barriers to CYP participating in research may also be barriers to them participating in EHC planning meetings. In McNerney, Hill & Pellicano's (2015) study for example, mainstream school staff tended to view CYP who had difficulty communicating or presented challenging behaviour to be the most difficult to include in meetings.

3.7.2.2 Children's views regarding their education

Very few studies explore children's views directly. In McNerney, Hill and Pellicano's (2015) study, CYP were interviewed along with adults. CYP described as having an Autism Spectrum Condition identified worries about peer relationships and their anxieties towards learning as their main concerns.

A service evaluation by Hallett, Hallett and McAteer (2007) explored the views of both pupils and parents in a residential special school using an evaluative case study design. A questionnaire was designed by parents to reduce researcher bias though this may have introduced another bias, namely the vested interests of parents. Children were interviewed as a single cohort

through school council meetings. Overall, pupils and parents tended to value high quality accessible social care over curricular-led academic provision.

Goepel (2009) explored how year six pupils (aged 10 to 11) are involved with the development of their own targets as part of their Individual Education Plan. Goepel looked for agreement between child, parent and teacher, and at how partnership is expressed. In all cases, the voice of the teacher was dominant and all children had concerns which were not acknowledged. Children in the research who were articulate and able to express their views appeared to benefit from the process of collaboration. Their expressed views were most likely to align with those of the adults and this was interpreted as evidence that their voice was heard (though it is also possible that they had learned to express views that aligned with those of adults, perhaps through those views being positively reinforced). Children who were quieter and appeared to struggle more to express their views were more likely to experience support.

One study (Lewis, et al., 2007) followed up a parent survey (1776 parents, 35% of whom had children described as having SEN) with case studies of CYP (36 individual interviews with CYP and three focus groups with 10 CYP in each). They then returned to the parents of 15 of the case-study children to conduct follow-up interviews. The main aim of the study was to identify the main concerns of CYP described as having SEN regarding education, including how CYP felt about their independence and autonomy. Some issues regarding not being given sufficient information, were raised both by children and parents. Children wanted to know what was happening and what support schools were putting in place. Parents were often unaware of whether their child was described by the school as having SEN, with 43% of parents registered as having SEN stating that their child did not have SEN. Children reported wanting to be asked about what they liked and what kind of support they found most useful though this is reported as relating only to how they were supported within school. Knowledge of rights was also explored though not explicitly in relation to voice in statutory processes.

3.7.2.3 Barriers that limit children's opportunities for access and inclusion

Research by Frost et al. (2010) attempted to address the research question: how can extended services be changed in order to improve access and inclusion? They adopted a multi-method approach which included a literature review, face-to-face interviews and focus groups with CYP, focus groups with parents, and a postal survey and face-to-face interviews with professionals from education, health and care. Higher levels of voice were deemed to be particularly elusive for some CYP and parents. Some were deemed by professionals likely to be excluded such as transient populations, asylum-seekers, or 'Children and families more isolated from their communities, who don't attend school regularly, who are not achieving, whose parents live chaotic life styles, who may have drug and alcohol problems, who may be experiencing domestic violence' (p.116).

3.7.2.4 Children's experience of SEND-related processes

Since commencing this study, two papers with similar aims have been published. This provides some support for the idea that this is currently a topic of interest.

Skipp and Hopwood (2016) conducted research to explore the experience of 77 parents and 15 (aged 15 to 19) YP in EHC processes from referral through to planning educational provision. They focussed particularly on families' satisfaction with the process and with the reforms more generally. Telephone interviews and online surveys were conducted with parents, and YP took part in focus groups and were asked to talk about what they liked and did not like about the process. Workshops were also completed with professionals from LAs to obtain their view of what practice looked like, to contextualise the views of families. Parents reported that they liked the philosophy of the new reforms including the importance of being child-centred, agencies working together and families' views being heard and taken on board. Parents appreciated staff who tried to keep them involved throughout the process and made particular effort to understand their child's needs. Skipp and Hopwood identified ten factors that influenced parents' satisfaction with the process including feeling involved and supported, being provided with the information they needed, and having plans that were followed through with monitoring and review procedures in place.

However, while much is made of the parents' views in this research, it is unclear what if any contribution the focus groups with YP made to the findings. As Skipp and Hopwood themselves acknowledge

> *The feedback from children and young people with SEND in this study is limited. Appropriately engaging them in the study and gaining productive feedback was difficult, and suggests issues for local authorities to consider when they set out to do this.* (p.49)

White and Rae (2016) used a mixed-methods design to explore the views of CYP (aged 10 to 14) about their experience of person-centred planning. Semi-structured interviews were used for both CYP and parents. CYP also completed a psychometric measure before and after the meeting to explore the impact of the meeting on their locus of control (no significant change was observed). They used thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to analyse the parent and child interview data separately. Several broad themes were found in the parents' data including the emotional impact of the meeting and how the structure had helped to contain those emotions. The various roles of the facilitator were explored and parents reported that they felt the process was collaborative and enabled the CYP to be involved. They also reported that they valued receiving the information that was shared in the review and that they thought the process of generating outcomes gave them confidence that the plan would be put into effect. However, as with Skipp and Hopwood's (2016) study, only limited qualitative data was gleaned from interviews with CYP. As the authors acknowledge, 'some of the young participants struggled to engage in the interviews' (p.49). Those who were able to engage in interviews reported feeling generally positive about the meeting, and that they liked being given information and having a chance to have their say. CYP expressed differing views regarding how child-friendly the process was.

3.8 Research related to Educational Psychology practice

To begin to answer my second research question, exploring implications of this study for EP practice, I also considered research related to EP practice.

Some studies have explored possible ways of eliciting the voice of CYP in practice. Hill et al. (2016) for example, explored the use of a range of

techniques to elicit the views of CYP between the ages of eight and 19 in residential special schools, many of whom were described as being unable to use speech to communicate. They used an adaptation of a graffiti wall approach in which they gave participants colour-coded Post-It notes on which to write things they liked and did not like about the school. They used two different card-sorting techniques, namely a diamond ranking activity in which nine cards with statements and pictures were ranked from most important to least important, and a set of photo cards depicting places, people and practices in the CYP's school which they were asked to sort based on whether they liked, disliked or felt 'OK' about each item. Finally, they used an ethnographic observation approach. This involved a structured time sampling observation, and the use of four checklists which included exploration of: the CYP's behaviours demonstrating social communication and emotional regulation, their interactions with others, and the actions of adults to adapt the environment to meet the CYP's needs.

Hill et al. (ibid.) found that many CYP could engage in the graffiti wall task, though some needed support from key workers to express their views on Post-It notes and the authors wondered if this might inhibit some CYP from expressing particularly negative views. Both card sorting tasks were found to be useful in enabling CYP to express their views. The authors noted that some CYP, particularly those described as having an Autism Spectrum Disorder, who would have struggled with an interview situation, coped well with the diamond ranking activity. The task appeared to contribute to participants' ability to reflect on and articulate their views. The simpler photo card task was more accessible for CYP with more severe needs, whose non-verbal expressive responses to the stimulus materials could be interpreted to determine their view. Use of the observation approach was noted to be particularly time consuming which might limit its use in practice, but it highlighted that adults who knew the child best were generally more able to facilitate the CYP to actively engage in expressing their views and decision-making. Hill et al. (ibid.) concluded that all CYP can be supported to express their views, and that the approaches used in their study can support that process. They also noted that the participation of all CYP requires 'the adoption of a positive attitude to participation, flexibility and creativity, and the investment of adequate time' (p.40).

In White and Rae's (2016) recent study focussed on PCP meetings (discussed previously), a range of possible implications for EP practice are offered. The authors suggest that EPs have the necessary training and experience to facilitate PCP meetings effectively, though their role is much wider than this. For example, EPs might also be involved in training school staff. White and Rae suggest that EPs' knowledge of solution-focussed and person-centred approaches could be employed to support others' ability to facilitate a meeting focussed on strengths and outcomes, which keeps the interests and views of the CYP at the heart of the plan. EPs are noted to also understand the disempowerment felt by many families and the importance of promoting support and preparation for parents for meetings in school. EPs' understanding of containment is also highlighted as a possible focus of training, and there may be scope for supporting others to understand and contain the emotional needs of others (such as CYP) in meetings.

Others have also pointed to the breadth of possible roles for EPs. Norwich et al. (2006) for example, argue that although EPs have been at the forefront of eliciting the views of CYP, their role is wider than this and includes 'evaluating and supporting participation policies and practices' (p.255). They conducted a study in which they sought to explore what they considered to be promising school practice surrounding eliciting the views of CYP described as having SEN and enabling their participation. They interviewed staff and CYP from 18 schools identified by the school's SENCO as having good practice. To explore the potential impact of the LA on school practice, the schools were located across three LAs which had self-reported varying levels of success regarding their approach to eliciting pupils' views. Although there were mixed views regarding the impact of the LA on developing these kinds of school cultures, particular professionals were identified as offering support. This included EPs who were viewed by SENCOs as primarily bringing 'valuable eliciting skills' (p.264) to schools.

Norwich et al. (2006) found that some schools saw the distinction between the voice of CYP described as having SEN and the voice of all children, to be artificial. They found that good practice for those described as having SEN

existed within school cultures which promoted voice of all pupils. The authors distinguish between formal and informal practice. Informal practice includes treating children with 'respect, sensitivity and empathy' (p.269) and this was viewed by many as being a necessary component of effective practice as well as using more formal interventions and procedures which are explicitly designed to elicit the views of CYP. There were barriers to CYP's participation identified, which were: the competency of adults and CYP involved, lack of opportunities and resources and not using appropriate methods to elicit the views of CYP (the methods used by participants relied heavily on talking). The authors however, argue that there is a risk that people merely focus on removing these barriers. In doing so they may overlook the risks to the child's self-esteem, as shared decision-making may be beyond the capabilities of the CYP.

Discussing the role of EPs in promoting the voice of parents, Hartas (2008) similarly suggests that there may be informal practices which are necessary for promoting the voice of families. She argues that

> parental participation can be achieved through parents and professionals being responsive to, and respectful of, each other's views, and through parents being capable of exercising agency, enacted with self-reflection, advocacy, and a sense of shared power and responsibility' (p.150).

Hartas also suggests that there is a need for professionals to be flexible in their approach and consider the wide range of needs of parents when developing approaches to support them. She states 'Some may need advocacy, guidance, or information about education and care, whereas others may have the capacity for advocacy and are ready to share power and responsibility with the professionals' (p.150).

3.9 Summary

Considerable progress has been made in the UK towards enshrining children's interests, in national law. A recent step in this process has been a new SEND Code of Practice (DfE and DoH, 2015). The extent to which these legislative changes necessarily reflect changes in practice, is unclear. Some research has been carried out with parents, and suggests that there is a wide variety of experiences among this group. Less well understood is how CYP view their

experience of participating in the EHC process in general and EHC planning meetings specifically, and their views about the extent to which this process offers them a voice. Some recent research has attempted to explore aspects of this question using interviews and focus groups, but has failed to yield rich data to help professionals to gain a better understanding of how YP view the process. Research with teaching staff has identified that adults may find it more difficult to include some CYP such as those who are judged to have difficulty communicating or who present with challenging behaviours (McNerney, Hill & Pellicano, 2015), such that articulate CYP may be most likely to access the opportunity to have a voice (Goepel, 2009). Possible roles for EPs have been considered including sharing knowledge of strategies for accessing the voice of CYP. I shall now outline the aims of this study, before discussing the approach taken towards achieving these aims.

4 Research aims

Through this research, I have aimed to explore the experience of CYP in the Education, Health and Care (EHC) planning meetings. I have focussed on the experience of CYP between the ages of 11 and 25, who shall be described hence as young people (YP), who have participated in a recent meeting to develop or review their EHC plan, or to transition from a Statement of SEN to an EHC plan.

4.1 Value

4.1.1 Value in the literature

This research is timely as there has been a recent change in legislation in England, Wales and Northern Ireland which affords greater legal rights to YP and their parents. Most of the literature to date on voice and choice in planning education provision for YP described as having SEND, focusses on parents' participation in the process. The limited literature that does focus on YP explores their views of education, but does not generally consider YP's experience of expressing their views. Although recent research has attempted to consider the views of YP about the EHC planning process, researchers have struggled to obtain rich data from YP.

4.1.2 Value for Educational Psychology practice

Following the recent changes in legislation, Local Authority (LA) professionals and managers are aware of the requirements regarding the participation of YP in the EHC process. Having a better understanding of the experience of YP will help LAs to know how well their policies and procedures achieve this aim. The research has also involved developing a set of cards which could be used for future service evaluations or evaluation of single cases.

EPs have a significant statutory role in the EHC process. A better understanding of the views of YP about their experience of this process may help EPs to further reflect on and develop their role.

4.1.3 Value for participants

For the YP who participated in the research, the study provided an opportunity to reflect on their experience and for that experience to be communicated to a

wider audience. It may be that by reflecting on their experience, YP will be better able to act as active participants in future reviews of their EHC plan.

4.2 Research questions

- What are young people's views concerning their voice in Education, Health and Care planning meetings?
- What are the implications of young people's views concerning their voice in Education, Health and Care planning meetings for Educational Psychology Practice?

5 Methodology

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I aim to explain the rationale for my research choices. I shall begin by discussing some of the ethical considerations of the study and how these link to my study design. I shall then offer the briefest of excursions through the paradigm wars and then describe how this research is situated relative to this. I will introduce Q-methodology and explain the rationale for using it. Finally, I will describe the production of the Q-set, how participants were chosen and the inclusion of young people as co-researchers.

5.2 Ethical considerations

As Von Unger (2016) points out, there is much debate surrounding research ethics in the social sciences. To navigate the University Ethics procedures to be allowed to complete this study (Appendix 1, p.129), it was necessary to demonstrate adherence to a set of normative ethical principles such as minimising harm, transparency, accountability, autonomy and rights. It has been argued that the process of gaining ethical approval for research is often viewed as a "regulatory enterprise" which creates an "illusion of ethical practice" (Cannella and Lincoln, 2007, p.315). There may be a risk that use of normative rules in the research ethics process creates the possibility of navigating the process of gaining ethical approval by a kind of painting-by-numbers approach. As such, it is possible to imagine that a study might be deemed to be ethical, but the novice researcher has failed to actually grapple with many of the ethical dilemmas posed by conducting research.

One way I demonstrated that I had fulfilled the University's criteria for determining that this study was ethically sound, was by creating information sheets outlining what participants were asked to do (Appendix 2, p.133), and requiring consent forms to be signed by both legal guardians and the YP taking part (Appendix 3, p.143). In choosing to ask YP to sign a consent form, I am adding an extra layer of consent. It is a way of raising the voices of YP and offering them an opportunity to have some agency to choose whether to take part. I have also made efforts to ensure anonymity and the safe storage of identifiable data (for example, not using names of participants in the write-up and storing data on a secure server).

Most of the participants in this study are under 16 and therefore legally considered to be children (DfE & DoH, 2015). As such, they are described in the British Psychological Society's (BPS) Code of Human Research Ethics (Oates, et al., 2010) as being members of a vulnerable group. The Code stipulates that parents must be informed and granted the opportunity to withdraw. The Code also states that vulnerable participants should be 'given ample opportunity to understand the nature, purpose and anticipated outcomes of any research participation, so that they may give consent to the extent that their capabilities allow' (ibid. p.31). To try to ensure this, I sent information sheets and consent forms home for parents and guardians to go through with YP. Once signed, I also went through the information sheet with all participants asking questions to check understanding, regardless of whether or not they had already read through it on their own or with help when they first signed the consent form.

However, as already noted, this may not necessarily guarantee that the research process is ethical, and it may be necessary to go beyond the 'institutionalised regulatory procedures' and view ethics as something which is an 'integral part of the research process' (Von Unger, 2016, p.87). For example, as Fisher notes, it is important to consider the impact of the 'social, cultural, economic, and political contexts' in which people are being asked to participate (Fisher, 2013, p.358). When a YP described as having SEND is asked by an adult to participate in research, they may be likely to do what the adult wants even if they do not themselves want to do it simply due to the implicit power imbalance. Similarly, parents may feel compelled to give permission for their offspring to take part because they feel they must stay on the right side of school staff to ensure continued provision.

Furthermore, the use of a normative approach to ethics in which absolute rules are considered to apply in all situations is only one approach, and is often contrasted with relativist approaches such as appealing to utilitarianism (Swazo, 2010). For example, while this research adheres to a set of normative ethical rules, there may be still limitations for participants such as missing lessons for which they may be ill-equipped to catch up, if research is conducted within lesson-time. From a Utilitarian position, I could argue that there is a greater

good in the value the research will add to practice for all CYP described as having SEND.

Finally, while ethics as a discipline has been often viewed as shaping practice (Weber, 2003), others have argued that ethical stances merely reflect the structures and interests of those with social power (Marx, 1977) or even that ethical positions are held to gain power (Bourdieu, 1991). By way of offering some attempt to challenge the status quo, in this study I am seeking to raise marginalised voices by exploring the experiences of those with limited social power, and by making some attempt to conduct research with, rather than simply on, young people. Even this may have some limitations. For example, by attempting to raise the voices of children I may be inadvertently supporting an individualisation agenda in which there are winners and losers (Clarke, 2010), and I may therefore be contributing to widening inequality.

5.3 Approach to research

It could be argued that any research design would inevitably represent the researcher's view on the subject. For example, attempting to quantify attitudes of professionals towards the participation of YP, might suggest a positivist expectation that there are facts to be discovered which transcend the EHC process and would imply that the views of YP are of little consequence in determining these facts. For this reason, I have made the following deliberate choices, explicit.

- This study aims to explore the views of YP regarding their experience of participating in the EHC process. To raise the voices of YP the study participants will be YP.

- To further amplify the voices of YP, the research includes some opportunities for active participation by including YP as co-researchers. This reflects the distinction made by Fisher (2014) between research 'on children' and research 'with and for children'.

5.4 Approach to knowledge

5.4.1 The paradigm wars

There are a range of approaches I could have taken to thinking about this research area. I could have considered a construct such as 'satisfaction' as

Skipp and Hopwood (2016) explored, and perhaps used surveys to try to determine how high satisfaction is among YP in general within the EHC process. However, this would miss arguably more interesting and useful questions which are more relevant to practice such as what the process is like for young people. By developing a richer understanding of the views of YP, EPs can begin to 'get inside the mind' (Hughes, 2017a) of YP and reflect on their practice from the perspective of YP. Furthermore, by assuming the existence of objective truths such as the construct of satisfaction, we may be applying simplistic Humean notions of cause and effect (Hume 1739/2000). Quantitative social science researchers interested in these kinds of questions have adapted methods used in the natural sciences, using large numbers of participants in the hope of generating objective generalizable knowledge. They have supposed that cause and effect can be determined simply by demonstrating that a change in an independent variable reliably results in a change in a dependent variable (National Research Council, 2002). However, such simplistic notions of causality are problematic and have been largely abandoned by philosophers (Lowe, 2002). A few have gone so far as to question whether cause and effect exist at all but that perhaps the world is organised in such a way that predictions can be made about it (Leibniz, 1764/1981). Some have argued that even Hume himself was not certain about the existence of causal relationships, but that he was making an epistemological statement (about knowing) rather than an ontological one (about fact) (Strawson, 1989).

Disillusioned with the limitations of quantitative research, qualitative researchers have opted for small samples and are more interested in generating 'thick' (Geertz, 1973/2000) or 'messy' (Tierney, 1999) descriptions to develop a deeper understanding. The research questions are likely to be broader inductive questions which allow meaning to emerge from the data, than the deductive hypothesis-testing questions posed by quantitative researchers. Many qualitative researchers have generally rejected the pursuit of objective truths and focussed instead on subjective meaning making processes. By focussing on the subjective, we talk about people's views about something. Views or narratives are held as the important focus of study.

In this research, I have explored the views of YP about the EHC planning process, understanding that those views may be socially constructed, as especially given the power differential between YP and adults, co-construction undoubtedly plays some role shaping those views (Thompson, 2009). I have considered the views of YP about what happened in an EHC meeting. I have sought to understand not just an account of events, but to try to understand what sense they made of those events and how it made them feel.

5.4.2 Ontology and epistemology

In this study I have adopted a social constructionist epistemological position. Gergen argues that

> *constructionism neither makes no denial concerning explosions, poverty, death, or 'the world out there' more generally. Neither does it make any affirmation…constructionism is ontologically mute. Whatever is, simply is…Once we attempt to articulate 'what there is', however, we enter the world of discourse* (Gergen, 1994, p.72)

This has led some (eg. Shotter, 2012) to express concern that this has led researchers to be only interested in language, even adopting a retrospective view of language used rather than understanding its situated meaning by the individual. However, Gergen disputes this, arguing that while constructionists talk about shared understandings guiding actions, these shared understandings may not necessarily be reflected in language (Wang, 2016).

The constructionist project then, could be viewed as an approach to knowledge and says nothing about what is. Though some have been uncomfortable with such an agnostic approach and have sought for example to apply a critical realist ontological stance to constructionism (Nightingale & Cromby, 2002), I have followed Gergen's lead on this. I am neither affirming nor denying that the EHC meetings took place in the ways described by participants. Rather I am focussing on the subjective views of YP as the object of study.

In adopting a social constructionist position in this thesis, I have used some slightly clunky turns of phrase such as 'CYP described as having SEND'. This phrase has been chosen as it points towards the idea that the construct of SEND is not built on a series of objective facts, but rather is socially

constructed. It could also be argued that my choice of research topic, questions and methodology are products of my interactions with the people and culture around me. For example, my interaction with a post-modern culture with its critique of modernism in which knowledge gained through application of the scientific method is held in particular esteem, might have contributed to my seeking a more nuanced qualitative understanding of the experience of YP. Or perhaps my interaction with others who have either challenged power structures or left me feeling disempowered, has contributed to my decision to research the voice of those whom I perceive to be marginalised.

5.5 Choice of research method

In qualitative research, interviews and focus groups are the dominant tools for data collection. There are several reasons why I have not used either of these and instead opted to use Q-methodology.

- It has been argued that in-depth interviews require relatively good verbal skills on the part of participants (Ellingsen, Thorsen & Storksen, 2014, p.3). Given the limits of the verbal and reflective abilities of my participant group as others have found (eg. Skipp and Hopwood, 2016), having a set of statements which can act as prompts is likely to yield a fuller picture than would likely be gained from an individual interview.

- It could be argued that other data collection methods such as interviews or focus groups provide greater opportunity for participants to express a variety of nuanced views. However, as Brown (1980) demonstrated, even with a modest set of '33 items, there are in excess of 11,000 times more different ways to sort the statements, even in the forced distribution than there are people in the world!' (p.201). Therefore, there should be ample opportunity within a Q-study for any individual participant to find a way of sorting the Q-set in a way which feels like a good representation of their view.

- Given the dynamics of an unfamiliar adult researcher asking YP described as having SEND for their views, a Q-sort may be a less threatening task than an interview and be less likely to result in the YP trying to please the adult and provide socially desirable responses.

- Compared to some qualitative approaches which analyse the participants together as a single group, Q methodology has a greater focus on differences of viewpoint and therefore offers more chance of highlighting minority voices which might otherwise be marginalised in the analysis.

5.6 Q methodology

Q methodology has its origins in the work of William Stephenson who adapted Spearman's factor analysis to produce a by-person approach to factor analysis rather than a by-variable approach. In doing so, Stephenson sought to emphasise the qualitative nature of subjective experience, using factor analysis to systematically reduce the data so that it can be meaningfully interpreted. Psychology as a discipline appears to have largely ignored this approach, instead seeking generalizable facts. Stephenson himself bemoaned that much of his work appeared to have gone unnoticed (Stephenson, 1977).

Perhaps due to the mathematical component of Q methodology, some have considered it to be a mixed methods design (Ramlo & Newman, 2011). Others have argued that it should not be classified as such, using the term 'qualiquantological' to situate the methodology outside the quantitative-qualitative continuum in which an objective natural world is contrasted with a socially constructed human world (Stenner, 2011). I have used Q-methodology to emphasise the qualitative nature of the data and as such have approached it as a systematic method for conducting qualitative research.

Q-methodology often involves creating a set of cards with statements printed on them which are sorted in a pattern from those which the participant most agrees with at one end, to the statements they most disagree with at the other, generating a kind of normal distribution curve.

Despite its origins in psychology, Q methodology has been used in a wide variety of fields. Recent Q methodology research has included explorations of

- students' views about learning (Collins & Angelova, 2015)
- approaches to city planning (De Wijs, Witte & Geertman, 2016)
- environmental concerns (Jacobsen & Linnell 2016)
- how public managers deal with media attention (Klijn, et al., 2016).

Q-methodology offers the researcher the possibility of thinking beyond language. Watts and Stenner (2012) propose that in interpreting views, researchers should try to think about how participants who hold those views might feel. I have gone further by including statements about feeling, intentionality and actions directly in the Q-sort. Furthermore, it could be argued that Q-methodology locates language within an experience. The researcher is not simply examining a pre-existing view obtained for example through unstructured interview. Rather, it offers participants an experience of interacting with the Q-set and through this experience, a view is developed (Watts & Stenner, 2012).

5.6.1 Q as a research method with children

For CYP, this experience of interacting with a set of statements, offers an opportunity to formulate a view as well as articulate it. It may be that many of the participants in this study would not have previously given much thought to what they think about their experience of the meeting, or even if they had, may not have had the reflective ability to explore subtleties or even contradictions within their view.

Q-methodology has previously been used in research even with very young children. Taylor, Delprato & Knapp (1994) for example, used pictorial items in the Q-set to explore the experience of three and four year-olds. Similarly, Ellingsen, Thorsen and Storksen (2014) used a pictorial Q-set with five-year-olds to explore 'children's experiences and emotions' (p.1). All the participants in this study are older (though some are described as having cognitive difficulties) and were deemed to be able to engage with the process (for

evidence of this, see the data collection procedure described on p.49f, particularly the use of the sorting task in Appendix 6, p.187).

To try and get as close as possible to the child's perspective and to try to conduct research with YP rather than simply on YP, I opted for the Q-study to be participatory in nature, recruiting YP to act as co-researchers, as suggested by Ellingsen, Thorsen and Storksen (2014).

5.7 Sample (Q-set)

As this is a Q methodological study, the sample refers to items in the Q-sort. Participants are referred to as the P-set. Q-sets usually contain between 40 and 80 items (Watts & Stenner, 2012, p.67). Due to the cognitive limitations of my participants, I tried to keep the number of statements as low as possible and ended up with 47 statements. For each statement, I tried to keep the language simple and the statement short. I worked with young researchers to further refine the wording of these statements to ensure that they would be understandable (see Appendix 5, p.184 for a list of changes made as a result of working with young researchers). Even so, a reliance on spoken language rather than on some other form of communication such as images (Cremin, Mason & Busher, 2012) may have slightly limited the potential participants I could approach. However, I had to balance this with a need to gather data that was meaningful and I judged that use of images was more likely to lead to a much wider set of interpretations of the items and an associated increase in challenge when trying to analyse the results. Also, it was difficult to imagine how I might begin to present many of the ideas in visual form and so pictures may have generated less rich descriptions of the views of YP. Further, although other studies have used images with very young children under five years old (Ellingsen, Thorsen & Storksen, 2014; Taylor, Delprato & Knapp, 1994) as the youngest age of my participants was 11, I thought they would probably manage simple language. I always read the statements for participants at the outset, though some chose to take over this role part way through.

In generating statements for the Q-set, I aimed to explore participants' experience of participating in the EHC process. Within Curt's (1994) distinction between statements exploring representation, understanding and policy, this

would most closely align with representation. Curt suggested that it is easier for participants if all statements are in one of these three categories rather than mixing across categories.

The statements making up the Q-set have largely emerged from the literature as recommended by Snelling (1999). However, while Snelling sought to use the literature to ensure that her 50-item Q-set was made up of five statements relating to each of ten perspectives on feminism, my approach has been more fluid and focussed more on how individual statements might be understood and used by YP to describe their views. I began by creating a table charting ideas taken from the literature regarding voice and participation, particularly literature focussed on the EHC process, as well as the new SEND Code of Practice. Against these, I charted ideas around possible ways of thinking about different aspects of experience, which I adapted from Smith (2016). This enabled me to generate a broad range of statements that YP might make about their experience related to voice in EHC planning meetings. I also considered themes arising from Skipp and Hopwood's (2016) interviews with parents regarding EHC processes, and some ideas relating to critiques of voice. In generating these items, I thought about how they might be relevant to YP thinking about their most recent EHC meeting. Through a fairly systematic process involving multiple reviews of the statements (described in Appendix 4, p.146) I combined, re-worked, discarded or added to the Q-set.

As suggested by Watts and Stenner (2012), I tried to avoid
- two proposition items which could be hard to sort as the participant might agree with one and not the other
- negative items such as 'I don't…' which could lead to a double negative 'I don't agree that I don't….' and may be difficult to think about
- items containing qualifications
- items expressing exact opposites, where only one item was required

I was also keen to avoid Galasinski and Kozlowska's (2010) critique of questionnaires which 'reproduc[e] the researcher's view of the world' (p.272). My hope was that this would ensure that the statements would be meaningful to

participants, making them easier to sort, and that the resulting factor descriptions represented the language of YP. I therefore worked with young researchers to explore their understanding of the statements and how this might apply to their experience (Appendix 4, p.146 and Appendix 5, p.184). As a result of this process, many statements were reworked and one was added. I would not claim my resulting Q-set is complete as there are always other things which could be added (Watts & Stenner, 2005). However, it hopefully includes a broad range of ideas which could support YP to express their views.

5.8 Participants (P-set)

As Watts and Stenner (2012) point out, as the Q-set is the sample, 'each participant in a Q study becomes a variable' (p.70). As such it is important to select participants with a meaningful contribution to make to the study. This means it helps to recruit participants who between them have a range of strong views.

There has been more research conducted with YP between the ages of 16 and 25 compared to younger children. LAs are required to communicate with YP over 16 directly, rather than primarily with their parents (DfE & DoH, 2015, section 1.8). As such, these YP might be expected to have more voice than that experienced by younger children, and so I had originally intended to add to the literature by purposively sampling participants from this age group. However, I discovered that EPs working in the region in which the study was being conducted, carry out limited work with YP post-16. As such, it was difficult to identify suitable participants as few were known to EPs. Furthermore, I hoped to consider how the experiences of YP might impact on EP practice, and judged that it would be a more meaningful enterprise if there is currently some practice to reflect on.

I therefore extended the research to include YP of secondary school age (11-16). I worked with EPs to identify YP who would be likely to have a view and to identify SENCOs who might be supportive of my collecting data in their schools. I then also liaised with these SENCOs to identify further YP who would be useful to approach. As well as seeking to recruit participants with strong opinions, I considered the following

- The identified primary needs of potential participants. I tried to ensure that I recruited from across the domains described in the SEND Code of Practice (DfE & DoH, 2015), namely
    - cognition and learning needs
    - communication and interaction needs
    - social, emotional and mental health difficulties
    - sensory and/or physical needs.
- I recruited from across a wide age range (11-19).
- Some participants were YP who had previously had a Statement of Special Educational Needs and had attended an EHC transition meeting. Out of these, some had been given an EHC plan and some had not.
- Some participants had not previously had a Statement or EHC and the meeting represented a transition from non-statutory to statutory SEND provision.
- A small number of participants experienced meetings which had been intended to be person-centred in its approach. While several other participants had previously experienced person-centred planning meetings this had generally been a one-off in the early stages of professionals becoming involved.

Q-studies have previously been conducted with a wide range of P-set sizes. The main factor influencing the number of participants is ensuring that a wide range of views are sought (Ramlo, 2016). In total, 21 YP took part in the study.

5.9 Young Researchers

As previously discussed, use of young researchers represents a parallel process to the research aims. It was also important for the study that the final Q-set was not just an adult-centric set of statements, such that the views of YP were viewed through an adult lens. As Ellingsen, Thorsen and Storksen (2014) argue, there is a difference between viewing 'children as objects for research' and 'children as subjects within research' (p.2), and it is important as an adult researcher to make an attempt to get as close as possible to articulating children's experience from their perspective.

Three young researchers were recruited from a secondary school with a post-16 provision. All had an EHC plan and had recently completed GCSE exams. On the morning of the initial meeting, two turned up. For one of these researchers, the plan was to continue in school to the on-site post-16 provision, while the other planned to move to a post-16 college to pursue more vocational courses.

Taking into account the limits of what they might be expected to comprehend and meaningfully contribute to the research process, I considered Franks' (2011) notion of pockets of participation such that YP have 'participative ownership of specific parts of the research process so that participants become stakeholders rather than owners of the research' (p.23).

Young researchers were therefore involved in two phases of the research process.
- Planning phase:
  - To create a card set which was young-person friendly.
  - Help to re-word statements in a young-person friendly manner.
  - Offer ideas for other items.
- Pilot phase:
  - Pilot the card sort and give feedback.

Both were then invited to take part in the study.

Throughout this thesis, I have referred to these young researchers as 'co-researchers'. As Hughes (2012) notes, such a term is not unproblematic. It implies an equal status which is difficult to imagine existing given the imbalance of power implied by differential knowledge of research methods, my ownership of the project, and the differential institutional power implied by their role as pupil and mine as Trainee EP. The use of the term then is perhaps aspirational.

Shaw, Brady and Davey (2011) offer a model of the involvement of CYP in research outlined in Table 2 (p.47).
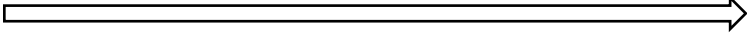
CYP are research participants	CYP are actively involved in aspects of the planning and process of research		
CYP are sources of data	CYP are consulted about the research	CYP are collaborators in the research	CYP have ownership of the research
	CYP have increasing control of the research process		

Table 2 - Different levels of involvement of CYP in research. From Shaw, Brady and Davey (2011, p.7).

The level of involvement in this study could be understood to be at the lower end of the range of possible involvement. The YP were consulted at crucial stages in the research. They took an active role, but it remained a small one. Research involving greater levels of involvement, might include CYP developing and planning research together or even CYP initiating and controlling the research ideas and design. However, it is difficult to imagine that many of the YP who were the target population of this study, would have managed to meaningfully participate in a more expansive way. For example, I found the process of analysing and interpreting data obtained from a Q-study to be cognitively demanding and it is likely that this would have been beyond the reach of the YP who participated in this research. Or if it was hoped that YP might make a meaningful contribution to the design of the study, it is difficult to imagine these YP developing a thorough enough understanding of research methods to make anything more than a tokenistic contribution.

5.10 Procedure

Having described the theoretical underpinnings of the study, I shall now report on how the research was conducted in practice. The research procedure is outlined in Figure 1.

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│            Review literature and develop research questions       │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
          │                                            │
          ▼                                            ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│              Complete University research ethics process          │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
          │                                            │
          ▼                                            │
┌──────────────────────────────────────┐              │
│         Recruit young researchers      │             │
└──────────────────────────────────────┘              │
          │                     │                      │
          ▼                     ▼                      ▼
┌──────────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────────────────┐
│  Approach EPs & SENCOs │   │          Develop Q-set           │
└──────────────────────┘   └──────────────────────────────────┘
          │                                    │
          ▼                                    ▼
┌──────────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────────────────┐
│ Recruit study          │   │   Conduct pilot study and        │
│ participants           │   │   finalise statements            │
└──────────────────────┘   └──────────────────────────────────┘
          │                                    │
          │              ┌─────────────────────▼──────────────┐
          │              │ Gather Q-sort data and factor      │
          │              │ analysis and interpretation of     │
          │              │ Q-data                             │
          │              └────────────────────────────────────┘
          │                                    │
          │                                    ▼
          │              ┌──────────────────────────────────┐
          │              │   Present to Educational          │
          │              │   Psychologists                   │
          │              └──────────────────────────────────┘
          │                                    │
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          │              ┌──────────────────────────────────┐
          │              │ Conduct focus group exploring      │
          │              │ implications for EP practice       │
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          ▼                                    ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│              Analyse data and write up thesis                     │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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Figure 1 - Stages of the research process

5.10.1 Young researchers

Two YP described as having SEND were involved in the project as co-researchers. The research and their potential role in the research was presented to them. Written and signed permission was sought from a legal guardian and the YP themselves were asked to sign a consent form. A brief simplified presentation was delivered on Q-sorting, followed by a workshop exploring their most recent experience of an EHC meeting.

The young researchers were then presented with each item of the Q-set, one at a time. They were asked about the statement to explore understanding and to explore how they felt it might apply to their experience. As part of this process, their input was actively sought to re-work any items as required. After this, young researchers completed the pilot phase of the study.

5.10.2 Pilot study

The pilot study followed the same procedure as the main study. In addition, follow-up interviews included feedback regarding the usability of the card sort and some further co-editing of statements.

5.10.2 Main study data collection

In order to approach appropriate YP to complete the study, I began by contacting EPs working in secondary schools and asked them to identify any young people who they thought might have a particular view. The EPs then introduced me to SENCOs in schools and, after presenting my research to them by email, phone or in person, I worked with SENCOs to identify any pupils who (other than those already identified by EPs) they thought might have a view about the topic. SENCOs hand-delivered information sheets and consent forms to potential participants to take home to their parents. I followed this up with phone calls to parents or guardians to respond to any questions or concerns they may have had about the research. Some of these are noted in the limitations section (p.102). I then requested that participants return signed consent forms to the SENCO at school. Once it was clear how many young people in the school had agreed to take part, I arranged to spend time in the school to conduct individual meetings with participants to complete the card sort. These meetings took between 50 minutes and 70 minutes.

In the session, I observed the YP for any signs of distress throughout. I went through the information sheet with the participant and checked for understanding and checked that they still wanted to take part. If they did want to take part (none backed out at this stage), I asked them to think about the most recent EHC meeting at which they had been present. We then co-wrote a description of their memory of what happened in the meeting. This is similar to a procedure used by Stenner and Stainton-Rogers (1998) who, prior to the Q-sorting task, asked participants to describe a short scenario which for them exemplified the subject being explored. The purpose of this was to help YP to recall and begin to think about the EHC planning meeting, prior to asking them to express their views about it. These descriptions have been collated and presented in the results section (p.61) and in Appendix 8 (p.189). They have also been used to contribute to descriptions of the background to the views of participants in section 6.3 (p.61), introductions to the factor interpretations and the discussion.

To check participant's ability to order items, I showed them a set of nine items and asked them to rate them according to whether or not they would like to eat them. They were given a grid (Figure 2, p.50), and asked to arrange them according to the pattern shown (cf. Appendix 6, p.187). All participants appeared to be able to complete this task.

Most dislike   Most like
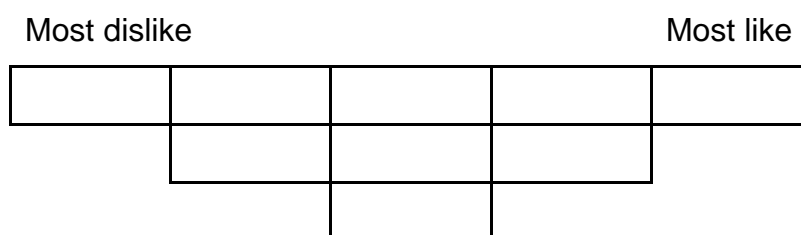
Figure 2 – Grid used for practice Q-sort task

Following successful completion of this task, I showed them the cards in the main Q-set and explained again that I was interested in understanding their experience of their EHC meeting. I showed a diagram of the final pattern we were going to make with the cards and explained that I wanted them to arrange the statements into this shape. This was a fixed-design grid from minus five to plus five, where plus five represented the items they most agreed with and

minus five, the items they most disagreed with. I told participants that all of the statements related to the meeting we had just talked about. I asked them to keep thinking about the meeting and separate the cards into three piles: those they agreed with, those they disagreed with and those that they neither agreed nor disagreed with, in the middle. I always began by reading the cards aloud and handing them to participants one-by-one. In some instances, participants chose to take more control over this process and chose to read and handle the cards themselves. Once three piles had been created, beginning with the cards they agreed with, I asked them to go through the piles again and divide each into three piles so that for example, for the statements they agreed with, they further divided these into statements they 'really, really agreed' with, statements they 'really agreed with' and statements they 'quite agreed' with. I then took the most agreed with pile and spread them out on the table. We read through them all again and I asked which two they most agreed with, followed by the three statements they next most agreed with and so on until all the cards in the pile had been sorted into the predetermined pattern. I then continued in the same vein with the 'really agree' pile and then the 'quite agree' pile. Then I followed the same process with the 'neither agree nor disagree' pile and subsequently the 'disagree' pile, in each case splitting them into three piles and then gradually filling up the predetermined pattern. The Q-sort task took between 30 and 45 minutes for participants to complete.

Once the card sort had been completed I recorded the item numbers of each statement on a grid. In the pilot, I took a photo of the completed Q-sort as a reference point to check for errors when inputting the data. However, I found this was not clear enough to be a reliable record, so for the main study I programmed a spreadsheet which could be filled in on a laptop at the time of the sort. Using nested IF formulas, I was able to look up each of the 47 items to check if they had been placed in the grid, thus generating instant feedback regarding any items which had been missed (Appendix 7, p.188). I have since developed this into a universal tool using COUNTIF formulas and conditional formatting, for Q-sets up to 100 items and grids of up to -6 to +6, and shared it on the Q-Methodology Network email list.

I asked the participant about anything in their sort that I thought looked interesting or unexpected. During this process, I tried not to assume I understood anything about how they had chosen to sort their cards and so erred on the side of caution, asking naïve questions. Questions took the form of

- questions about the placement of specific items such as +5 or -5: 'I see you've put this item right at the end. Can you tell me a bit more about that?'
- items that I might be surprised about their relative placing: 'I notice you've put this item here and this one here. Can you tell me about why you placed them there?'

I made notes of what the participant said during this discussion (see Appendix 10, p.205) and these were used to inform factor interpretations.

Finally, I thanked the participant for their time and effort completing the task and reminded them that they were still free to withdraw from the research, though none did at this stage. The whole meeting took between 50 and 70 minutes to complete.

5.10.4 Analysis

Analysis was achieved using PQMethod (Schmolk, 2014), a freeware programme which is downloadable from the internet. The software was downloaded onto my personal computer as I was not able to install it on my work computer. To maintain confidentiality, I assigned participants a participant number and only this number was used in the database to identify them. A list of participants and any descriptive information (eg. age, identified prime need) was stored password-protected, in a document on a secure server within the LA. Q-sort data were entered and analysed, and resulting factors were hand-rotated to determine best fit. Data obtained through brief follow-up interviews with participants immediately following the sorting task, were used to aid the interpretation of factors.

I entered the Q-sort data into PQMethod and performed a centroid factor analysis as described by Brown (1980). I began with seven unrotated factors. I rotated these by hand, and found six factors which at least two participants loaded onto. Altogether, these accounted for 64% of the variance. If I had

more participants I might have aimed for at least three participants per factor. This solution enabled more participants (16 out of 21) to load onto factors compared to other solutions. Other solutions with fewer factors were found but this led to some views being lost in the results. As this study is about student voice, I opted to use more factors maximise the voice of YP. Each of the views had some distinct relevance to literature and EP practice. In discussing these views later in the discussion section of this thesis, I will explore their contribution both to the literature and to EP practice.

I based my procedure for interpreting factors on that of Watts and Stenner (2012, p.147ff) with a particular focus on understanding the differences between factors. I began with Watts and Stenner's crib sheet (2012, p.154), identifying +5 and -5 items, and items with a higher score or lower score than in all other factors while noting those which had equally high or low scores as other factors. This formed the basis of my factor interpretations though I also completed the following processes to further develop my understanding of each factor.

I began by highlighting those statements which were statistically significant identifying statements for each factor. I then looked at statements which had largely been placed at a similar distance from other statements and looked for any factors which had arranged those statements differently to see if a different meaning might be discerned. I considered the items in the context of the idealised Q-sort for each factor to consider where defining statements had been placed relative to other statements.

I also examined post-sort interviews to better understand how statements were understood by participants. This included considering how all statements had been interpreted by participants, particularly those which had been ranked equally within some factors or those for which there was a consensus across all factors, and noted any which appeared to have been interpreted differently by some participants. One example of this is the statement 'People were in a rush to finish the meeting' (item 4). Not being in a rush could imply either that YP felt they were given plenty of time to understand what was going on, or it could imply that they found the meeting boring as adults were just talking to each other for a long time.

I then compared factor descriptions with each other and finally examined the idealised Q-sort for each factor and added items to the crib sheet as described by Watts and Stenner (p.159f). These completed crib sheets can be found in Appendix 11 (p.215). I was then able to write interpretations of each factor. I also noted statements for which there was consensus among participants and reported these separately.

5.10.5 Focus Group with EPs

To begin to think about the second research question (What are the implications of young people's views concerning their voice in Education, Health and Care planning meetings for Educational Psychology Practice?), I conducted a focus group with the EP Service in the LA in which the research took place. The session was included to ensure that implications for EP practice derived from the data were not just based on my interpretations and perceptions as a trainee EP, but took account of ideas of others who were more experienced. There were 15 members of staff present during this session. 11 were qualified EPs at various stages in their career including a Principal EP and three senior EPs. Their experience ranged from one EP being in their first year post-qualifying to another having over 30 years' experience. There were also two assistant EPs and two trainee EPs, one in their first year of training and one in their second year.

The session, which lasted for an hour and a half, took place at the end of a continuing professional development day during which several presentations had been given by members of the EP service regarding the importance of pupil voice and the implications for EP practice. As this was not the main part of the study and was only intended as a way of gaining a wider set of views to help shape my own thinking regarding implications of my study for EP practice, I did not consider that this process needed to produce an exhaustive list of implications for practice. As such, I gathered data by taking notes rather than recording and transcribing the whole conversation, and conducted a rudimentary thematic analysis on the data. I began by presenting the information sheet (Appendix 2.5) and consent forms (Appendix 3.3), and allowed time to ensure all read and digested its contents. I asked if anyone had

any questions and stated that participation was optional. No-one had any questions and all 15 EPs present agreed to participate in this study.

I then presented my research process to this point (Appendix 12, p.227). Finally, I presented the factors produced in the main study and asked EPs to try to put themselves in the shoes of the person whose view a Q-sort represented. For each factor, I asked EPs to consider firstly 'What do these YP need?' and secondly in response to this need, 'What do you think good EP practice would look like?' The purpose of the first question was to act as scaffolding towards generating ideas regarding implications for EP practice, and as such the analysis was only conducted on answers to the second question. Factor 1 and Factor 2 were discussed as a group and ideas discussed were noted down on flipchart paper that was visible to all present. Due to time constraints, the remaining four factors were explored in small groups of three or four EPs and recorded by members of each group on flipchart paper. Each group fed back their ideas in turn to the whole group and any further comments from EPs from other groups were added to the flipchart paper. All completed flipchart sheets related to each of the six factors were transcribed, and these transcriptions can be found in Appendix 13 (p.229).

The discussion also contributed to ongoing service development including the development of a training package to be used with school staff that aimed to teach staff to be more effective in seeking and gaining the views of CYP. It includes the use of card-sorting tasks as these appeared to be helpful in this study.

5.10.5.1 Analysis

Once the ideas written on the flipchart paper had been transcribed, the data were analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I began by reading and re-reading the data. I printed out and cut up all individual statements which had been written on flipchart paper in response to the question 'What do you think good EP practice would look like?' such that I had a large set of slips of paper each containing a single idea. These were spread out on the floor and all ideas were initially 'coded' by arranging similar items together. I explored these groups of statements, thinking about the idea that

they represented in relation to the second research question 'What are the implications of young people's views concerning their voice in Education, Health and Care planning meetings for Educational Psychology Practice?' I then grouped sets of statements based on themes and checked statements within each theme to verify that they made sense together. Finally, I named the themes and wrote a description of the theme incorporating all data included in it. The findings are shown at the end of the next chapter.

5.11 Summary

Q methodology was used to support YP to formulate and express their views. The focus in using Q-methodology was to emphasise the qualitative nature of the data. It is understood that the data obtained through this approach are situated in a particular time and place. Neither the list of statements nor the array of views obtained from the process could be considered exhaustive, but are merely a representation of a range of views that exist. YP were consulted in the development of the Q-set and all participants were YP. As well as using statements to prompt participants' thinking, YP were supported throughout the process through development of a co-written description of their memory of the meeting, individual support from the researcher to complete the task, and discussion afterwards about their choices made during the task. In the following chapter, I shall outline the results of these processes.

6 Results

6.1 Introduction

In this section, I shall provide a description of those who participated in the study and their perspectives on the meetings that they attended. I shall offer a brief description of the analysis process conducted as this has already been covered in greater detail above. Following this, I describe the six factors found. I will complete this section with a brief note regarding comments made by participants about their experience of completing the Q-sort task.

6.2 Participants

6.2.1 Co-researchers

Two males, both aged 16 who were due to transition to post-16 educational provisions within two months, took part in the research as co-researchers. As well as helping to develop the Q-set, they piloted the task. They agreed that their Q-sort of the finalised statements could be included in the main study and therefore they are included with the 21 participants (Participant 1 and Participant 10) as well as being co-researchers.

6.2.2 Main study

Details of the participants are outlined in Table 3 (p.60). 21 participants between the ages of 11 and 19 (mean=14.6) took part in the study. 76% (n=16) were male and 24% (n=5) were female, which reflects there being more boys than girls described as having SEND (DfE, 2010). I have not included this in the table to maintain anonymity of the participants. YP were recruited from four mainstream secondary schools and two post-16 providers, one of which is a special college for young adults described as having social communication needs.

Seven (33%) of the participants were aged 16 or over on the date the EHC meeting took place. Of these, four were already attending post-16 settings full-time, two had just completed secondary school and were due to transition to post-16 providers within two months, and the other participant attended a secondary school for one and a half days per week and had been given a partial early transition to college which he attended three days a week.

Eight participants (38%) were described as having a prime need of communication and interaction (C+I) difficulties which were primarily difficulties with social communication. Of these, one was also described as having physical difficulties which were considered to be equally as challenging to manage in a secondary school. One other participant was considered to have physical difficulties as their primary need. A further six participants (29%) were described as having a prime need of cognition and learning (C+L). Of these, five were described as having difficulties across all aspects of academic work, while one was considered to have specific difficulties with literacy. The other six participants were described as having social, emotional and mental health difficulties (SEMH).

All participants had attended a recent meeting to plan or review their EHC. These meetings had all taken place within the past four months and most were much more recent than this. The average number of weeks between the meeting and data collection was 5.1. For five (24%) of the participants, the meeting was to transition from a previous Statement of SEN to an EHC plan. The other 16 (76%) were reviews of already existing EHC plans. Of these, one involved planning for a transition to secondary school and three were reviews following a recent transition to secondary school. One was a review at the end of Key Stage 3 (year 9) and involved planning new outcomes for the end of Key Stage 4 (year 11) in preparation for post-16 education. Two of the participants who were also participants for the pilot, had recently attended a meeting to transition to a post-16 education provider.

Of the remaining participants, most appear to have attended quite typical annual review meetings in schools as described in section 3.6.2 (p.20). The meetings generally involved adults from school and often also from the LA, as well as the YP and their often their parents or guardians. The meetings appear to have been focussed on completing the paperwork necessary as part of the EHC process and reviewing and planning the YP's education provision. The EPs involved with some of the YP ensured that some participants experienced a good PCP process similar to that described by Sanderson, Mathiesen and Erwin (2006). The process included pre-planning with the YP using the PATH (O'Brien, Pearpoint, & Kahn, 2010) tool and the meeting itself involved placing

large sheets of paper around the room with questions such as 'what people like and admire about [the YP]' and 'what is important to [the YP] in the future'. The YP, her parents and all professionals at the meeting, were invited to write comments on the sheets.

Participant	Setting	Age	Reason for EHC meeting	Weeks since meeting	C+L	C+I	SEMH	Physical	Co-researcher	1	2	3	4	5	6
					Prime need					Factor loaded on					
1	Secondary 1	16	Transition to post-16	2		✓			✓						✓
2	Secondary 1	11	Review following transition to secondary	12			✓								
3	Secondary 1	11	Transition to secondary	12				✓							✓
4	Secondary 1	14	Annual review at end of KS3	16		✓									
5	Secondary 2	13	Annual review	4	✓										✓
6	Secondary 3	15	Transition from Statement	3			✓								
7	Secondary 3	15	Transition from Statement	0		✓								✓	
8	Post-16 1	18	Annual review	1		✓						✓			
9	Post-16 2	17	Annual review	4			✓			✓					
10	Secondary 1	16	Transition to post-16	3		✓			✓			✓			
11	Post-16 2	18	Annual review	8	✓										
12	Post-16 2	19	Annual review	4	✓							✓			
13	Secondary 4	15	Annual review	3			✓							✓	
14	Secondary 4	16	Transition from Statement	2			✓			✓					
15	Secondary 3	11	Review following transition to secondary	2	✓						✓				
16	Secondary 3	15	Transition from Statement	4		✓							✓		
17	Secondary 2	14	Transition from Statement	4		✓		✓					✓		
18	Secondary 2	11	Review following transition to secondary	5	✓						✓				
19	Secondary 2	15	Annual review	2	✓					✓					
20	Secondary 2	13	Annual review	12			✓								
21	Secondary 2	13	Annual review	4		✓				✓					
				Totals	6	8	6	2	2	4	2	3	2	2	3

Table 3 – Descriptive data regarding participants

6.3 Co-written descriptions of the EHC meeting

Prior to completing the Q-sort task, all participants were asked to talk about what happened in the meeting and we co-wrote a short paragraph outlining their memory of the meeting. The purpose of this was to help them to start thinking about the meeting. The descriptions have been collated and published in Appendix 8 (p.189).

All participants reported having a parent or guardian present at the meeting. There was always at least one member of staff from school they could identify. A third of participants did not report that anyone from outside the school or home was present. Another third stated that there were people present whose identity they were unsure of. In some instances, they reported that there were 'people there [they had] never met before' and even that 'only one of them made an effort to introduce themselves to [them]' (participant 7). Some, however, were 'not really bothered about who they were' (participant 14). 24% recalled there being an EP present at their meeting though in some cases identified the person but stated that they did not 'know her job' (participant 5).

Most either stated or implied that they had been present all the way through the meeting, and there was only one participant who explicitly stated she 'didn't stay in the meeting for very long' because she gets 'very anxious and [would] prefer to be in [her] lessons' (participant 8).

Most participants reported that the meeting involved 'lots of people sat round a table in a room talking about things' (participant 9). Participants who had previously had a Statement of SEN reported that they 'had been to similar meetings before' (participant 1), that 'this one wasn't really any different from previous ones' (participant 9) and that the process was as 'usual in these meetings' (participant7). This suggests that for many participants, the meeting was experienced as being not noticeably changed following the introduction of the new Code of Practice (DfE & DoH, 2015).

Few of the participants reported having had any pre-planning for the meeting and these were those who had been through a thorough PCP process. As one participant describes the process: 'Before the meeting I sat in a room with

someone talking about what I wanted and stuff. During the meeting there were pieces of paper up on the walls and we filled them in with what I thought and my parents thought and what other people thought' (participant 19). Some reported that they 'didn't really know anything about the meeting before' (participant 3). One participant was keen to point out that 'there were no snacks or drinks' in the meeting (participant 13).

6.4 Analysis

Within PQMethod, centroid factor analysis was applied to the data before rotating by hand. The positions of each item in the matrix for all factors is listed in Table 4 below.

	Statements	F 1	F 2	F 3	F 4	F 5	F 6
1	I listened to other people	4	-2	3	0	1	1
2	I felt frustrated	-2	3	-3	-3	-5	-3
3	I tried hard to take part	2	1	1	-2	-3	-1
4	People were in a rush to finish the meeting	-4	-1	-3	-4	-5	-2
5	The meeting went too fast for me to follow what was going on	-3	4	-4	-4	-3	-2
6	I could refuse to have an EHC plan	1	-5	0	-2	-1	1
7	I felt like an equal	-3	-2	0	-1	2	3
8	I was treated with respect	0	0	3	3	0	4
9	I understood the things people were talking about	2	-3	-1	0	4	2
10	I was nervous	-5	5	1	0	-2	-3
11	I felt ignored	-1	1	-5	-5	-3	-4
12	I was in control of the meeting	-3	-5	-2	-2	-4	-3
13	People focussed on things that I struggle with	2	3	-1	4	3	3
14	People understood me	0	3	1	1	4	2
15	I was unsure why people had come	-2	0	-4	-1	-1	-2
16	I was saying things that I'd already told people before	3	4	-2	-1	-1	-5
17	I am now more likely to say what I think in the future	5	-1	0	0	-2	0
18	It was OK for me to ask questions	3	1	2	4	5	3
19	It was helpful to know what other people thought	1	0	-2	4	0	1
20	People already knew what I thought before the meeting	-1	-1	-3	0	-1	-1
21	People tried to make sure I was included in the conversation	1	0	2	3	1	3
22	I knew what my options were	4	-4	1	1	2	2
23	I felt confused	-4	3	-2	-5	-4	-2
24	People seemed to care about me	0	2	5	5	3	5
25	I got all the help I needed for the meeting	0	-1	2	1	2	5
26	I concentrated all the way through	-1	-3	-1	-2	3	-1
27	People wanted to listen to me	0	2	5	1	1	1

#	Item						
28	The plan showed my ideas	-1	-2	1	3	0	0
29	I felt powerless	-5	0	-5	-3	-5	-4
30	People understand me better because of the meeting	1	2	0	2	1	-1
31	Being part of the meeting has made me more motivated to work hard	-2	0	1	-1	-3	-1
32	I felt uncomfortable	-4	4	-1	-3	-1	-3
33	All the people I wanted to be there were at the meeting	4	1	0	2	0	1
34	It was OK for me to disagree with people	3	-1	0	2	1	0
35	People wanted me to listen to them	5	1	2	0	4	2
36	People made sure they understood what I wanted	-2	-1	3	2	1	0
37	People tried really hard to understand what I needed	-2	-1	4	3	-3	4
38	Before the meeting, I expected people would listen to me	-1	2	4	1	5	0
39	I said all the things I wanted to say	3	2	3	4	-2	1
40	I had a good idea what the meeting would be like	1	-4	2	1	3	0
41	I understand why I have an EHC plan	-1	-3	-2	1	1	-1
42	If I'd wanted I would have been allowed to lead the meeting	-3	-4	0	-2	-1	-2
43	I disagreed with people	2	0	-1	-1	0	-4
44	I wanted to feel part of the conversation	0	-2	1	-1	1	0
45	People were trying to persuade me to do what they wanted me to do	0	1	-3	-4	-1	-5
46	I was bored	2	5	-4	-3	-2	4
47	I knew what everyone was responsible for	1	-3	-1	0	0	2

Table 4 – Item scores for all factors

Six factors were generated which in total account for 64% of the total variance. 16 out of 21 participants loaded on these factors with at least two participants loading on each factor. All factors had an eigenvalue greater than 1.00 and therefore meet the KaiserGuttmann criterion for determining factor significance (Brown, 1980). Table 5 (p.64) shows factor loadings for each participant and Table 3 (p.60) shows demographic details of the participants who loaded on each factor. Table 6 (p.64) shows correlations between factors.

Participant	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6
1	0.1003	-0.1335	0.2644	0.3517	0.2260	0.5778X
2	0.4538	0.0846	0.3160	0.3357	0.4555	0.1085
3	0.2449	-0.1335	0.2318	0.3486	0.1747	0.6257X
4	0.1928	-0.4257	0.5090	0.0709	0.3263	0.3744
5	0.1089	0.0905	0.1943	0.0512	0.0494	0.4499X
6	0.2648	0.0006	0.496	0.4394	0.1065	0.3843
7	0.2720	-0.2092	0.3548	0.3812	0.4886X	0.1770
8	0.1311	0.2232	0.6897X	0.3268	0.1932	0.2613
9	0.7392X	0.0711	0.0813	0.0777	0.0655	0.1119
10	0.2640	-0.0267	0.7340X	0.1405	0.1303	0.2964
11	0.2835	0.1117	0.4798	0.2966	0.2834	0.5232
12	-0.011	-0.2727	0.6853X	0.2318	0.1482	0.2206
13	0.2951	-0.0522	0.2150	0.2770	0.5007X	0.2890
14	0.7928X	-0.1413	0.1932	0.0291	0.0549	0.1368
15	-0.1339	0.6667X	-0.1147	-0.0381	0.0432	0.0676
16	0.3233	-0.0528	0.3785	0.5964X	0.1755	0.3776
17	0.1160	0.0225	0.2754	0.5740X	0.2490	0.1947
18	0.0794	0.7592X	0.0736	0.0322	-0.0847	-0.046
19	0.6557X	-0.1625	-0.0100	0.2842	0.3058	0.1451
20	0.3594	-0.0966	0.4409	0.1521	0.4522	0.3456
21	0.5530X	0.0984	0.3856	0.2480	0.3117	0.3230

Table 5 – Factor loadings for each participant. An 'X' indicates a defining factor

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	-	-0.052	0.330	0.406	0.498*	0.403
2		-	-0.051	-0.007	-0.130	-0.099
3			-	0.650*	0.568*	0.591*
4				-	0.634*	0.681*
5					-	0.568*
6						-

Table 6 – Correlations between factors. * indicates significant correlations.

As can be seen in the above table, there are significant correlations particularly between some Factors. However, as stated previously, these have been retained to maximise the voices of YP and because they have distinct contributions to make to the literature and particularly to EP practice.

6.5 Consensus Statements

Four statements are described as consensus statements (p>.01) as they were placed in similar locations in the idealised Q-sorts in all factors.

- Item 4 – People were in a rush to finish the meeting
- Item 12 – I was in control of the meeting
- Item 30 – People understand me better because of the meeting
- Item 31 – Being part of the meeting has made me more motivated to work hard

6.6 Interpretations of factors

For all the factor interpretations, the first number in the brackets represents the item number of the statement, and the second number shows the location in the grid. Text in italics indicates direct quotations from participants in post-sort interviews.

6.6.1 Interpretation of factor 1

No-one cares about me and they just want me to listen to them, but they can't stop me saying what I think

Factor 1 has an Eigenvalue of 2.94 and explains 14% of the study variance. Four participants (three males and one female), aged between 13 and 17, are significantly associated with this factor. Two of the males were described as having a social, emotional and mental health difficulty, the other male was described as having a social communication difficulty, and the female was described as having a cognition and learning difficulty. Three of the participants (the female and two of the males) are in mainstream schools and the other male attends a further education college. One of the males had recently taken part in a meeting to transition from a previous Statement of SEN to an EHC plan, and the other three participants had recently attended an annual review of their EHC. All four reported that their meeting largely involved adults talking to each other and then sometimes asking the YP questions. One of the YP in this group was identified by an EP as someone who had been through a particularly good PCP process.

My over-riding feeling about the meeting is that it mostly involved me doing a lot of listening to other people (1, +4). I'm certain that that's because all other people wanted was for me to listen to them (35, +5). When other people spoke, I was able to follow what was going on and mostly understood the things they were talking about (5, -3; 9; +2). So there was no point at which I felt at all confused (23, -4). But because I was mostly listening, the meeting seemed like *it was really long* (participant 9) and no-one seemed like they were in any rush to finish (4, -4). So I did find it a bit boring (46, +2).

I'm not really sure how much I wanted to be involved in the conversation (44, 0). I suppose I hadn't really expected that people would particularly want to listen to me and they didn't surprise me (38, -1; 27, 0). *I didn't feel like they saw my opinion as being important* (participant 14). Sometimes other people's ideas were even *recorded as if they were what I wanted to do* (participant 19)! I don't really think people tried that hard to understand what I wanted or needed (36, -2; 37, -2). So I didn't really feel like they cared all that much about me or treated me with much respect (24, 0; 8, 0). But then I *don't feel like teachers at school respect me at all, so not being respected in the meeting is just what I expect* (participant 14). In the end, I thought that if *people don't listen to me or treat me with respect…fuck it, in the future, I may as well say what I think anyway (participant 14; 17, +5).*

Having said that, in the meeting I really didn't feel nervous or uncomfortable in any way (10, -5; 32, -4). Although I wasn't sure what everyone's *roles were in the meeting* (47, +1, participant 21), everyone I wanted to come to it was there (33, +4). And although I'm not entirely sure why I have an EHC plan and I think I might be able to refuse to have one (41, -1; 6, +1), *I know I need [extra support] sometimes so I haven't* (participant 19). I had a really good understanding of what my options were (22, +4) and *I knew what I wanted to say* (participant 19). I disagreed with people (43, +2) and felt like it was OK for me to do so (34, +3). So I wasn't at all powerless (29, -5). I made some effort to take part (3, +2) and although *I didn't really expect people to listen to me…I just said what I thought anyway* (participant 9; 39, +3).

I still could have done with a bit more help for the meeting though (25, 0). I didn't feel like an equal with the other people there (7, -3). And when I did speak, *I felt like I just kept repeating myself in the meeting – people kept asking me the same questions over and over* (participant 19; 16, +3). So I didn't really feel like the meeting helped other people to understand me (14, 0; 30, 0).

6.6.2 Interpretation of factor 2
I had no idea what it was for or what was going on

Factor 2 has an Eigenvalue of 1.47 and explains 7% of the study variance. Two participants are significantly associated with this factor. Both are males, aged 11 years and had recently been part of transition meetings to different mainstream secondary schools. Both are described as having a cognition and learning difficulty. There were no outside agencies present in either meeting, just parents and school staff.

I was really, really nervous and uncomfortable all the way through the meeting (10, +5; 32, +4). I *really didn't want to be there…but at least I got out of lessons – I find lessons really hard all of the time* (participant 18).

Before the meeting had started, I had no idea at all what it would be like (40, -4). There were some other people there though I don't know what they were all responsible for (47, -3) and I'm not totally sure why they had all come (15, 0). Once the meeting started, I found that it went way too fast for me so I had no idea what was going on (5, +4) and I didn't understand many of the things people were talking about (9, -3). So I felt pretty confused (23, +3). This meant that I didn't manage to concentrate all the way through the meeting (26, -3). To be honest, I was so extremely bored (46, +5), that *I nearly fell asleep* (participant 15)!

I had absolutely no control over what was going on in the meeting (12, -5), so I suppose I felt a bit powerless (29, 0). I don't think I'd have been allowed to lead it (42, -2) and *wouldn't have known how to anyway* (participant 15). I'm not sure that I really wanted to feel part of the conversation (44, -2). However, *at times I tried to talk and to get in control* (participant 15), but I felt a bit ignored (11, +1)

which was frustrating (2, +3). So I didn't really feel like people treated me with respect (8, 0). There were a few times when people wanted to listen to me (27, +2) so I got chance to say some of the things I wanted to say (39, +2). When I did speak, I think people understood what I was saying (14, +3), but then I only said things that I'd already told people before (16, +4), so I'm not sure how much better people understand me because of the meeting (30, +2). I think I could have done with a bit more help (25, -1).

I had no idea what my options were (22, -4) and at times it felt a little bit like people were just trying to persuade me to do what they wanted me to do (45, +1), so my EHC plan probably didn't really show my ideas (28, -2). And I'm not really sure if it would have been OK for me to disagree with other people anyway (34, -1). I don't really know why I have an EHC plan (41, -3). All I'm certain about is that I definitely couldn't refuse to have one (6, -5).

6.6.3 Interpretation of factor 3
People really cared and wanted to listen, but I'm unsure if it affects my life

Factor 3 has an Eigenvalue of 3.36 and explains 16% of the study variance. Three participants (two males, one female) between the ages of 16 and 19 are significantly associated with this factor. One of the males attended a mainstream secondary school and had recently had an EHC transition meeting prior to moving to a college placement. The other two YP were educated in post-16 college provisions and had attended recent annual reviews of their EHC plans. The female and one of the males are described as having a communication and interaction difficulty and the other male is described as having a cognition and learning difficulty.

Overall, I felt like people in the meeting really, really cared about me (24, +5). *People showed they cared by asking me things in a nice way that seemed like they really wanted to know what I thought* (participant 10). They tried hard to make sure they understood what I wanted (36, +3). And they didn't just focus on the things I struggle with (13, -1), *they talked about things I'm good at too* (participant 12). And people really, really wanted to listen to me (27, +5) which

is exactly as I'd expected (38, +4), so I definitely didn't feel ignored in any way (11, -5).

I struggled a bit to concentrate all the way through the meeting (26, -1), even though it *was all about me* (participant 12) so it wasn't at all boring (46, -4). But the other people there didn't know what I thought before the meeting (20, -3) so I kind of wanted to feel part of the conversation (44, +1) and tried really hard to take part (3, +4). However, when I did speak, I'm not sure how well people understood what I was saying (14, +1), so I'm not sure how much the meeting has improved their understanding of me (30, 0). I think people also wanted me to listen to them (35, +2), which I did (1, +3) but I'm not sure I understood all the things they were talking about (9, -1). Even when I did understand them, it wasn't always particularly helpful to know what they thought (19, -2). I was still left unsure what my options were (22, +1) and *I'm not sure what the final plan is* (participant 12). So I'm not sure how much my EHC plan shows my ideas (28, +1).

I didn't feel at all powerless in the meeting (29, -5) as *I knew all the answers to the questions people were asking me because it was about what I like and what job I wanted to do and things* (participant 8). I'd had a fairly good idea what the meeting would be like (40, +2), and I knew exactly why everyone had come (15, -4). And it went slow enough for me to easily follow what was going on (5, -4). So I felt like I had a tiny bit of control in the meeting (12, -2) and if I'd wanted, I might have even been allowed to lead it (42, 0). In the end, I think being part of the meeting has probably also made me a bit more motivated to work hard in the future (31, +1).

6.6.4 Interpretation of factor 4
My views weren't their priority but I was still heard and my views were taken on board

Factor 4 has an Eigenvalue of 1.89 and explains 9% of the study variance. Two participants (one male and one female) between the ages of 14 and 15, are significantly associated with this factor. Both are described as having a communication and interaction difficulty. Both attend different mainstream

secondary schools. Both had attended a recent meeting to transition from a Statement of SEN to an EHC plan.

In the meeting, *it seemed like all some people cared about was completing the paperwork. The meeting was shaped around this but all I wanted was to be able to say what I thought* (participant 16). And when people talked about me, they were mostly focussed on things they thought I struggle with (13, +4), even things that *I didn't think were a problem* (participant 16). People talked about my achievements too and I felt like they *were proud* of me (participant 17).

I hadn't been really sure what the meeting would be like or whether people would listen to me (40, +1; 38, +1) so maybe I'd been a tiny bit nervous about it (10, 0). Most of the people I wanted to be there were there (33, +2) though I wasn't quite sure why some of the other people had come (15, -1). *I didn't understand what people's roles were until they explained it, though not everyone explained their roles well. [For example], I wasn't sure why someone was typing things up* (participant 16; 47, 0).

However, I felt like people really, really cared about me and showed me respect (24, +5; 8, +3). For example, some people tried to make sure I was included in the conversation (21, +3) I didn't feel at all ignored (11, -5). If I wanted to know something, I felt like it was definitely OK for me to ask questions (18, 4) and I managed to say all the things I wanted to say (39, +4). When I did speak, I think people sort of understood me (14, +1) and there's an extent to which people probably already knew some of what I thought before the meeting (20, 0). But I think people probably understand me a bit better now because of the meeting (30, +2).

No-one seemed like they were in any kind of a rush to finish the meeting (4, -4) so it went slowly enough for me to really follow what was going on and I wasn't confused at all (5, -4; 23, -5). Although I found it extremely helpful to know what other people thought (19, +4), I'm not sure whether they were all that bothered whether or not I listened to them (35, 0). I disagreed with people at times and I felt just about OK with doing that (43, -1; 34, +2). But I didn't feel like I had much control in the meeting (12, -2). *It would have been nicer if I could have*

had the opportunity to take charge of the meeting but I had to wait for an opportunity to talk (42, -2; participant 16).

I think I kind of have some understanding why I have an EHC plan (41, +1) but I don't think I could refuse to have one (6, -2) as *it's there because of what teachers think about me* (participant 17). But at least I now feel like it shows my ideas (28, +3).

6.6.5 Interpretation of factor 5
High hopes that I'd be listened to, but I was disappointed and had to rely on my bravery

Factor 5 has an Eigenvalue of 1.47 and explains 7% of the study variance. Two male participants, both aged 15, are significantly associated with this factor. Both attend different mainstream secondary schools. One participant is described as having a communication and interaction difficulty while the other is described as having a social, emotional and mental health difficulty. Both had recently attended a meeting to transition from a Statement of SEN to an EHC plan.

Before the meeting, I thought I had a fairly good idea what the meeting would be like (40, +3). For example, I really strongly expected that people would definitely listen to me (38, +5). But although they listened to me a bit, they didn't as much as I expected them to (27, +2) and mostly they really just wanted me to listen to them (35, +4). As *usual in these meetings…there was lots of talking about me* (participant 7). I was a little bit nervous, uncomfortable and bored (10, -2; 32, -1; 46, -2) so *wasn't talking much,* but it was *alright. I just got to sit there and listen* (participant 7).

I was able to concentrate pretty much all the way through the meeting (26, +3). And because no-one was in any rush at all to finish it, I was able to understand what was going on (4, -5). So I wasn't confused at all (23, -4) and was able to understand everything that people were talked about (9, +4). I thought it was definitely OK for me to ask questions (18, +5) and I disagreed with people a bit and that felt sort of OK (43, 0; 34, +1).

I didn't feel at all powerless because *I was brave [enough] to talk* (29, -5; participant 13). However, I also had absolute *control over the meeting or what we talked about* (12, -4; participant 13). And I didn't feel like people treated me with much respect (8, 0). I'm not sure whether people knew what I thought before the meeting (20, -1), and in the meeting, I don't think people tried very hard to *find out about me* (participant 7). Although they made some tiny attempt to understand what I wanted (36, +1) they didn't try to understand what I needed (37, -3).

I didn't get to say all the things I wanted to say (39, -2). So although it seemed like people understood me really well (14, +4) in the few times I did speak, I'm not sure that people actually understood me much better because of the meeting (30, +1). And while I think I kind of understand why I have an EHC plan (41, +1), I'm not really sure how much it shows my ideas (28, 0).

I didn't find any of that at all frustrating though (2, -5). *I wasn't bothered about* taking part in the conversation more (participant 7; 44, +1) and so I didn't try that hard to take part in the meeting (3, -3). Being part of the meeting really hasn't helped my motivation to work hard (31, -3), nor made me any more likely to say what I think in the future (17, -2).

6.6.6 Interpretation of factor 6
Respectful, and all agreed, but boring and focused on my weaknesses

Factor 6 has an Eigenvalue of 2.31 and explains 11% of the study variance. Three participants (two males, one female) between the ages of 11 and 16 are significantly associated with this factor. All participants attend different mainstream secondary schools. One of the males was described as having a communication and interaction difficulty while the other male was described as having a physical disability. The female was described as having a cognition and learning difficulty. One of the participants had recently attended an EHC meeting to transition to college and another had recently attended an EHC meeting to transition to secondary school. The third participant had recently attended an annual review meeting for their EHC.

I really strongly felt like I had all the help I needed for the meeting (25, +5). And although I wasn't in control of the meeting (12, -3), I didn't feel at all powerless (29, -4). There was no point at all that I disagreed with what other people said (43, -4), though if I had disagreed with anyone, I'm not sure if that would have been OK (34, 0). I certainly never felt like there was any point when anyone was trying to persuade me to do what they wanted me to do (45, -5). Overall, I felt like people in the meeting really, really cared about me and treated me with loads of respect (24, +5; 8, +4), almost like an equal (7, 3). There was no point in the meeting when I felt at all ignored (11, -4). So I didn't feel frustrated, uncomfortable or nervous (2, -3; 32, -3; 10, -3).

I didn't really know anything about the meeting before (participant 3) and hadn't done *anything to prepare for* it (participant 1). So I wasn't sure what it would be like (40, 0) or whether people would listen to me (38, 0). I hadn't really thought about who I wanted to be there (33, +1) but I knew most of the people there and what they were responsible for (47, +2).

However, the meeting was really, really boring (46, +4) and I struggled a bit to concentrate all the way through (26, -1). So I didn't really listen to other people all that much or try particularly hard to take part (1, +1; 3, -1). *I don't know how it could have been less boring* (participant 1) but maybe *talking about things I'm really good at…would have made it more fun* (participant 5). As it was, *people focussed on things I struggle with* (13, +3), so you could say that although they tried really hard to understand what I needed (37, +4) but were much less *interested in what I like or find interesting* (participant 1; 36, 0). So I suppose the plan was more *based on helping me with things I'm not good at* (participant 1), rather than showing my ideas (28, 0).

Though I didn't talk very much (participant 3) in the meeting, people tried to make sure I was included in the conversation (21, +3). When I did speak, all the things I said were things I hadn't already told people before (16, -5) and people mostly seemed to understand (14, +2). However, I'm not sure how much people really wanted to listen to me or if they were bothered about whether or not I listened to them (27, +1; 35, +2). I'm not sure if I really got to

say all the things I wanted to say (39, +1) so I'm not really sure how much the meeting has helped people to understand me better (30, -1).

I'm not really sure why I have an EHC plan (41, -1) and I don't know if I could refuse to have one (6, +1) *but I want one so it doesn't make any difference* (participant 3).

6.7 Participants' views about the use of Q-methodology

A few of the participants made comments on the methodology itself. All who did so reported feeling that their final Q-sort was *a good description of what [they] think* (participant 17). One participant noted

> *I really liked doing this task - it was really helpful to have the [statements] to help me remember and think of things - I wouldn't have thought about most of those things if you'd just asked me about [the meeting]* (participant 16)

6.8 Focus group with EPs

Once I had completed this analysis, I worked with the EPs who work for the LA in which the study was conducted to begin to explore possible implications of this research for EP practice. As already described, the procedure involved a focus group consisting of 15 EPs, and data were analysed using thematic analysis. These EPs were at various stages in their careers from assistant and trainee EPs to those who had been qualified for many years and were approaching retirement. They were presented with the Factors and were then asked two questions: 'What do these YP need?' and 'What do you think good EP practice would look like?' Data obtained through this process were analysed according to theme, and four broad themes were found. These were EP roles in the meeting, preparation and follow-up for the meeting, working with schools and working at the level of the LA.

6.8.1 EP roles in the meeting

There was some discussion regarding whether EPs should attend EHC planning meetings. It was pointed out that the large number of meetings involved meant that it was impossible for EPs to attend all of them. It was, however, expected that EPs would attend some, and in the discussion the

multiplicity of roles EPs must take in the meeting, was explored. These included being

- Advocate for CYP and parents
- A representative of the LA with knowledge of LA procedures
- A good facilitator, including
  - Being a good listener, ensuring people feel listened to by using active listening skills
  - Effective summarising and paraphrasing
  - Acknowledging conflicting agendas
  - Ensuring all present at the meeting understand the process.

A view emerged through the discussion that good EP practice would involve balancing these roles which at times may conflict with each other, rather than being overly focussed on one. In this sense, there is an understanding that the voice of CYP is important but it is not the only thing that is important.

6.8.2 Preparation and follow-up for the meeting

Several EPs considered the possible value of helping CYP to prepare for the meeting, so they know what the meeting is for and what to expect. This might include helping YP to understand EHC processes and what to expect people to say about them in the meeting. Or it might be helpful to understand the distinction between things that may be important *to* them and things that may be important *for* them. One person suggested that it may also be valuable to organise a follow-up to check understanding of the meeting process.

Some EPs thought there might be more value in preparing adults for the meeting, helping ensure they understand what the most important aspects are of the meeting such as listening to the views of the child. Or perhaps a role for EPs might be to work with staff to check EHC paperwork so that they feel more confident that they do not need to check through it so much in the meeting.

6.8.3 Working with schools

It was acknowledged that given the number of meetings, preparation for every meeting would still not be achievable for EPs and so there may be value in thinking about the level of the school. This primarily consisted of discussion

around training and what training should look like and whether it should be focussed on procedure or on listening skills. However, some wondered whether people might already know how to listen to CYP and that perhaps some things get in the way of that. Perhaps then the EP role is to support adults to circumnavigate barriers to listening to CYP.

Some of the discussion steered more towards developing school cultures. One focus of this might be to support a whole school ethos of pupil involvement and choice. We explored the idea that CYP described as having SEND are viewed as a special case and have the opportunity for their educational provision to be personalised to their needs. An alternative might be for EPs to work with whole schools and help shape them into institutions where adults generally listen to the views of CYP. This way we are not singling some CYP out as being in need of personalisation. Perhaps if listening to CYP is more embedded in the culture of the school, adults are more likely to do it in EHC processes. Another focus for supporting school ethos was considered, which was to promote a continuous plan-do-review approach, such that less pressure is placed on EHC planning meetings.

6.8.4 Working at the level of the LA

Some EPs began to explore possible roles in shaping LA procedures. For example, there may be value in working to develop the form completed in the meeting by the representative of the LA. It currently includes a box to tick if the views of the CYP have been represented in the meeting, though there may be scope for expanding this further to ensure people think about how this is achieved. Similarly, it was acknowledged that the paperwork associated with EHC plans more generally was likely to form the basis of meetings, as it has to be completed and school staff and other professionals have limited time to complete it at another time. Perhaps then there is a role for EPs taking another look at the paperwork and contributing to its ongoing development or guidance on its use, with a view to promoting the voice of the child.

6.8 Summary

Six factors were found which represent a spectrum of views of YP about EHC planning meetings. YP who chose to comment on the Q-sorting process

reported being pleased with the way it had helped them to express their views. In the following sections of the thesis, I will explore these views in more detail and consider possible implications for EP practice.

While EPs might like to use their skills to help prepare adults and CYP for EHC meetings and contribute to the meetings themselves through balancing a multiplicity of roles, EPs have limited time. As such, there may be value in thinking about how to develop the skills of other professionals or to support them to use the skills they already have. There may also be roles for EPs in shaping school cultures or in developing LA procedures.

7 Discussion

7.1 Introduction

The first question that this research aimed to answer is: What are young people's views concerning their voice in Education, Health and Care planning meetings? The following chapter sets out to explore differences and similarities between the six viewpoints identified, and explore their relationship with and contribution to the literature. The views represented by the six factors in this study could be viewed as representing different levels of voice as set out in Table 1 (p.11). I have therefore based the organisation of my discussion of these results on the levels of voice in the SEND Code of Practice (DfE & DoH, 2015) starting with the lowest. This means I have begun by exploring the extent to which YP in this study felt that they received information, then explored the extent to which they felt they had an opportunity to impart information and express an opinion, and whether they felt that opinion was taken into account. Given that some of the participants are over 16, I have also discussed the right afforded to parents in the Code of Practice that grants access to a personal budget so that they can choose to commission their own services. For these YP, LAs are 'normally [required to] engage directly with the young person rather than their parents' (ibid, section 1.8).

Following this I have considered what the data in this study tell us about whose voice is heard and whether some groups, such as YP described as having SEMH difficulties or those who might be seen as vulnerable, might be more or less likely to have a voice. I have considered what the data tell us about the impact of the experience of the meeting on YP's future intentions and motivations. Finally, I have briefly explored how this research process might have contributed to the use of Q methodology as a research tool with CYP, and how it can contribute to raising marginalised voices. This focus on more practical aspects of the study will lead on to the following chapter in which I have explore the second research question by discussing possible implications for EP practice.

7.2 The right to receive information

7.2.1 Insufficient information

The right to receive information in a manner which is understandable can be considered as the lowest level of voice (cf. Table 1, p.11), and could be considered a prerequisite for making an informed contribution to a decision-making process. Parents and CYP in previous studies have reported that they valued information shared by others in EHC meetings and that this sharing of information contributed to their satisfaction (Skipp & Hopwood, 2016). However, several studies have highlighted concerns raised by parents and CYP that they were not given enough information on which to base their decision-making (Bajwa-patel & Devecchi, 2014; Lewis et al., 2007; McNerney, Hill & Pellicano, 2015; Parsons, Lewis & Ellins, 2009). The current study contributes to the literature in several ways. In this study, most participants reported that they received some information, though the data support the finding that YP often do not view the information they receive in EHC processes as sufficient. It also adds to the literature by exploring differences in views of YP, especially the differences between YP describing information as understandable, useful or sufficient.

With regards to understanding the content of information given, in this study, Factor 5 participants reported feeling confident that they understood the things people were talking about in the meeting (9, +4), and this contrasts with Factor 2 participants who reported not understanding (9, -3). However, understanding the information given is not necessarily the same as being given sufficient information, and parents in previous studies have reported that although they were given information, it was not always useful. For example, parents could sometimes be given conflicting information advice by different professionals (Flewitt & Nind, 2007). In this study, which adds to the literature by exploring the views of YP, only participants who loaded onto Factor 4 felt that it was helpful to know what other people thought (19, +4), despite not feeling that they listened much to others (1, 0). Although other YP felt they did a lot of listening such as participants who loaded onto Factor 1 (1, +4) and Factor 3 (1, +3), they did not report finding this information especially useful, and placed item 19 'it was helpful to know what other people thought', at position 1 and -2 respectively.

Finally, although some felt they understood the things people were talking about and some felt that the information given was useful, it was only participants who loaded onto Factor 1 who reported receiving and understanding enough information to know what their options were (22, +4). Again, this contrasts with Factor 2 participants who had no idea what their options were (22, -4). This difference highlighted here between Factor 1, Factor 4 and Factor 5 may have some implications for practice. It may be that through seeking to ensure that YP understand the content of their speech, adults may reduce the complexity of the content to the extent that it no longer becomes useful or sufficient so as to make a decision. Additionally, Factor 2 participants' view shows that for some YP, much more would need to be done for them to begin to understand enough to make an informed contribution to the decision-making process.

7.2.2 Disempowered by the complexity of the EHC process

Wellner (2010) found that parents can feel disempowered by the complexity of the language and processes used, and I predicted that this is likely to be an even greater challenge for YP. As well as receiving information on which to base decisions, in order to meaningfully participate in an EHC it could be considered necessary to receive sufficient information about the processes involved. In Table 1 (p.11), I placed the lowest levels of voice alongside the lowest level of participation 'assigned but informed' (Hart, 1992), such that if YP do not report this level of participation, they could be described as not participating and having no voice.

CYP in White and Rae's (2016) study had a range of different views regarding how child-friendly they found the EHC process. Data from this study supports this finding that there are differences in YP's views on this matter. However, in this study, the difference participants reported was varying levels of confusion about the process, suggesting that YP may often find EHC processes too complex to participate meaningfully. Although all except Factor 2 participants reported that the meeting did not go too fast for them to follow (item 5), their placement of other statements related to the meeting process were mostly negative. For example, in all Factors YP gave low rankings to item 41 'I understand why I have an EHC plan' (maximum +1) and item 47 'I knew what everyone was responsible for' (maximum +2). Factor 5 participants gave the

highest rating for 'I knew what the meeting would be like' (39, +3), but they were disappointed by their actual experience in the meeting (for example, they expected people would listen to them (38, +5) but found they did not (27, +1)). Furthermore, participants loading on all Factors placed item 42 'If I'd wanted I would have been allowed to lead the meeting' in a negative or neutral position (-3, -4, 0, -2, -1, -2), and some participants explained in the post-sort interviews that they would not have known how to lead the meeting anyway. The data in this study therefore, indicate that YP do not always think they have a good understanding of EHC processes.

7.3 The right to impart information and to express an opinion

As well as a right to receive information, the SEND Code of Practice grants CYP a right to 'impart information' and to 'express an opinion' (DfE & DoH, 2015, section 1.6). This corresponds with higher degrees of participation that involves not just being 'informed' but also 'consulted' (Hart, 1992). This reflects YP being viewed as 'experts on their own lives' who are 'capable of describing experiences and sharing perspectives that adults may not have articulated or been aware of' (Lundqvist, 2014, p.751). However, most research in this field to date has been conducted with adults, and while some researchers have sought the views of CYP, they have sometimes found that CYP have difficulty articulating their views (Skipp & Hopwood, 2016; White & Rae, 2016). This research adds to the literature by gaining the views of YP regarding their voice in EHC planning meetings. The data in this study show differences in views among YP regarding the extent to which they were consulted.

7.3.1 People's willingness to listen

Parents in previous studies have sometimes reported that professionals were 'unwilling to listen' to their views (Bajwa-Patel & Devecchi, 2014). In this study exploring the views of YP, only YP who loaded onto Factor 3 felt strongly that people did want to listen to them (27, +5). Most participants placed item 27 'People wanted to listen to me' near the middle of the grid, indicating that they either thought people did not particularly want to listen to them, that only some people wanted to listen to them or that they did not know whether people wanted to listen to them. This suggests that many YP are unconvinced that adults are particularly interested in their views in EHC planning meetings. In

contrast to this, some YP (Factor 1 and Factor 5) strongly agreed with item 35 'people wanted me to listen to them' (+5 and +4 respectively), suggesting that YP often experience an imbalance in EHC meetings, between the value placed on their views and that placed on adults' views.

7.3.2 Opportunity to express a view

Goepel (2009) found that the teacher's voice was generally dominant when setting targets with year six pupils, and that all children had concerns which were not acknowledged. As the participants in this study who were older (in year seven or above), this research adds to the literature by exploring the views of older YP. In this study, it was only YP who loaded onto Factor 5 who reported that they did not manage to say all the things they wanted to say (39, -2). Of note here though, is the relatively high placement of item 39 in some of the other factors. 'I said all the things I wanted to say' was rated very positively by Factor 4 (39, +4) participants and to a slightly lesser extent by Factor 1 (39, +3) and Factor 3 (39, +3) participants. Given that it was only Factor 3 participants who felt that anyone was interested in their views, this is perhaps surprising. Even though adults did not always appear interested in the views of YP, some YP managed to express their views anyway. For YP who loaded onto Factor 1, expressing their views appears to have been a form of resistance. They thought that people did not especially want to listen to them (27, 0) nor particularly care about them (24, 0), but the YP just said what they thought anyway (39, +3). These YP realised that while they could not make others want to listen to them, no-one could stop them from speaking and contributing to the meeting. YP who loaded onto Factor 4 had a different experience of the meeting. They felt strongly that people in the meeting cared about them (24, 5), but that the meeting was shaped around adults' agendas. However, the YP themselves were focussed on expressing their views, and they perceived that they managed to achieve this aim. In this way, they viewed themselves as participants in the meeting process.

7.3.3 Included in the process

Parents in Skipp and Hopwood's (2016) study reported that they appreciated it when staff tried to keep them involved throughout the EHC process. This research adds to the literature by exploring the views of YP about their involvement in EHC processes. In this study YP were asked to sort the statement 'people tried to make sure I was included in the conversation' item 21. This was placed between 0 and +3 in all factors. While this suggests that overall YP felt that people tried to include them to some extent within the context of the EHC meeting, no participants felt strongly that people tried to include them. However, there was some agreement among participants that they were ambivalent about being involved in the conversation (item 44). This provides some support for Hughes' (2012) finding that some YP want to have a say but are not particularly interested in full participation such that they have equal power with adults.

7.3.4 Values

When YP do feel included in the meeting process and that they have an opportunity to express their views, there are differences in the data regarding what adults wanted to know about. CYP in Lewis et al.'s (2007) study said that they wanted to be asked about what they liked and what support they found most useful, suggesting a desire to focus on strengths and what works rather than their deficits. Skipp and Hopwood (2016) found that parents on the other hand, appreciated it when staff made an effort to understand their child's needs. This study adds to the literature by exploring YP's views regarding how the focus on strengths and what YP like, is balanced with a focus on deficits.

Item 36 'people made sure they understood what I wanted' and item 37 'people tried really hard to understand what I needed', are of relevance here. That four out of six factors placed these items very close together (no more than one position away, for example F4 placed them at 36, +2; 37, +3), suggests that the different values of the adults and those of the YP may be often viewed by YP as being balanced in the EHC planning meeting. However, participants who loaded onto Factor 5 and Factor 6 had contrasting responses to these items. Factor 5 viewed adults as being more interested in what the YP wanted than what they needed (36, +1; 37, -3), whereas Factor 6 YP viewed adults as being

more interested in their needs than wants (36, 0; 37, +4). As participant 5 who loaded onto Factor 6 said, 'talking about things I'm really good at…would have made it more fun', which supports Lewis et al.'s (2007) finding that this is what YP would prefer to focus on.

7.3.5 Agreement between adult and child

Exploring agreement between children and adults in target-setting, Goepel (2009) observed that children who were articulate were more likely to express views which aligned closely with those of adults, and this was taken as evidence that their voice was heard. In this study, participants who loaded onto Factor 6 felt strongly that they did not disagree with people (43, -4). Unlike in Goepel's study, it does not appear that these were especially articulate YP. One is described as having communication and interaction difficulties and one is described as having cognition and learning difficulties. They report that they did not say all the things they wanted to say (39, 1) and describe themselves as being a little disengaged in the meeting process, stating that they were bored (46, +4) and struggled a bit to concentrate all the way through (26, -1). The reason for the alignment of views then, is unclear. It may be that adults had gained the views of the YP prior to the meeting, though this is not reported by participants in this study (participant 1 for example reports having not done 'anything to prepare for' the meeting). This adds to the literature as, similarly to Goepel's findings, some YP's views appear to be closely aligned with adults and it is likely that this is interpreted (rightly or wrongly) as evidence of YP having a voice. However, there is no obvious group of CYP for whom this occurs, and the causes may therefore be difficult to determine. More research could be completed to explore this further.

A related question is how YP might feel about disagreeing with adults. While some parents in previous research have expected that their role may include challenging professional practices (Hartas, 2008), others have expressed concern that non-compliance would result in them being distanced from the decision-making process (Hess, Molina & Kozleski, 2006). Data from this study suggests that this difference is mirrored in differences between YP. While YP who loaded onto Factor 1 felt that it was OK to disagree with adults (34, +3), others were less certain. Of note is the placing of item 34 by Factor 6

participants at 0, suggesting that while they agreed with adults, they were unsure if it would have been OK to disagree. As such, agreement between adult and child may not necessarily imply that YP have power in the meeting. Again, it is not clear from this data why some YP may feel more able than others to disagree with adults in this context and further research might explore this question.

7.4 The right for that opinion to be taken into account

Skipp and Hopwood (2016) found that parents appreciated having plans that were followed through. It could be hypothesised that this is also the case for YP, though data in this study suggests many YP do not feel that their views are taken on board when developing plans for their educational provision. Only participants who loaded onto Factor 4 felt at all confident that the plan showed their ideas (28, +3) implying that they thought they had made a meaningful contribution to the decision-making process, or as the SEND Code of Practice puts it, that their 'views had been taken into account' (DfE & DoH, 2015, section 1.6).

Participants who loaded onto Factor 3 were certain they were listened to within the meeting, but much like most other participants, placed item 28 'the plan showed my ideas' in the middle of the grid (28, 1). This could either mean that they did not know what their plan was, or they did know but did not think that their ideas had been taken on board. If the former interpretation is taken, given Lewis et al.'s (2007) finding that CYP wanted to know what was happening and what support was being put in place, this may not be happening effectively. If the latter interpretation is taken, the implication is that the 'voice' of YP who loaded onto Factor 3 only really existed in the context of the meeting. Perhaps this is what Hirschmann (1970) meant when he predicted that voice may be institutionalised to avoid people having real power associated with choice. It may be that the very positive experience these YP had of the EHC planning meeting, offered them sufficient voice to feel satisfied with the process, such that they were unconcerned how much their voice gave them power over what happens in their lives.

7.4.1 Young people as partners

Higher levels of voice are associated with a sense of partnership, or of a shared decision-making process (Hart, 1992). Previous studies involving parents have found differing results. While some have found that parents can feel inferior to experts (Wellner, 2010), others have found that parents reported being pleased with the relationship and sense of partnership they had with school staff (O'Connor, 2008). This study adds to the literature by exploring the views of YP. It might be expected that YP would not experience that same sense of partnership as parents, and this is supported by the data in this study. Only participants who loaded onto Factor 5 (7, +2) and Factor 6 (7, +3) reported feeling at all like an equal with others in the meeting.

7.5 Access to a choice

Hart's (1992) degrees of participation on Table 1 (p.11) defines the highest level of participation as being child initiated shared decisions with adults. It is difficult to describe the views of YP found in this study as reflecting this level of participation. Item 12 'I was in control of the meeting' was a consensus statement and was not placed higher than -2 in any of the factors. And as already discussed, item 42 'If I'd wanted I would have been allowed to lead the meeting' was not placed higher than 0, and some participants reported that they would not have known how to anyway. If we associate this degree of participation with the highest level of voice, perhaps this highest level of participation should not be expected. It implies a shared-level of power associated with exit (Hirschman, 1970), choice (National Consumer Council, 2004) or access to personal budgets which the SEND Code of Practice (2015) offers to parents and not YP.

However, as some of the participants were over 16 years of age, and LAs are therefore required to 'engage directly with the YP rather than their parents' (DfE & DoH, 2015, section 1.8), it might be expected that they would be in some sense afforded this access to a choice. The only factor that includes exclusively over 16s is Factor 3. These YP reported that they did not feel particularly equal to the other people in the meeting (7, 0), that they were not in control of the meeting (12, -2) and that they were unsure how much their EHC plan really showed their ideas (28, 1). As such, the experience of these YP does not

appear to reflect the level of voice they are expected to have based on the SEND Code of Practice (DfE & DoH, 2015). This apparent lack of access to a choice might reflect SENCO's concerns that giving parents control over a personal budget would take funding away from schools and may threaten the jobs of staff (Pearson, Mitchell & Rapti, 2015).

7.5.1 YP as competent social actors

It is worth noting however, that these participants who loaded onto Factor 3 rated item 42 'If I'd wanted I would have been allowed to lead the meeting' higher than in all other factors (42, 0). Even though this was still placed in the middle of the grid, it suggests that compared to other YP described as having SEND, they were more able to imagine the possibility of them initiating a decision-making process with adults. This highest level of participation (Hart, 1992) might require YP to be seen as capable of initiating these processes, and not needing to rely on adults to support them to express their views. Parents in previous studies have been described as having agency (Hartas, 2008). They have been viewed as being fairly autonomous decision makers (Kaehne & Beyer, 2008), who assume some responsibility such as for developing relationships with staff (McNerney, Hill & Pellicano, 2015). However, little is known about how YP are viewed and view themselves.

Although some (Smith, 2010) assert that CYP are increasingly viewed as competent social actors, the data in this study suggest this may be limited in practice. For example, although the YP who loaded onto Factor 1 viewed themselves as capable, this appears to be at odds with how they felt that adults viewed them. Although the adults did not appear to want to listen to them, these YP understood what was going on, and they knew what their options were and what they wanted. They felt they did not need adults to do any pre-planning with them before the meeting, and as such that aspect of the PCP process experienced by participant 19 may have felt unnecessary for this particular YP. Factor 1 participants therefore could be described as having agency even if they were not perceived as such by the adults involved. However, they still reported needing further help, suggesting that their attempts to take power and create their own opportunities to have a voice still felt inadequate. YP who loaded onto Factor 4 might also be considered competent

social actors in the context of an EHC planning meeting. Although they experienced the meeting as being focussed on adults' agendas, they found ways to express their views and to be heard. Their more positive view of the meeting compared to Factor 1 participants, implies that adults may have viewed these YP as having some agency and therefore expected them to engage in the process.

However, YP who loaded onto Factor 2 do not appear to have been capable of independently participating in the meeting and clearly needed a lot more help. But it may be that these YP did not get the support they needed because adults viewed them as incapable. Adults may have thought there was no point trying to meaningfully involve the YP in the meeting because it would be impossible to enable the YP to understand the process sufficiently to contribute in any significant sense. This differs from participants who loaded onto Factor 3. They reported being given lots of support to participate in the meeting, and this suggests they were viewed by adults as being capable of participating as long as they had sufficient support to do so. However, there may still be a risk here. While YP who loaded onto Factor 1 and Factor 4 might be described as having agency, Factor 3 participants appear to have relied more on adults for them to have a voice. As Mercieca and Mercieca (2014) argue, starting with the assumption that adults need to bestow voice on YP, positions YP as unequal. In this context, even if YP are enabled to express their views it is possible that their views are not treated as equal to those of adults. This may explain the disparity for Factor 3 between the positive experience of the meeting and the possibly limited impact of their views on their EHC plans. Mercieca and Mercieca therefore propose beginning with the assumption that even very young children are equal to adults. It may therefore be important to find a way of balancing viewing CYP as capable with providing them the support they need to participate meaningfully in EHC processes. Not providing necessary support risks articulate families and YP being more able to express their views and potentially gain preferential access to resources, which may in turn exacerbate inequality (Clark, 2010; Gray, 2010; Lewis, 2010).

7.6 Whose voice is heard

The concerns expressed by some that some families have more access to resources, raises questions regarding exactly whose voice is heard. McNerney, Hill and Pellicano (2015) found that school staff thought that CYP who presented with challenging behaviour or those who had difficulty communicating, were the most difficult to include in meetings. Other studies have found that children who were articulate and able to express their views appeared to benefit from the process of collaboration (Goepel, 2009). This research provides data regarding YP described as having SEMH difficulties, YP who appear vulnerable, and those who are described as having communication and interaction difficulties.

7.6.1 The voice of young people described as having SEMH difficulties

Participants described as having SEMH needs who loaded onto factors, loaded onto Factor 1 or Factor 5. These YP include those whose behaviour is particularly problematic for schools and families to manage, and whose views may therefore frequently conflict with those of the adults around them. Gibson (2006) argued that in modernist institutions when YP's views conflict with dominant discourses, they are generally considered to be wrong and quickly rejected. This is supported to some extent in the data by the low placing of item 28 'The plan showed my ideas' by Factor 1 at -1 and by Factor 5 at 0. However, this item was placed around the middle of the grid in most factors, and as such does not necessarily support Gibson's expectation. More apparent in the data is evidence in support of McKay's (2014) concern, that over time the rejection of these YP's views may contribute to the eroding of the adult-child relationships. Compared to other factors, YP who loaded onto Factor 1 and Factor 5 reported feeling that adults did not really care about or respect them. However, these items were also given a relatively low score by participants who loaded onto Factor 2 and this raises another possible group of YP who might have limited voice, that being YP who appear vulnerable.

7.6.2 The voice of YP who appear vulnerable

Both participants who loaded on Factor 2 were young compared to the rest of the participants and were described as having cognition and learning needs. It might be expected that they would need additional support to understand and

engage with the process. In total, four participants were aged 11 with the next youngest being 13. The other 11-year-old participant who loaded onto a factor loaded onto Factor 6. It is possible that for this participant, adults made particular effort to understand their views prior to the meeting so less pressure was placed on the YP to express their views in the meeting. The experience of YP who loaded onto Factor 2 was that they did not get the support they needed. This appears to contradict Goepel's (2009) finding that children who are quieter and appeared to struggle more to express their views, are more likely to experience support. Their experience seems to have been more similar to the Spanish-speaking parents in Kozleski et al.'s (2008) study who often found that school staff did not often appear to consider their need for an interpreter in order to participate in meetings.

7.6.3 The voice of YP who have difficulty communicating

Lewis, Newton & Vials (2008) argued that difficulties associated with all CYP described as having SEND being able to express their views means there is a risk that their views are overlooked or assumed by adults. Participants described as having communication and interaction needs might be one group of YP who are considered especially likely to require additional support to express their views. In this study, these participants loaded onto all factors except for Factor 2, suggesting they all had some voice and that they perceived their views were not completely overlooked or assumed by adults. Those who loaded onto Factor 2 were described as having cognition and learning difficulties. As such, in this study it was not those who struggled to express views whose views were overlooked or assumed, but rather the data points to issues around more fundamental difficulties in understanding EHC processes. Those whose difficulty was only in expressing a view did not necessarily feel well supported, but could be described as having some level of voice.

7.7 Future intentions

Goepel argued that increasing CYP's engagement in the process of planning SEND provision increases engagement in education. To observe this effect in the data, it is necessary to find some evidence of an increase in CYP's engagement in the EHC planning process rather than simply a positive or negative experience of the process. One way this could be achieved is by

comparing items 38 'Before the meeting I expected people would listen to me' and 27 'People wanted to listen to me'. This highlights possible scenarios in which YP's experience differs from their expectations. None of the factors show experience that superseded expectations. For five out of six factors, YP report that their expectations were closely aligned with their experience. Only Factor 5 described a substantial difference (38, +5; 27, +1), indicating that their expectations were very high but not met which may suggest a decrease in engagement in the process. Factor 5 also reported the lowest rating for item 31 'Being part of the meeting has made me more motivated to work hard' (31, -3), suggesting that a decrease in engagement in the meeting resulted in a decrease in engagement in education. This lends some support to Goepel's argument.

However, it was Factor 1 participants who reported the greatest intention to say what they thought in the future and this was a statistically significant distinguishing item for Factor 1 ($p < .05$). Contrary to Goepel's (2009) prediction that feeling listened to would increase engagement, for these YP it was the experience of not being listened to or cared about or respected (27, 0; 24, 0; 8, 0), that fostered greater engagement in the process. Their intentions for future self-expression appear to come from a place of anger at not feeling heard rather than from more positive feelings associated with feeling valued and respected.

7.8 Consensus statements

Four statements were arranged similarly by participants in all factors

- Item 4 – People were in a rush to finish the meeting
- Item 12 – I was in control of the meeting
- Item 30 – People understand me better because of the meeting
- Item 31 – Being part of the meeting has made me more motivated to work hard

However, not all participants appeared to interpret these statements the same.

7.8.1 Item 4 – 'People were in a rush to finish the meeting'

For this item, while no-one felt that people were in a rush to finish the meeting, there are differences between whether participants felt that this was a positive

or negative thing. For some participants (Factors 3 and 6), other people not being in a rush meant that they felt that people took their time to make sure the YP was able to follow what was going on in the meeting and understand things people were talking about. For other participants (Factors 1, 2, 4 and 5), feeling that other people were not in a rush was associated with them feeling bored or even that people were just interested in talking to each other.

7.8.2 Item 12 – 'I was in control of the meeting'

Item 12 was placed low in the sort by all participants indicating they experienced having little or no control over how the meeting went. This included one young person who was given a robust PCP process (participant 19). This may suggest that participant 19 experienced PCP as an approach that felt imposed and that she felt she had little or no control over the process. Those who reported having slightly more control had participated in more typical meetings.

7.8.3 Item 30 – 'People understand me better because of the meeting'

All participants placed item 30 between -1 and 2 in their Q-sort, suggesting they were either unsure if people understood them better because of the meeting or they felt that people understood them a little bit better because of the meeting. It is not always easy to tell how to interpret items in this central location, however, combined with items such as 'people understood me' (item 14), 'people already knew what I thought before the meeting' (item 20), 'I said all the things I wanted to say' (item, 39) and 'I was saying things I'd already told people before' (item 16), it was possible to then make some sense of the participants' views.

7.8.4 Item 31 - Being part of the meeting has made me more motivated to work hard

Item 31 relates to a perception that if YP have a voice in the EHC planning process, it will have a causal effect on their engagement in education (Goepel, 2009). Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) argue similarly that increased parental involvement can contribute to a corresponding increase in their child's attainment. Item 31 has already been discussed above with regards to Factor 5 participants, for whom a decrease in engagement shown by the discrepancy

between their expectations and experience of the meeting (38, +5; 27, +1), appeared to result in a decrease in engagement in education. However, that this was a consensus statement suggests that most participants perceived that the meeting had little if any impact on their motivation, regardless of their level of involvement in the meeting.

7.9 Q-methodology as a tool for researching with young people

Given the challenges faced by others (eg. Skipp & Hopwood, 2016; White and Rae, 2016) regarding gaining meaningful qualitative data from this population, using Q-methodology appears to offer a possible solution to this problem. The data obtained appears to be quite rich and nuanced, and some YP report that it is a good way of helping them to express their views. As argued by others (Stenner, 2011; Watts and Stenner, 2012), the interaction with the Q-set can be viewed as an experience in itself for the participants in this study. This experience appears to have helped them to form views as well as to articulate their views. The result appears to have been the opportunity to present a view that felt like a good representation of what they felt at the time when thinking about their experience of the EHC meeting. This may provide support for the notion that card-sorting tasks might be a way of helping CYP to form and articulate their views (Hughes, 2017b) more widely in EP practice.

It is important not to underestimate the value of the work completed by the co-researchers on this project. Although their role was small, they are responsible for helping me to develop a Q-set which would be mostly understandable to my participants, and which was articulated in the words of YP rather than imposing my own adult voice (Appendix 5, p.184). It may be that this has helped YP to be able to engage in the process.

Even though the statements used in the Q-set were designed to be short simple language, and edited by YP, they were obviously still linguistic in nature. It seemed that for participants at the younger end of the age-group who were described as having severe cognitive difficulties, completing the sorting task was at the limit of their abilities even with my help. If the participants had been any younger, it might have been necessary to consider giving further consideration to their cognitive ability and perhaps to have used pictures rather

than words, although as noted before, this would have presented challenges in representing some of the concepts.

7.10 Summary

These differences provide some support to the findings of a parliamentary report that there was inconsistency in the extent to which the views of CYP are sought, listened to or acted on (The Children's Commissioners, 2011). A review in Scotland (HMIE, 2007) published several years after the wording of the Articles 12 and 13 of the UNCRC (1989) were adopted in Statute, found CYP were rarely consulted in statutory processes. In this study however, most YP reported being consulted at least to some extent. The data from this study contribute to the literature by bringing to light the views of YP regarding their voice in EHC meetings when much of the previous research has focussed on parents' views. It supports and expands on some previous findings, while contradicting other findings such as that CYP who are considered vulnerable would be most likely to be given support.

With regards to the views of YP, different levels of voice were reported and this appears to reflect in part their perceptions of their efforts and abilities as well as the actions and intentions of others. Some YP felt that they had not even been given information in a manner they understood. Others felt that they understood what was going on and what their options were, but felt that adults did not want to listen to them. Some YP responded to this experience by feeling like there was no point taking part and so they disengaged from the process. Other YP realised that while they could not make people want to listen to them, no-one could stop them expressing their views. Some YP did feel listened to in their EHC meeting. However, this was not always experienced as the main focus of the meeting, which instead was often around adults' agendas and needs such as the need to complete the paperwork associated with the statutory processes. A small minority of YP reported feeling that their ideas were taken on board and that they were able to contribute to the planning of their education provision. Most YP reported feeling that they did not get as much help as they needed and what that help might look like will be explored in the next chapter.

8 Implications for EP practice

8.1 Introduction

The second research question I set out to answer was

- What are the implications of young people's views concerning their voice in Education, Health and Care planning meetings for Educational Psychology Practice?

I have already begun to explore this question through reviewing relevant literature and through conducting a focus group with EPs who work in the LA in which the research took place. I will therefore draw on these ideas in this chapter to inform my thinking surrounding the implications of YP's views expressed in this study, for EP practice. The chapter will be structured around exploring how EP practice might promote formal practice (such as interventions and procedures) followed by informal practice (such as how CYP are viewed), as both of these have previously been deemed necessary to ensure CYP have a voice (Hartas, 2008; Norwich, et al., 2006). While it is acknowledged that EPs could be considered as having the necessary training and experience to EHC facilitate EHC meetings which promote the voice of CYP, their role is wider than this (White & Rae, 2016). Furthermore, as was pointed out in the EP focus group, it is not possible for EPs to be present at, and help to prepare for, all EHC meetings. Therefore, the ideas that follow will primarily focus on how EPs might promote the voice of CYP indirectly through working with other adults. This approach also follows previous findings that adults who know the CYP well may be best placed to facilitate CYP to express their views and contribute to decision-making (Hill et al, 2016).

8.2 Formal Practice

Promoting strategies for gaining the views of YP

As Norwich et al. (2006) found, a readily recognised contribution that EPs bring to promoting the voice of CYP, is knowledge of strategies to elicit views. This research used Q-methodology, a card-sorting technique, which supported YP to form and articulate their view. That this appears to have been beneficial to enable YP to form and articulate their views, supports previous findings that card-sorting techniques can be helpful to elicit the voice of CYP (Hughes, 2016, Hill, et al., 2016). Younger participants (aged 11), particularly those described

as having cognition and learning difficulties, appeared to find the task challenging. This supports the approach taken by other researchers that younger children may require the use of pictures when using a Q-sort task (Ellingsen, Thorsen & Storksen, 2014; Taylor, Delprato & Knapp, 1994), or even a simplified task such as sorting cards into like and 'don't like' piles (Hill, et al., 2016). EPs may have a valuable role designing card-sorting tasks as well as other strategies to elicit the views of children on a wide range of subjects. EPs might use these tools in their own practice directly with CYP, and train other adults to use them.

Ensuring YP have sufficient information

Evidence from this study has highlighted the importance of CYP being given information in a manner they understand both to inform their decision-making and to participate in EHC processes. This was especially apparent for YP who loaded on Factor 2, who reported having little understanding of the content or process of their EHC meeting.   For other YP there was a distinction between having information that was understandable (Factor 5) and having information that was useful (Factor 4). And none of the participants reported feeling confident they understood the process well enough to have led it. Possible roles for EPs could be viewed as related to preparation from the meeting, the meeting itself and wider LA procedures.

White and Rae (2016) suggest that EPs may be well-placed to train school staff to develop their understanding of the disempowerment that families can feel in meetings, and the importance of preparation and follow-up for families. Training staff to conduct effective pre-planning could focus on teaching the use of the kinds of tools described above to enable CYP to form and articulate their views. In doing so, there is less emphasis placed on the meeting itself and it may be that this partly reflects the experience of Factor 6 YP who found that they agreed with everything that was said in the meeting.

However, to participate meaningfully in the meeting, the data suggest that preparation would need to include developing CYP's understanding of the meeting process. This was identified as important both in the YP's view and in the EP focus group. This would appear to be largely a communication task.

EPs could be involved in developing literature or multi-media presentations to describe to CYP what the meeting is for and what it will be like. Or EPs could provide training to staff on explaining EHC processes to CYP. Alternatively, EPs might work at the level of the LA to stipulate that a brief outline of the aims and procedure of the meeting be given at the start of meetings, or simply model asking naive questions to this effect at the start of any EHC meetings at which they are present.

It is worth noting that pre-planning takes additional time, and that it may be necessary for EPs to also work with LAs to streamline procedures so that school staff have more time available for completing this work.

Schools as institutions in which all children are heard

As Norwich et al. (2006) found and as raised in the EP focus group, good practice regarding the voice of CYP described as having SEND appears to tend to exist in schools that promote the voice of all pupils. There may therefore be a role for EPs in using their knowledge and skills to shape school cultures by working with school leadership teams to implement strategies which promote the voice of all children. Morse and Allensworth (2015, p.790f) offer a long list of possible roles for CYP in schools which enable them to have a voice. This includes participating in school planning, curriculum development and delivery, peer support, organising events, and research and evaluation. EPs could apply their knowledge of research methods to support schools to work with CYP to begin this process by understanding what ways the school's pupils want to participate and have a voice.

Person-centred planning

One participant (participant 19) who loaded onto Factor 1 attended an EHC meeting that followed what the EP involved considered to be a gold standard PCP process. However, this YP did not view their experience of PCP as being particularly person-centred. Overall, Factor 1 participants appeared angry that others in the meeting were not interested in hearing their views, and thought that adults just expected that the YP would listen to them. Although this is only evidence from one participant who went through a PCP process, it follows reviews by Rudkin and Rowe (1999) and Ratti et al. (2016) of PCP which found

'no significant evidence [that PCP leads to] people gaining greater control in shaping their lives, driving decision-making and planning their care' (Ratti, et al, 2016, p.78). Ratti et al. (2016) were seeking evidence of relatively higher levels of participation and voice which includes having views 'taken into account' (DfE & DoH, 2015, section 1.6), and a process of shared decision making which may be initiated by the service-user (Hart, 1992). However, the limited evidence regarding PCP in this study does not even provide support for the view that PCP necessarily supports lower levels of voice. It was participant 19's experience that any voice she had was due to her own efforts rather than those of adults. To find these higher levels of voice, we need to turn to Factor 4 participants, whose meeting was viewed by the YP as being shaped around adults' agendas rather than around the YP themselves.

There may then be something more subtle going on in the dynamic in EHC meetings that results in some YP having more voice than others. The meetings involve multiple people with possibly multiple overlapping and conflicting agendas. How these are managed, combined with the mix of the effort and capability of the YP, and the intentions or perceived intentions and actions of adults, may contribute to the extent to which YP have a voice.

There are implications here for EP practice. EPs may be involved in training staff to use PCP procedures to conduct EHC assess-plan-review processes. However, evidence from this and previous studies is that the procedures alone are insufficient, without also considering informal practice. Perhaps if an EP is present in an EHC meeting, one role they may take might be to help to manage the power dynamics in the group. Or if EPs are involved in training school staff, it may be useful to think beyond teaching procedures and work to develop staff's listening and reflexive skills. Or EPs might seek ways to develop staff's attitudes towards the voice of YP or perhaps seek to shape school cultures more widely.

8.3 Informal practice

Perhaps then, as Hill et al. (2016) argue, as well as formal practices, what is required for the participation of all children is 'the adoption of a positive attitude

to participation, flexibility and creativity' (p.40). It is these kinds of ideas to which I now draw my attention.

Enabling adults to listen to YP

It would be easy to think about a role for EPs delivering training which aims to develop listening skills in adults, and this was raised in the focus group with EPs. However, what was also considered in the focus group, was the possibility that adults generally know how to listen but for some reason do not. It may be that they are focussed on their own goals in meetings such as completing the paperwork adequately, and this may get in the way of adults thinking about the voice of CYP. It would be understandable that adults' anxiety surrounding completing their statutory duties sufficiently, might be experienced by some YP as a feeling that people did not particularly want to listen to them. Perhaps then, a role for EPs is containing the adults in some way such that they are more able to listen to CYP.

White and Rae (2016) suggested that EP's understanding of containment may be a subject for training, enabling staff to contain emotional needs of CYP in meetings. This was shown to be a need for YP who loaded onto Factor 2 who reported feeling nervous (10, +5) and frustrated (2, +3) in the meeting. EPs might also apply their understanding of containment more widely in their work with school staff to think about how they might contain the emotional needs of adults. Perhaps for example, as implied by Factor 4 participants, professional's anxieties surrounding getting the paperwork correct may lead to this being their focus in the meeting, and other things that are important such as the voice of CYP may not be prioritised. This anxiety could be reduced by EPs supporting schools by checking paperwork or by working with the LA to ensure the paperwork is easily understandable and not unnecessarily onerous.

Balancing roles and foci

The issue highlighted in Factor 4, that others were focussed on other goals in the meeting compared to the YP, points to another possible area of focus for EP practice. As Villeneuve and Hutchinson (2012) suggest, different roles and foci adopted by individuals in multi-agency meetings may lead to subtly different goals. Experienced EPs in this context may switch effortlessly between multiple

different roles in any given meeting and hold multiple goals in mind. Roles taken by EPs in EHC meetings, as identified in the EP focus group, may include being a good facilitator, and advocate for families and a representative of the LA. Managing these multiple roles involves holding multiple goals including ensuring all have a voice, ensuring statutory duties are adhered to and balancing ensuring the most suitable education provision for a child with ensuring resources are allocated equitably to provide the best possible education for all CYP. Other people may be likely to adopt simpler goals for the meeting. As Factor 4 participants perceived their meeting, the YP's goals might be as simple as expressing their views while some adults might be focussed on completing paperwork.

One possible solution to this is, as Rose and Norwich (2014) propose, to co-develop group goals. Alternatively, if it is accepted that as Villeneuve and Hutchinson (2012) argue, different roles and foci are going to lead to different goals, there may be value in clarifying these different goals at the start of a meeting. I have been in many EHC meetings in the LA in which the study took place. It is not uncommon in these meetings for all present to introduce themselves by name and state their job title. But perhaps there is value in extending this to include a very brief description of the role they are playing in this meeting and what they are hoping to achieve from the meeting. EPs could be involved in modelling this practice in meetings, training staff or working with the LA to stipulate this as part of the guidance given to schools for all EHC meetings. Further research would be required to explore the usefulness of this activity.

Balancing values

As well as being explicit regarding differences in goals, there may be value in explicitly exploring different values. In this study, while Factor 5 participants viewed adults as being more interested in what the YP wanted than what they needed (36, +1; 37, -3), Factor 6 participants viewed adults as being more interested in their needs than wants (36, 0; 37, +4). Factor 6 participants reported that they would have preferred people to have a more positive focus on what they wanted and what they find helpful in school. Again, this could be a useful item on a training agenda. As White and Rae (2016) suggest, EPs could

employ their knowledge of solution-focussed and person-centred psychology to train others to effectively facilitate meetings that are focussed on strengths and outcomes, and keeps the interests and views of CYP at the heart of the plan developed.

It may be that staff largely know how to focus on strengths, but a more negative focus on deficits might be viewed as an understandable position. When adults experience a situation as problematic, it may be easier to think of the child as the source of that problem than to think of themselves as the source. EPs have a possible role in ensuring adults are heard, so that they have greater capacity to listen to CYP. Or there may be a role for EPs in supporting adults and CYP to think of problems as located in relationships between individuals, such that the problem is seen as shared and that all might be equal participants in the development of shared solutions. More research could offer some insight into the value of this kind of EP practice.

The voice of young people described as having SEMH difficulties
Participants who loaded onto Factor 1 and Factor 5 reported feeling that adults did not really care about them. This provides some support for McKay's (2014) concern, that CYP whose behaviour is difficult to manage will find that their views are often rejected and this may contribute to the eroding of the adult-child relationships. This points to a possible wider role for EPs in working with schools, especially when EPs are asked to support schools with managing challenging situations involving YP described as having SEMH difficulties. As well as supporting the school to reduce the problem at the time there may also be value in thinking about how to restore the relationship between the adults and CYP. As previously raised, this could involve supporting the adults to think of the problem as a shared problem with the CYP and work on it together.

YP as capable or as needing support
As a final note here, the differences in views expressed by YP in this study demonstrates the need for a flexible approach that understands the different needs of individual CYP. Pre-planning, for example is a prerequisite for some YP to participate in an EHC meeting (Factor 2), but not needed by others

(Factor 1 and Factor 4). And clearly some YP need more support than others to engage meaningfully in the meeting, but it might be useful to think of all CYP as being capable of participating in some sense. Perhaps Franks' (2011) notion of pockets of participation is relevant here. There may be ways in which YP could be involved at a level at which they are capable. Or it may be that there are particular aspects of the views of YP that are particularly important for adults to understand, things that YP themselves are best-placed to contribute to. These might include exploring their own accounts of their likes and dislikes, things they find easier or more challenging, things that they feel have helped them in the past, what things they consider to be problematic and which of these they are motivated to work towards solving.

8.4 Summary

EPs are able to apply their knowledge and skills both directly and indirectly to support CYP to have a voice. This may involve disseminating knowledge of strategies for enabling CYP to have a voice as well as working with LAs to develop procedures that support CYP to have a voice. There is also a need for schools to develop informal strategies to enable CYP to have a voice, and EPs might support this through thinking about the needs of adults and how these might be met, such that adults have greater capacity to listen to CYP. It also appears to be most useful for EPs to support schools to become places in which all CYP are heard, rather than focussing on CYP described as having SEND. This research question raises possible areas for further research and in the following chapters I will explore the limitations of this study and highlight some key areas for further study.

9 Limitations

9.1 Introduction

Invariably, research has limitations. Methodologically, not only are the views of participants socially constructed but also my choice of topic, research questions, methodological choices and interpretations of my data. I understand that the study itself as well as the findings reflect the views of a particular researcher and co-researchers with particular participants, located in a particular time and place. This study never aimed to be the last word on this subject, but aimed simply to expand our understanding of some CYP's views that exist in order that EPs and other professionals and managers involved in the EHC process might be able to reflect on their practice. There are, however, some aspects of the research which I might try to do differently if I was to repeat the study. These changes relate to participants and the Q-set.

9.2 Participants

I approached many more potential participants and their parents or guardians than I managed to recruit. When I managed to speak to parents or guardians who chose not to give permission for YP in their care to be approached, their reasons given included

- The YP has had to see so many professionals and it was not considered fair to make them meet another unfamiliar adult if it was not necessary.
- One YP was described as not feeling very 'patriotic' by which the parent appeared to mean that they were reluctant to do something which did not benefit them directly.
- Some adults reported an expectation that the YP would not talk to me or that they would be unable to complete the task.
- A feeling that parents have enough difficulty engaging YP in their education and preferred not to attempt to engage the YP in participating in research as well.

This raises the question of what might be different about the YP who participate compared to those who did not. It is possible that most of my participants were those who were generally quite engaged in their education and in the decisions being made about them. In a sense, this does not matter particularly. I am not

trying to make grand claims regarding the generalisability of my findings. I have tried to obtain a broad spectrum of views and it appears that this is what I have achieved. It is not possible to know what percentage of YP described as having particular SEND would load on to each of the factors. Or whether there may be more viewpoints or if adding in more participants might have framed the factors in different ways. All I can say is that the factors found broadly represent a range of views that exist. However, this can still be a useful starting point for thinking about EP practice as it enables us to consider a range of needs and possible responses to those needs.

Most participants appeared to be able to complete the task without too much trouble, and all seemed to take it seriously and try hard to make decisions about which statements they agreed with most. However, two participants, one who loaded onto factor 2 (Participant 18) and one who did not load onto any factor (Participant 2), had some difficulty deciding between items in the middle columns. However, all appeared to manage to rank the outer columns without any particular difficulty. As such, this is unlikely to have had much impact on the results. It does, however, suggest that there are limits on the age and cognitive ability of participants for completing Q-methodology research involving statements and some may need pictorial items as used in other studies (Taylor, Delprato & Knapp, 1994; Ellingsen, Thorsen and Storksen; 2014).

A related possible limitation of this study is that there were participants who I did not approach as they were deemed either by EPs, SENCOs or legal guardians, to be unable to complete the task. This, then is a possible group that may not have been represented in my study. I wonder how much people made assumptions about the YP and their ability to engage with the study, just as the adults in the meetings experienced by participants who loaded onto Factor 2 may have assumed the YP would be unable to meaningfully engage.

Almost all participants were from mainstream schools and colleges. Only one was from a specialist college provision. Although staff from special schools were approached regarding conducting the research in their school, none of the schools agreed to participate. Byrne's (2010) small study of parents found that those whose children had gone to a special school felt like they had less say in

the process, and it would have been interesting to find out more views from YP who attend special schools. Also, the format of the meetings as described by participants, appears to have been fairly similar in most cases. It would be interesting to add to the data obtained from this study to find out more views from YP who had for example experienced a meeting conducted using PCP principles and procedures.

9.2.1 Analysis

In conducting the factor analysis, I found six factors. The purpose of using this large number of factors was to maximise the voice of YP. However, given the limited number of participants (21) and the significant correlations between some factors, it is necessary to be cautious regarding interpreting these views as different.

There was also a lot of variation among the participant group. Although meetings appear to have largely followed a similar format, there were a wide variety of purposes for the meetings such as an annual review or to transition from a Statement of SEN.   The YP who took part in the study were drawn from across the domains described in the SEND Code of Practice (DfE & DoH, 2015), and from across a wide age range (11-19). The intention of having this variation was to gain access to the multiplicity of views that YP have about their voice in EHC meetings.   However, this may also be a limitation as the participants may be expressing views about subtly different situations.

Furthermore, almost all of the EHC meetings were non-person-centred in their approach, and so there are limited conclusions that can be drawn from the data related to PCP. There would be benefit in conducting further research with this group, perhaps repeating this study but only with YP who have experienced PCP meetings.

9.3 The Q-set

There are also specific aspects of the Q-set that I might change were I to repeat the study. Although I went through a fairly systematic process to generate the Q-set and worked with YP who piloted it by arranging it, there are still some limitations with some of the items. The process of working with YP as co-

researchers to re-word the statements may have produced both positive and negative effects. It may have had the positive effect that the statements were more likely to be understandable to YP and that factor interpretations could be articulated in the words of YP (albeit not necessarily the specific words that might have been preferred by the YP associated with that factor). However, it may have contributed to some of the statements being less clear when I came to analyse them. Through completing this study, helping YP to arrange the statements and then analysing the results, I have found that some of the statements might have been improved.

Item 5 – 'The meeting went too fast for me to follow what was going on'
This could have been two statements. It might have been clearer had it been 'The meeting went too fast for me' and 'I could follow what was going on'. It seems that many participants related this item to item 4 'people were in a rush to finish'. But as that can have both positive (eg. 'people took the time to make sure I was included and they understood what I wanted') or negative connotations (eg. 'I was bored as they were just all talking to each other and ignoring me'), it may not really have added much clarity to different viewpoints.

Item 15 - 'I was unsure why people had come'
It would have been more straight forward and easier to place this item if it had been 'I understood why everyone had come'. I had tried to frame it more negatively as part of an attempt to balance the statements so that most participants would have fairly equal numbers of positive and negative statements. I'd hoped this would help make the process feel more satisfying, but possibly the wording of this made it difficult to place. It has certainly been difficult to interpret what participants might have meant when they were completing the card sort. It may be possible for a participant to strongly agree or disagree that they were unsure why people had come to the meeting, but if a participant placed this item towards the middle of the grid, it becomes harder to interpret. Perhaps some participants just placed it in the middle of the grid in the end as they couldn't come to a decision about what they thought about it. In this way, a middle placement may not have any particular meaning related to the statement itself. Perhaps I failed to generate a sufficient proportion of ideas which were actually more negative so felt the need to frame some positive items

negatively to create the illusion of a balanced Q-set which would enable most participants to feel that a zero position roughly equated to a mid-point between agree and disagree. Although I largely did achieve this and for most people their mid-point based on the median position or their statements in the initial middle pile was between -1 and +1, this aim now seems far less important than having a set of cards which are easy to understand and easy to think about how to sort.

Item 17 – 'I am now more likely to say what I think in the future'

This statement was included because it refers to the argument that giving children a voice in meetings makes them more likely to exercise that voice in the future. It is worded as understanding rather than what happened and might have therefore been difficult to sort (Curt, 1994). But some (eg. factor 1 – especially noted by participant 14) seemed to interpret it more to do with how they felt in the meeting. So although the statement talks about the future, they appear to be relating their previous experience of not feeling listened to and their response in the meeting of just saying what they think anyway. Perhaps with that comes an implicit statement about the future too – so they are more likely to say what they think in the future because of the meeting. So it may be that a statement such as 'I felt like I may as well just say what I thought' would have been easier to sort and still met the need of helping to think about some possible reasons for pursuing the voice of the child in EHC planning meetings.

Item 29 – I felt powerless

With this statement I made a mistake. I did not include what I thought would be an opposite statement along the lines of 'I felt powerful'. Indeed, I chose powerless deliberately as a negatively-framed version of powerful in a possibly unnecessary attempt to balance the Q-set. However, it became apparent as I collected data, that participants were frequently saying that they did not feel powerless but were also saying they had no control (item 12), that they would not have been allowed to lead the meeting (item 42) and as Wellner (2010) previously observed with parents, the YP who took part in this study felt they would not have known how to lead the meeting anyway. Almost all reported that they could have done with more help (item 25). I explored this in many of the follow-up interviews. There were a small number of YP who placed the item

towards the middle of the Q-sort as they felt neither powerful nor powerless. However, many had said that they really did not feel powerless so placed it close to or at -5 but also reported that they really did not feel powerful. It may be then that for many participants, they would have strongly disagreed with both of the ideas that they felt powerless and powerful. In this way, most participants did not interpret these terms as opposites.

This left me wondering about whether there might be other items for which I had assumed a negatively or positively worded version of the statement would have been the opposite of the statement and therefore left it out of the Q-set. So I went through all the statements and thought about whether disagreeing with the statement constituted an opposite statement to the one expressed in the item. This process highlighted some further statements which may have benefitted from further development.

- *Item 10 – 'I was nervous'.* Not being nervous may not necessarily mean that you feel confident and perhaps feeling confident is an idea which would have been useful to include. However, other items may have drawn on the notion of confidence such as whether or not the YP felt uncomfortable in the meeting (item 32), or whether they felt OK about asking questions or disagreeing with people (items 18 and 34).

- *Item 13 – 'People focussed on things that I struggle with'.* The opposite of this is not necessarily that people focussed on things that I am good at or on things that I like and the inclusion of a statement to that effect could have made the process of interpreting the Q-sets easier. In this case, the post-sort interviews often proved to be helpful to better understand how this statement had been interpreted. There are also two other statements which at first glance appear very similar to each other but for which the difference in placement for these relative to each other and to item 13 offered some helpful clues regarding how item 13 was understood. These were item 36 'people made sure they understood what I wanted' and item 37 'people tried really hard to understand what I needed'. However, given the different wording of these statements ('made sure' is not necessarily the same as 'tried really hard'), some caution needed to be exercised when comparing their relative placements.

- *Item 23 – 'I felt confused'.* There is a statement which is a partial reversal of this, 'I understood the things people were talking about', but there may be other ideas such as whether the YP understood the meeting process or the purpose of the meeting. There are statements that hint towards these ideas such as 'the meeting went too fast for me to follow what was going on' (item 5) and 'I understand why I have an EHC plan' (item 41). But something that came up in some of the post-sort interviews in response to item 42 ('if I'd wanted I would have been allowed to lead the meeting'), was that the YP felt that even if they had wanted to lead the meeting, they would not have known how to lead it or that it would have been too difficult for them to do so. This suggests there could have been value in adding an extra statement along the lines of 'I would have known how to lead the meeting'.

- *Item 32 – 'I felt uncomfortable'.* I wonder to what extent 'uncomfortable' is necessarily the opposite of 'comfortable'. All bar one group of participants (factor 2) said they did not feel uncomfortable. However, it is difficult to imagine that many YP would describe the meeting as a comfortable experience.

Item 31 – 'Being part of the meeting has made me more motivated to work hard'
This is really a statement of understanding rather than what happened. Also, it appeared to be a little confusing for some participants when they were sorting it as it required them to think about how motivated they were to work hard and then think about how much difference being part of the meeting has made to that.

Item 41 – 'I understand why I have an EHC plan'
This statement was included as it relates to feeling empowered – it was intended to contribute to the YP being able to say how much they understood what was going on and what the process was for. It might be expected that understanding the EHC process and purpose of the meeting might help YP to feel empowered. But it may be that it is difficult to place this statement among others describing what happened in the meeting. Perhaps 'I knew what the meeting was for' would have been a better statement.

Item 42 – 'If I'd wanted I would have been allowed to lead the meeting'

While this probably counts as one statement and not two, it is quite confusing and possibly was understood as two statements by some participants making it difficult to place. Thinking about ideas such as 'I wanted to lead it but I wouldn't have been allowed' or 'I didn't want to lead it but I would have been allowed' are possible to place with this card but require a lot of processing. In fact, the first part of the statement 'If I'd wanted' is possibly superfluous for placing the item and it should have been 'I would have been allowed to lead the meeting'. Two other cards could have been made – 'I wanted to lead the meeting' and 'I would have known how to run the meeting'. This would however, have increased the size of the Q-set.

Summary

If I were to complete the study again, there are some changes I would make to the Q-set. There are also some possible limitations associated with the participants I was able to recruit and there may be value in exploring how to recruit participants from this population more effectively in future studies. It would also be possible to repeat the study with different participants. This and some other possible directions for future research are described in the following section.

10 Directions for future research

Through this research, I have illuminated something of what EHC meetings are like for YP. However, it also raises a number of questions which could be explored in future research.

- A question that I kept returning to when trying to make sense of the data was what the aims of YP are for these meetings. It seemed that for some YP the main focus was to express their views, while others appeared to want to just get through the meeting. What sometimes seemed to be lacking in their descriptions was an understanding that the meeting was to make plans for their education provision. It is unclear whether this did not arise because the question I was asking was about voice or because planning their education provision was not their primary goal for the meeting.

- In this research, I asked YP if they felt they had all the help they needed for the meeting, but did not ask what further help they wanted. It was necessary to infer this from the rest of their descriptions of their experience. It may be that YP would find it difficult to think about what other help might be available, but with prompts as provided in this study, there may be value in asking the question directly to YP.

- Few participants had experienced a meeting which was conducted using PCP principles and procedures. Given its prominence in the SEND Code of Practice (DfE & DoH, 2015) and the equivocal nature of the evidence for its usefulness identified by Ratti et al. (2016), it may be worth repeating this research with more YP following a PCP meeting.

- This research was located in one LA at one particular time. It would be possible to repeat the study in other authorities with different procedures, or in the same authority once the implications of the new Code of Practice have had time to bed in.

11 Conclusions

I set out to answer the following questions

- What are young people's views concerning their voice in Education, Health and Care planning meetings?
- What are the implications of young people's views concerning their voice in Education, Health and Care planning meetings for Educational Psychology Practice?

Although some (Smith, 2010) have claimed that CYP are increasingly viewed as competent social actors, very little research in this field has focussed on their views directly. Recent studies have attempted to explore the views of YP described as having SEND regarding their experience of EHC processes through the use of interviews and focus groups. However, it appears that the reflective and verbal limitations of YP from this population has led to difficulties generating rich data. This study has added to the literature by gaining the views of YP on this subject. Q-methodology appears to provide participants with an experience of interacting with a set of ideas which seems to have enabled the YP in this study to both formulate and articulate their views.

In this research, I have explored the views of some YP regarding how much they had a voice in EHC meetings. YP expressed a spectrum of views concerning their voice in EHC planning meetings. Some experienced having little or no voice. They viewed adults as being unsupportive and disinterested and themselves as either unable to express their views, or able but perceived that there was little point trying. However, others similarly felt that adults did not help them, including one whose meeting was based on person-centred processes, and yet found ways of making their voice heard. Some participants viewed adults as supportive and themselves as capable, and therefore had a more positive experience of the meeting. Some were unsure how much impact their efforts had on their life beyond the meeting, or whether they would have still felt that they had a voice had they disagreed more with the adults. Some who experienced having a voice in the meeting to the extent that they were able to make a meaningful contribution to their educational plans, viewed the meeting as being primarily focussed around adults' agendas. Some YP

experienced having little say in the meeting but felt that adults were presenting ideas that they agreed with so not having a say did not seem important.

The study could be applied to EP practice by thinking about the multiplicity of roles of an EP within EHC planning processes and in wider school and LA systems. Good EP practice may include promoting the voice of CYP both directly and indirectly, perhaps focussing on all CYP rather than specifically those described as having SEND. It could be argued that it also involves an appreciation and holding of the many dilemmas and competing demands implicit in the EP role, working with CYP, families, schools and LAs.

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Appendix 1 – Ethics approval letter

The University Of Sheffield.

Jonathan Heasley
Registration number: 140109447
School of Education
Programme: Doctorate in Child and Educational Psychology

Dear Jonathan

PROJECT TITLE: Young peoples experience of voice, choice and participation in the Education, Health and Care planning process
APPLICATION: Reference Number 007963

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 18/04/2016 the above-named project was **approved** on ethics grounds, on the basis that you will adhere to the following documentation that you submitted for ethics review:

- University research ethics application form 007963 (dated 11/04/2016).
- Participant information sheet 1016083 version 2 (11/04/2016).
- Participant consent form 1016072 version 2 (11/04/2016).

If during the course of the project you need to deviate significantly from the above-approved documentation please inform me since written approval will be required.

Yours sincerely

Professor Daniel Goodley
Ethics Administrator
School of Education

From:	edu-ethics@sheffield.ac.uk
Sent:	09 September 2016 08:52
To:	Jonathan Heasley
Subject:	Re: Research changes

Good morning, Jonathan

Thank you for your email.

Professor Dan Goodley has agreed that he is happy for these changes to be made so I will upload the attachments you provided, and this email trail, to your application. Could you please confirm your application number?

Kind regards

Lizzie

On 5 September 2016 at 08:46, Jonathan Heasley <jheasley1@sheffield.ac.uk> wrote:

To whom it may concern

I am hoping to explore the experience of young people in the Education Health and Care (EHC) planning process. I am proposing a change in age group of my participants from 16-25 to 11-16.

I have struggled to find potential participants who have had more than the minimum input from Educational Psychologists (EPs) in the process. As I am hoping to write a thesis which considers the role of EPs in shaping the young peoples' experience, it would be useful to have participants who have had a broad range of experiences of EP involvement.

One way to solve this problem would be to recruit younger participants than I had originally intended. EPs work more closely with secondary schools than with post-16 provisions and so it would be possible to find a broader range of EP involvement among young people between the ages of 11 and 16.

The Q-set created would work fine with both age groups. There would be a difference in interpreting the data as the older participants have greater legal rights in the process. There has been less research undertaken previously with this younger age group.

My current information sheet and consent forms include parental/carer/guardian agreement that the participant has capacity to decide whether or not to take part. I would change this to a statement of permission and have attached updated information sheets and consent to this effect. I have also attached a pdf of my original ethics application.

Regards
Jonathan Heasley

--

Ethical Review Administrator

School of Education

The University of Sheffield

388 Glossop Road

Sheffield

S10 2JA
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<u>**Appendix 2 – Information sheets**</u>

2.1 Information sheet for participants

Research Project Title: Young people's experience of voice, choice and participation in the Education, Health and Care planning process.

Invitation
You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

What is the project's purpose?
In this research, I will be trying to find out about the experience of people between the ages of 11 and 16 of the Education, Health and Care (EHC) planning process. To do this, I will be using a card-sorting task which involves arranging statements depending on how much the participant agrees with them.

Why have I been chosen?
I am asking you to participate because you are between 11 and 16 and have an Education Health and Care Plan. I want to hear about what making the plan felt like for you.

Do I have to take part?
It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part (though you will also need a parent or carer to agree that it's OK). If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form). You can still withdraw at any time without it affecting any benefits that you are entitled to in any way. You do not have to give a reason.

What will happen to me if I take part?
If you do decide to take part I will meet with you at an agreed time and safe place. This will normally be at school or college if you attend one of these. I will show you a set of cards with statements on them. The statements will be different things people might think and feel about being involved in the EHC process. I will ask you to arrange the cards in order from the ones you most agree with to the ones you least agree with. Finally, I will ask you a few questions about how your card-sort to help me understand your views. In total, this should normally take no more than an hour.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?
It is possible that some people who choose to take part will find the card sorting exercise quite difficult to complete. If you like, you can bring along someone else to help you to complete it. I will also try and try to make sure you are managing the task and offer help if you need it. If at any point you find the task too challenging or become frustrated you must let me know. You can choose at any point to stop the task and end your involvement in this research. You will not lose out in any way from making this choice.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?
While there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that this work will help other people involved in the Education Health and Care planning process to better understand your experience. Hopefully this will help them to make sure that young people have a positive experience of this process.

What happens if the research study stops earlier than expected?
If this happens, I will let you know about it and explain why it has happened.

What if something goes wrong?
If you do take part and then want to make a complaint about anything to do with the research or if you feel that the research has had a negative effect on you in any way, you can contact Dr Martin Hughes (m.j.hughes@sheffield.ac.uk) who is supervising the project. If you do make a complaint and you are not satisfied with the response, then you can contact the University of Sheffield's 'Registrar and Secretary'.

Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?
All the information that I collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications. If, however, during the research you disclose any information which suggests that you or someone else might be at risk of harm, I will pass on that information.

What will happen to the results of the research project?
The research will be written up next year (in 2017) as part of my qualification in Educational Psychology. The full report will be available online. I will also produce a summary of the research which I can send to you. Your participation will be completely anonymous, so your real name will not appear in any presentation of the research.

Who is organising and funding the research?
The research is being conducted through the University of Sheffield's Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology programme.

Who has ethically reviewed the project?
This project has been ethically approved via the University of Sheffield School of Education's ethics review procedure.

Contact for further information.
If you have any further questions or concerns about this research, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at jheasley1@sheffield.ac.uk

Alternatively, you can contact Dr Martin Hughes who is supervising the research: m.j.hughes@sheffield.ac.uk

Finally…   …
You will be given a copy of the information sheet and, a signed consent form to keep. Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet. If you do decide to take part, your participation will be greatly appreciated.

2.2 Information sheet for parents/carers/legal guardians of participants

Research Project Title: Young people's experience of voice, choice and participation in the Education, Health and Care planning process.

Invitation
I am inviting ………………………………………….(name) to take part in this research. Before you decide if you agree that it is OK for them to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

What is the project's purpose?
In this research, I will be trying to find out about the experience of people between the ages of 11 and 16 of the Education, Health and Care (EHC) planning process. To do this, I will be using a card-sorting task which involves arranging statements depending on how much the participant agrees with them.

Why has he/she been chosen?
I am asking …………………………………………….(name) to participate because they are between 11 and 16 and have an Education Health and Care Plan. I want to hear about what making the plan felt like for them.

Do they have to take part?
It is up to you and …………………………………………….(name) to decide whether or not they should take part. If they do take part you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form). They can still withdraw at any time without it affecting any benefits that you are entitled to in any way. They do not have to give a reason.

What will taking part involve?
If …………………………………………….(name) would like to take part and if you agree, I will meet with them at an agreed time and safe place. This will normally be the school or college they attend. I will show them a set of cards with statements on them. The statements will be different things people might think and feel about being involved in the EHC process. I will ask them to arrange the cards in order from the ones they most agree with to the ones they least agree with. Finally, I will ask them a few questions about how they arranged their cards to help me understand their views. In total, this should normally take no more than an hour.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?
It is possible that some people who choose to take part will find the card sorting exercise quite difficult to complete. If they like, participants can bring along someone else to help them to complete it. I will also try and try to make sure they are managing the task and offer help if they need it. If at any point they find the task too challenging or become frustrated they must let me know. They can choose at any point to stop the task and end your involvement in this research. Neither they nor you will not lose out in any way as a result of making this choice.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?
While there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that this work will help other people involved in the Education Health and Care planning process to better understand your experience. Hopefully this will help them to make sure that young people have a positive experience of this process.

What happens if the research study stops earlier than expected?
If this happens, I will let participants know about it and explain why it has happened.

What if something goes wrong?
If …………………………………….(name) takes part and then you decide you want to make a complaint about anything to do with the research or if you feel that the research has had a negative impact, you can contact Dr Martin Hughes (m.j.hughes@sheffield.ac.uk) who is supervising the project. If you do make a complaint and you are not satisfied with the response, then you can contact the University of Sheffield's 'Registrar and Secretary'.

Will taking part in this project be kept confidential?
All the information that I collect about participants during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. Participants will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications. If, however, during the research any participants disclose any information which suggests that they or someone else might be at risk of harm, I will pass on that information.

What will happen to the results of the research project?
The research will be written up next year (in 2017) as part of my qualification in Educational Psychology. The full report will be available online. I will also produce a summary of the research which I can send to you. Participation will be completely anonymous, so real names of participants will not appear in any presentation of the research.

Who is organising and funding the research?
The research is being conducted through the University of Sheffield's Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology programme.

Who has ethically reviewed the project?
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Contact for further information.
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Alternatively, you can contact Dr Martin Hughes who is supervising the research: m.j.hughes@sheffield.ac.uk

Finally…
You will be given a copy of the information sheet and, a signed consent form to keep. Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

2.3 Information sheet for co-researchers

Research Project Title: Young people's experience of voice, choice and participation in the Education, Health and Care planning process.

Invitation
I am inviting you to take an active role in this research by joining me as part of the research team. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

What is the project's purpose?
In this research, I will be trying to find out about the experience of people between the ages of 11 and 16 of the Education, Health and Care (EHC) planning process. To do this, I will be using a card-sorting task which involves arranging statements depending on how much the participant agrees with them.

Why have I been chosen?
I am asking you to participate because you are between 11 and 16 and have an Education Health and Care Plan. I want to hear about what making the plan felt like for you.

Do I have to take part?
It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part (though you will also need a parent or carer to agree that it's OK). If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form). You can still withdraw at any time without it affecting any benefits that you are entitled to in any way. You do not have to give a reason.

What will happen to me if I take part?
If you do decide to take part, then I will arrange to meet with you and the rest of the research team on three occasions at an agreed time and safe place. This will normally be at school or college if you attend one of these.

1. You will help me to develop a set of cards with statements on them. The statements will be different things people might think and feel about being involved in the EHC process.
2. You will have a go at doing the card sorting task and tell me how I can make it better. I will ask you to arrange the cards in order from the ones you most agree with to the ones you least agree with.
3. Once I have used the cards with some other people, I will come back and explain how they arranged the cards, and what their experience was of the EHC process. I will ask you to help me to present these ideas to feed back to the other people who took part.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?
It is possible that some people who choose to take part will find some of the tasks quite difficult to complete. If you like, you can bring along someone else to help you to complete them. I will also try and try to make sure you are managing the tasks and offer help if you need it. If at any point you find the

tasks too challenging or become frustrated you must let me know. You can choose at any point to stop any of the tasks and end your involvement in this research. You will not lose out in any way from making this choice.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?
While there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that this work will help other people involved in the Education Health and Care planning process to better understand your experience. Hopefully this will help them to make sure that young people have a positive experience of this process.

What happens if the research study stops earlier than expected?
If this happens, I will let you know about it and explain why it has happened.

What if something goes wrong?
If you do take part and then want to make a complaint about anything to do with the research or if you feel that the research has had a negative effect on you in any way, you can contact Dr Martin Hughes (m.j.hughes@sheffield.ac.uk) who is supervising the project. If you do make a complaint and you are not satisfied with the response, then you can contact the University of Sheffield's 'Registrar and Secretary'.

Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?
All the information that I collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. Your specific input will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications. However, with your permission, I would like to use your name to acknowledge the help that you have given.

If, during the research you disclose any information which suggests that you or someone else might be at risk of harm, I will pass on that information.

What will happen to the results of the research project?
The research will be written up next year (in 2017) as part of my qualification in Educational Psychology. The full report will be available online. I will also produce a summary of the research which I can send to you. Your participation will be completely anonymous, so your real name will not appear in any presentation of the research.

Who is organising and funding the research?
The research is being conducted through the University of Sheffield's Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology programme.

Who has ethically reviewed the project?
This project has been ethically approved via the University of Sheffield School of Education's ethics review procedure.

Contact for further information.
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Alternatively, you can contact Dr Martin Hughes who is supervising the research: m.j.hughes@sheffield.ac.uk

Finally…
You will be given a copy of the information sheet and, a signed consent form to keep. Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet. If you do decide to take part, your participation will be greatly appreciated.

2.4 Information sheet for parents/carers/legal guardians of co-researchers

Research Project Title: Young people's experience of voice, choice and participation in the Education, Health and Care planning process.

Invitation
I am inviting ……………………………………….(name) to take to take an active role in this research by joining me as part of the research team. Before you decide if you agree that it is OK for them to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

What is the project's purpose?
In this research, I will be trying to find out about the experience of people between the ages of 16 and 25 of the Education, Health and Care (EHC) planning process. To do this, I will be using a card-sorting task which involves arranging statements depending on how much the participant agrees with them.

Why has he/she been chosen?
I am asking ………………………………………….(name) to participate because they are over 16 and have an Education Health and Care Plan. I want to hear about what making the plan felt like for them.

Do they have to take part?
It is up to you and ………………………………………….(name) to decide whether or not they should take part. If they do take part you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form). They can still withdraw at any time without it affecting any benefits that you are entitled to in any way. They do not have to give a reason.

What will taking part involve?
If you agree that it is OK for ………………………………………….(name) to take part, then I will arrange to meet with them and the rest of the research team on three occasions at an agreed time and safe place. This will normally be at school or college if they attend one of these.

1. They will help me to develop a set of cards with statements on them. The statements will be different things people might think and feel about being involved in the EHC process.
2. They will have a go at doing the card sorting task and tell me how I can make it better. I will ask them to arrange the cards in order from the ones they most agree with to the ones they least agree with.

3. Once I have collected data for the research project, I will ask them to help me to present these ideas to feed back to the other people who took part.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?
It is possible that some people who choose to take part will find some of the tasks quite difficult to complete. If they like, participants can bring along someone else to help them to complete them. I will also try and try to make sure they are managing the task and offer help if they need it. If at any point they find the tasks too challenging or become frustrated they must let me know. They can choose at any point to stop the task and end their involvement in this research. Neither they nor you will not lose out in any way as a result of making this choice.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?
While there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that this work will help other people involved in the Education Health and Care planning process to better understand your experience. Hopefully this will help them to make sure that young people have a positive experience of this process.

What happens if the research study stops earlier than expected?
If this happens, I will let participants know about it and explain why it has happened.

What if something goes wrong?
If ……………………………………….(name) takes part and then you decide you want to make a complaint about anything to do with the research or if you feel that the research has had a negative impact, you can contact Dr Martin Hughes (m.j.hughes@sheffield.ac.uk) who is supervising the project. If you do make a complaint and you are not satisfied with the response, then you can contact the University of Sheffield's 'Registrar and Secretary'.

Will taking part in this project be kept confidential?
All the information that I collect about participants during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. Participants will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications. However, with your permission, I would like to use …………………………………'s name to acknowledge the help that they have given.

If during the research any participants disclose any information which suggests that they or someone else might be at risk of harm, I will pass on that information.

What will happen to the results of the research project?
The research will be written up next year (in 2017) as part of my qualification in Educational Psychology. The full report will be available online. I will also produce a summary of the research which I can send to you. Participation will be completely anonymous, so real names of participants will not appear in any presentation of the research.

Who is organising and funding the research?
The research is being conducted through the University of Sheffield's Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology programme.

Who has ethically reviewed the project?
This project has been ethically approved via the University of Sheffield School of Education's ethics review procedure.

Contact for further information.
If you have any further questions or concerns about this research, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at jheasley1@sheffield.ac.uk

Alternatively, you can contact Dr Martin Hughes who is supervising the research: m.j.hughes@sheffield.ac.uk

Finally…
You will be given a copy of the information sheet and, a signed consent form to keep. Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

2.5 Information sheet for focus group participants (Educational Psychologists)

Research Project Title: Young people's experience of voice, choice and participation in the Education, Health and Care planning process.

Invitation
You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

What is the project's purpose?
In this research, I will be trying to find out about the experience of people between the ages of 11 and 16 of the Education, Health and Care (EHC) planning process. To do this, I have used a card-sorting task which involves arranging statements depending on how much the participant agrees with them. I am hoping to understand what the implications might be for Educational Psychologists, and it is this stage that I am inviting you to contribute to.

Do I have to take part?
It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form). You can still withdraw at any time without it affecting any benefits that you are entitled to in any way. You do not have to give a reason.

What will happen to me if I take part?
If you do decide to take part in the focus group, I will articulate the range of experiences expressed by young people in this study. I will ask you consider what implications there might be for Educational Psychology practice.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?
There may be some disagreement within the group. It is important that

What are the possible benefits of taking part?
Taking part in this focus group will provide an opportunity to reflect on your practice and role in the Education Health and Care planning process and to discuss these ideas with colleagues. Hopefully this will contribute to ensuring that young people have a positive experience of this process.

What happens if the research study stops earlier than expected?
If this happens, I will let you know about it and explain why it has happened.

What if something goes wrong?
If you do take part and then want to make a complaint about anything to do with the research or if you feel that the research has had a negative effect on you in any way, you can contact Dr Martin Hughes (m.j.hughes@sheffield.ac.uk) who is supervising the project. If you do make a complaint and you are not satisfied with the response, then you can contact the University of Sheffield's 'Registrar and Secretary'.

Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?
All the information that I collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications.

What will happen to the results of the research project?
The research will be written up next year (in 2017) as part of my qualification in Educational Psychology. The full report will be available online. Your participation will be completely anonymous, so your real name will not appear in any presentation of the research.

Who is organising and funding the research?
The research is being conducted through the University of Sheffield's Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology programme.

Who has ethically reviewed the project?
This project has been ethically approved via the University of Sheffield School of Education's ethics review procedure.

Contact for further information.
If you have any further questions or concerns about this research, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at jheasley1@sheffield.ac.uk

Alternatively, you can contact Dr Martin Hughes who is supervising the research: m.j.hughes@sheffield.ac.uk

Finally…
You will be given a copy of the information sheet and, a signed consent form to keep. Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet. If you do decide to take part, your participation will be greatly appreciated.

Appendix 3 – Consent Forms

3.1 Consent form for participants

Research Project Title: Young people's experience of voice, choice and participation in the Education, Health and Care planning process.

I have read and understood the information sheet titled 'Information sheet for participants', or someone else has read and explained it to me.   **Yes/No**

I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary.   **Yes/No**

I understand that if I decide to take part and then change my mind, I can withdraw from the research any time up to the 31st October 2016.   **Yes/No**

I agree to take part in the research.   **Yes/No**

Name………………………… Signature……………………………………….
Age………………………… Date……………………………………………..
Please tick the box if you would be happy to be approached at a later date to discuss your ideas further with a small group of other participants.

If under 18:

I, ……………………….. (**Parent/guardian** of …………………………….……)
have read and understood the information sheet titled 'Information sheet for parents/carers/legal guardians of participants'. I give permission for them to take part.   **Yes/No**

Name…………………………… Signature……………………………
Date………………………………

3.2 Consent form for co-researchers

Research Project Title: Young people's experience of voice, choice and participation in the Education, Health and Care planning process.

I have read and understood the information sheet titled 'Information sheet for co-researchers', or someone else has read and explained it to me. **Yes/No**

I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary. **Yes/No**

I understand that if I decide to take part and then change my mind, I can withdraw from the research any time up to the 22nd June 2016. **Yes/No**

I agree to take part in the research. **Yes/No**

Name…………………………………… Signature…………………………………

Age………………………………….... Date……………………………………

If under 18:

I, ……………………………… (**Parent/guardian** of ……………………………..…)
have read and understood the information sheet titled 'Information sheet for parents/carers/legal guardians of co-researchers'. I agree that ………………………… is able to understand the information sheet and to make an informed decision regarding whether or not they would like to take part.

Yes/No

Name…………………………………… Signature……………………………….

Date…………………………………

3.3 Consent form for Educational Psychologist focus group participants

Research Project Title: Young people's experience of voice, choice and participation in the Education, Health and Care planning process.

I have read and understood the information sheet titled 'Information sheet for focus group participants (Educational Psychologists)'.　　　**Yes/No**

I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary.　　　**Yes/No**

I understand that if I decide to take part and then change my mind, I can withdraw from the research any time up to the 28th February 2017.　**Yes/No**

I agree to take part in the research.　　　**Yes/No**

Name…………………………………… Signature……………………………….
Age…………………………………….. Date……………………………………..

Appendix 4 - Generating the Q-set

To begin to generate statements for my Q-set, I tabled ideas to do with voice, participation and person-centred planning, against ideas about experience which I adapted from Smith (2016). I then added possible statements related to different stages in the EHC planning process. Themes generated in Skipp and Hopwood's (2016) study offered scope for some other possible statements and finally, I added statements reflecting some of the main critiques of offering young people a voice in the process. In all, I generated a starting pack of 157 statements.

Thinking about my most recent EHC meeting….

Main idea	Sub-theme	Possible statements – focussed on experience of the meeting				
Loyalty, Voice, Exit, Participation						
-		**Perception/ thought/imagination**	**Memory**	**Emotion**	**Desire**	**Volition - Embodied actions / social activity (inc. linguistic)**
Informed	Told	People wanted to	I was given	I felt like it was	I wanted to	I did some of my

		make sure I knew what was going on	information about the process	OK to ask questions	know what was happening	own research
			I knew what my options were			
	Understood	I knew what was going on	I understood the information I received	I was confident in my knowledge	I wanted to understand what was happening	I asked questions if I was unsure of something
		My ideas were influenced by other people				
Listened to	Shared views	Other people wanted to know what I thought	I had the opportunity to share my views	I felt able to share my views	I had things I wanted to say	I told people what I thought
				It felt safe to share my views		
				It was OK to		

				disagree with other people		
	Heard / understood	Other people tried hard to understand me	It seemed like other people understood me	I felt like people were interested in me	I wanted people to understand my views	I tried to make people understand what I had to say
				Other people cared about me		
				I felt frustrated		
	Taken on board	People thought my views were important	My views were represented in the final plan	It felt like my views were considered to be important	I wanted to be taken seriously	I helped to draw up the plan
				I was powerless		
Chose	Decision	People tried to	The final plan	I was happy	I cared about	I contributed to

	reflected views	include my views in the plan	reflected my views	with the outcome	what happens to me	developing outcomes
	Could opt out (of the process or of the presented choices)	I knew what my options were	I had a range of options	I felt like it was OK to choose something different than what other people wanted me to choose	I wanted to do my own thing	I chose to remain silent
		I was free to choose any option				I told people what I wanted
		If I had wanted, I could have refused to have an EHC				In the end, I made my own decision
Participation	With rather than to	People tried to make sure I was included in the discussion	I took an active role in the discussion	I felt like an equal	I wanted to be there	I made an effort to take part
			I only spoke when spoken to			
	Two-way process	Other people had important things to contribute	I listened to other people	It seemed like everyone was taken seriously	I was interested in other people's ideas	I tried to listen to other people's ideas

	Involved	If I'd wanted to, I would have been allowed to chair the meeting	People spoke about me rather than to me	I felt involved throughout the process	I wanted to be included in the conversation	I tried hard to concentrate all the way through
Person-centred		Someone really thought about my needs when they were planning the meeting	People were focussed on me I was bored	People cared about me	I like being in the limelight	I tried to make sure I was noticed

Stages in the process	Possible statements				
Identification / referral	If someone had listened to me sooner I would have got an EHC earlier	It would have been easier if someone had told me more about the process	I feel relieved to finally have my difficulties recognised	It would have been better if I'd had an EHC earlier	I had to fight to get assessed for an EHC

		of getting an EHC earlier			
Assessment	All the people at the meeting knew me well	People had a good understanding of my needs	People already knew what I thought before the meeting	Someone helped others to understand my views	
Drafting plan	The plan reflected my views	I contributed to making a plan about what was going to happen	The plan was geared towards what I wanted to achieve in life		
Action Planning	I understood how the plan would help me achieve my goals				

Skipp and Hopwood			
Theme	**Possible statements**		
Variations			
Referral and decision-making approaches	I understood how decisions are made	I understood why I was being assessed for an EHC	
Thresholds	I think I should have an EHC	I want to have an EHC	
roles, responsibilities, skills and experience levels of staff deployed at key points of the process	I understood the roles of everyone involved	It was clear who was responsible for what	I understood what people expected of me
extent and type of involvement of a range of professionals	All the people I wanted to be involved were involved	Some people seemed just to be nosey	

extent of signposting to independent and other support	I knew what my options were	I had to find out some of the information for myself	I knew where to go to find out stuff that I didn't know	
mechanisms for sharing and agreeing information and advice	I felt like I was saying things that I'd already told people lots of times before	People seemed to have discussed my needs with each other before the meeting		
determining resource and agreeing placement	I had been able to meet with anyone I felt I had needed to so that I could make an informed choice	I understood how funding is allocated	I knew about how much different options cost	
Philosophy of reforms				
Involved	I felt involved throughout	It seemed like people wanted me to be there	I felt awkward	I didn't really know what I was supposed to do

Person-centred	I felt like the process was shaped by my needs			
Opinions listened to and respected	I was treated with respect	People talked down to me	People wanted to know what I thought	
Professionals taking a multi-agency approach	Professionals seemed to work well together	There was a lot of disagreement		
Developing a holistic view	Professionals seemed to be interested in me as a person	Professionals were only interested in knowing what I find hardest	It felt like people presented me in a bad light	No-one was interested in what I'm good at
Individual staff				
Staff go the extra mile to support the YP	People really seemed to make an effort to help me	Someone helped me prepare for the meeting	Someone was there to help me explain my views	
Staff keep the YP informed and involved in the process	People made an effort to keep me updated	People made an effort to make sure I was part of the meeting	People discussed things about me behind my back	People said things that were hard for me to understand

Staff seek to really understand YP's needs	Someone tried really hard to understand what I needed	The meeting went to fast for me to really follow what was going on	It felt like people were in a rush to finish	People really took their time to make sure they understood what I wanted

Reasons and critiques regarding raising the voices of YP					
	Perception/ thought/imagination	**Memory**	**Emotion**	**Desire**	**Volition - Embodied actions / social activity (inc. linguistic)**
Voice supports inclusion	After listening to me, I think people are more likely to want to provide a service for me	Some people seemed to change their views about me	I feel like people knew me better now	I wanted people to know what I'm really like	I tried to be open and honest about myself

Equality of provision		Other young people would have been listened to more than me	My plan was a good deal for me compared to what some people end up with	I felt confident to express my views	I was focussed on how the plan would affect me	I thought about how my ideal plan might affect other people
Personalisation		It felt like people were trying to understand me	In the end, the plan felt like it was very specific to me	I felt like I was treated as an individual	I wanted to be treated the same as everyone else my age	I tried hard to think about what I wanted
Service development	Improving services for all	It seemed like my input helped professionals to develop services for everyone.	People seemed really interested in what I had to say	I felt listened to	After my experience, I think professionals really need to do better	I tried to give people constructive feedback

		Professionals seemed more focussed on their own needs than mine				I told people how I felt
						I expressed my views
	Competition	It seemed like different services were competing for me	People seemed to be trying to sell their service	People wanted me	I wanted people to work together more	I played people off against each other to get the best deal
Young people's engagement and motivation		I think having the chance to express my views has helped me to be more engaged in what happens to me	I was engaged throughout	I feel more motivated to work hard now	I wanted to be involved	I am more likely to say what I think in the future

Phase one

- I began with the above statements. I initially read through the statements to ensure they made sense and reworded some
- I separated into three piles according to the relevance to the first research aim: What are young people's views concerning their voice in Education, Health and Care planning meetings?
- The piles were statements which seemed relevant, those which did not seem relevant and those which could be relevant if reworded. I reworked the statements in the third set.
- New statements arising from phase one

I had been told what the meeting would involve	I could follow what was going on in the meeting	I knew what I wanted the plan to be	Even before the meeting started, I was already exhausted from all the effort I've put in to getting this far in the process	Other people seemed focussed on making sure people listened to what they think	After they heard what I had to say, some people seemed to change what they thought about me

I think my performance in the meeting affected the deal I got	I felt like I was involved throughout the meeting	I had found out for myself about some of my options before the meeting	I felt like the meeting was designed around me	It seemed like some people were trying to convince me to do what they wanted me to do	Some people seemed like they were more focussed on themselves than on me
People seemed to want me to use their service	It seemed like people were interested in how to improve their services				

Phase two

- I considered Curt's (1994) distinction and reworked if possible, statements which would be considered understanding. At this stage I left them in.
- I sorted the cards to group statements which expressed similar-themed ideas. This led to some being discarded due to being identical to other statements and some being reworked to combine similar statements. I prioritised positively-worded statements to avoid double negatives, but also tried to include positively-worded negative statements. There were some groups of statements which while they covered a similar idea, it seemed that it may be useful at this stage to maintain more than one card to express

the idea, and if in doubt I left them in. For some groups of cards, the statements seemed to be trying to get at a particular idea which required a full reworking of statements to try to capture better.

- A small number of the statements did not make much sense on their own or adequately focus on possible experiences of a multi-agency meeting, and so these were also discarded. Cards which were too clearly about understanding rather than direct experience or those which were likely to only yield either a positive or negative response (eg. I wanted to be taken seriously), were discarded. (see box photo)

- In the process of collecting cards together, I created new statements to more clearly articulate the sense of what some of the original statements were trying to get at.

- One theme (participant's focus on self or wider service was discarded as it seemed to focus too much on understanding)

Statements arising from phase 2

Theme					
Understanding of meeting process	I understood everyone's roles in the meeting	The pace of the meeting was about right			
Understanding of meeting content (cf. confidence)	People said things that were hard for me to understand				
Confidence	I was able to say what I thought	I was nervous			
Background understanding (cf. influence)	I understood how the EHC process works	I knew what options were available to me	I understood why some things were not possible		
Expectations (cf. influence)	Before the meeting started, I expected I would be ignored				

Influence	I wanted to have an EHC	The final plan was based on what I wanted	I disagreed with some people	If I had wanted to I could have refused to have an EHC	It was a waste of time attending the meeting
Others interested in me (cf. take seriously)	Some people were only interested in what I find hardest	People seemed interested in what I had to say	It seemed like some people would have preferred me not to be there		
Take seriously	It seemed like people tried hard to understand what I wanted	I was ignored			
Respected	People talked down to me				
Others focussed on their own voice	Some people seemed focussed on making sure I listened to them				

Manipulated	I was free to choose any option	I was powerless			
Clear aims	I had a clear idea of what I wanted to achieve in the meeting				
Who is involved?	The people at the meeting were those who I wanted to be there				
Active participant / (intent/action) (cf. take seriously)	I wanted to be involved in the meeting	I was bored	I made an effort to take part in the meeting	I said all the things I wanted to say	I wanted to know what other people thought
Personalised	The plan felt like it was made specifically to help me	The plan was developed with my goals in mind	I really wanted to do the same as most other people my age were doing		

Felt understood	It seemed like other people really understood me	I think some people know me better now as a result of the meeting			
Supported	I had all the help I needed				

Phase three

- This left me with 36 cards. I sorted these as if I was a participant who had experienced being listened to one who had experienced not being listened to. I arranged from -5 to +5 as below

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
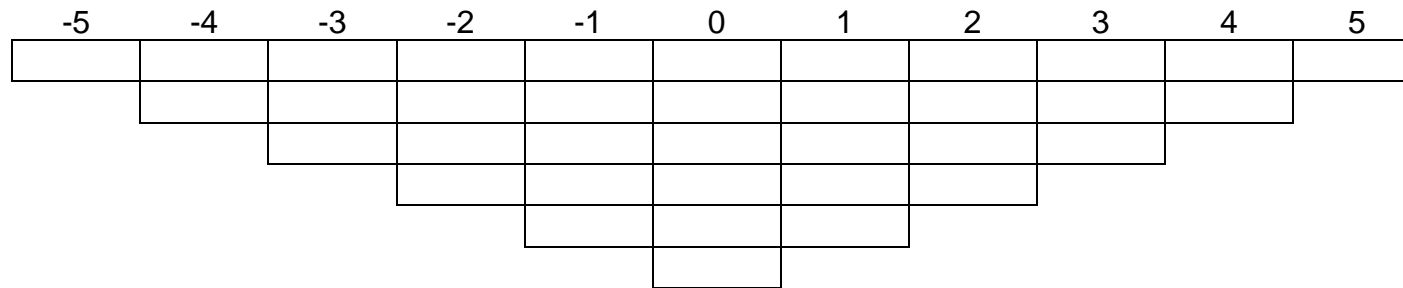
- Some statements may be difficult to understand:
  - I was free to choose any option – options related to what?
  - I understand why some things were not possible – It may be that the participant had not considered options which were not possible or they are not interested in doing things that are beyond the realms of possibility
  - I understood how the EHC process works – what does 'EHC process' mean?
  - I really wanted to do the same as most other people my age were doing – is this related to the meeting or the plan? Does it even relate to voice?
  - Before the meeting started I expected I would be ignored – could be 'I expected to be ignored'

- I was powerless – may be a challenging concept. Perhaps 'felt powerless' is subtly different but slightly easier to think about.

- Some statements seemed similar:
  - It seemed like some people tried hard to understand what I wanted / It seemed like other people really understood me
  - I was able to say what I thought / I said all the things I wanted to say
  - The plan was developed with my goals in mind / the plan was made specifically to help me
  - I wanted to be involved in the meeting / I made an effort to take part in the meeting

- With the listened to sort, neutral was at -1. Missing was:
  - I had a good idea what the meeting would be like (prior experience / preparation – either self or supported)

- With the not listened to sort, neutral was o. Disagree items may be difficult to decide between if feel really angry about what happened.

- After this, some statements seemed superfluous, representing a generally positive or negative view about the process which was already clear in how the cards had been sorted.

- Some statements represented facts about what happened and were separated out to inform a pre-interview in which a paragraph would be co-authored

- Overall, the number of statements had been reduced too far and felt thin so I re-visited the thematic analysis and came up with a larger set of statements.

Statements arising from phase 2 – take 2

Confidence	I was nervous	It was OK for me to disagree with people	I was able to say all the things I wanted to say		
Other people's views	I wanted to know what other people thought	My ideas were influenced by other people	I listened to other people		
Understood me better	I think people understand me better as a result of the meeting	People are more likely to want to work with me now	Some people already knew what I thought before the meeting		
Focus on wider service	I thought about how what I wanted to do might affect other people	People seemed interested in how they could make their service better			

Active participant	I wanted to feel part of the conversation	I tried hard to concentrate all the way through	I was bored	I made an effort to take part	
Equal partnership	People spoke about me rather than to me	I felt like an equal	If I'd wanted to I would have been allowed to chair the meeting		
Influence	The final plan reflected my views	I took charge in drawing up the plan	People tried to include my views in the plan	If I'd wanted I could have refused to have an EHC	I disagreed with some people
Who involved	All the people I wanted to be there were there	I was unsure why some people had come			
Intent / action	I said all the things I wanted to say	I tried to make sure I was noticed	I wanted people to know what I'm really like		

Supported	Someone was there who could help me explain what I thought	Someone helped me prepare for the meeting	People tried to make sure I was included in the discussion	Someone helped me to think through my options	
Respected / Taken seriously	I was treated with respect	People seemed to really take my ideas seriously	People took their time to make sure they understood what I wanted		
Felt understood	It seemed like people understood me	People seemed to care about me			
Interested in me	It felt like people presented me in a bad light	I felt frustrated	People seemed interested in what I'm really like	It seemed like some people were in a rush to finish the meeting	Someone tried really hard to understand what I needed

Expect to be listened to	I felt like I was saying things that I'd already told lots of people before	Before the meeting started, I expected people would listen to me	I am now more likely to say what I think in the future		
Engaged	Being involved in the meeting has made me more motivated to work hard				
Understanding of the meeting / EHC process	I understood who was responsible for what	The meeting went too fast for me to follow what was going on	I felt awkward		
Understanding of content	I understood the things that people were talking about	I felt like it was OK for me to ask questions if I was unsure			

Background understanding	I knew what my options were	I understood why I was being assessed for an EHC	I had a range of options	I knew how much different options cost	
Manipulated	Some people were trying to convince me to do what they wanted me to do	I felt powerless			
Person-centred	Some people seemed to want me to listen to them more than they were willing to listen to me	The meeting was focussed on me			
	I had a good idea what the meeting would be like				

Phase three – take 2

- This left me with 60 cards. I sorted these, trying to imagine I was a participant who had experienced being listened to, and then one who had experienced not being listened to. I arranged from -5 to +5 as below.

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5

- Some statements felt too factual
  - o 'Someone was there who could explain what I thought'
  - o 'Someone helped me prepare for the meeting'.
  - o Someone helped me think through my options'.
  - o Instead could be 'I felt supported' or 'I had all the help I needed'
- 'I tried to make sure I was noticed' is difficult to sort if you felt noticed. 'I felt ignored' might be easier.
- 'People spoke about me rather than to me' is now covered in 'I felt ignored'.

- 'I think people understand me better as a result of the meeting' needs to be 'I think *some* people understand me better as a result of the meeting'
- 'I said all the things I wanted to say' and 'I was able to say all the things I wanted to say' are almost identical.
- 'My ideas were influenced by other people' verges on understanding. 'It was helpful to know what other people thought' might be closer to experience.
- 'I wanted to know what other people thought' now covered by 'It was helpful to know what other people'.
- Don't need all of 'The final plan reflected my views', 'People tried to include my views in the plan' and 'I took charge in drawing up a plan'. The latter two statements are about locus of control. Maybe keeping 'I took charge' is a stronger statement which might be placed in more locations.
- For felt listened to sort, neutral is at -2

This leaves 54 cards:

I was nervous	It was OK for me to disagree with people	I knew how much different options cost	I had a range of options	I felt like an equal
I had a good idea what the meeting would be like	It was helpful to know what other people thought	I listened to other people	All the people I wanted to be there were there	I was unsure why some people had come
I think some people understand me better as a result of the meeting	People are more likely to want to work with me now	Some people already knew what I thought before the meeting	It felt like people presented me in a bad light	I felt frustrated
I thought about how what I wanted to do might affect other people	People seemed interested in how they could make their service better	I said all the things I wanted to say	I tried to make sure I was noticed	I wanted people to know what I'm really like

I wanted to feel part of the conversation	I tried hard to concentrate all the way through	I was bored	I made an effort to take part	If I'd wanted to I would have been allowed to chair the meeting
The final plan reflected my views	I took charge in drawing up the plan	I understood why I was being assessed for an EHC	If I'd wanted I could have refused to have an EHC	I disagreed with some people
I had all the help I needed	I felt ignored	People tried to make sure I was included in the discussion	I knew what my options were	People seemed interested in what I'm really like
I was treated with respect	People seemed to really take my ideas seriously	People took their time to make sure they understood what I wanted	It seemed like people understood me	People seemed to care about me

It seemed like some people were in a rush to finish the meeting	Someone tried really hard to understand what I needed	I felt like I was saying things that I'd already told lots of people before	Before the meeting started, I expected people would listen to me	I am now more likely to say what I think in the future
Being involved in the meeting has made me more motivated to work hard	I understood who was responsible for what	The meeting went too fast for me to follow what was going on	I felt awkward	Some people seemed to want me to listen to them more than they were willing to listen to me
I understood the things that people were talking about	I felt like it was OK for me to ask questions if I was unsure	Some people were trying to convince me to do what they wanted me to do	I felt powerless	The meeting was focussed on me

Phase four

At this stage I reviewed my Q-set with my supervisor. We discussed each statement in detail and some more general advice was given.

- Some of my statements were more tentative than they needed to be (eg. using language such as 'seemed to be' or 'some people'). These statements could be re-worked to be stronger and therefore easier to sort.
- Some of the statements were still quite similar to each other or seemed to be trying to get at the same
- Some of the language was questioned regarding whether it would make sense to YP.
- It was difficult to understand the meaning of some of the statements, even for an adult.

I was nervous	It was OK for me to disagree with people	People seemed to care about me	I was unsure why some people had come	I felt like an equal
I had a good idea what the meeting would be like	It was helpful to know what other people thought	I listened to other people	All the people I wanted to be there were there	Some people were trying to convince me to do what they wanted me to do
People understand me better as a result of the meeting	I disagreed with some people	Some people already knew what I thought before the meeting	People focussed on things that I find difficult	I felt powerless

I am now more likely to say what I think in the future	If I'd wanted to I would have been allowed to chair the meeting	I said all the things I wanted to say	I felt frustrated	I felt like it was OK for me to ask questions
I wanted to feel part of the conversation	I concentrated all the way through	I was bored	I made an effort to take part	Being involved in the meeting has made me more motivated to work hard
The final plan reflected my views	I was in control of the meeting	I understood why I was being assessed for an EHC	If I'd wanted I could have refused to have an EHC	I understood the things that people were talking about
I had all the help I needed	I felt ignored	People tried to make sure I was included in the discussion	I had a good idea of what things I could plan to do	I felt awkward
I was treated with respect	People wanted me to listen to them more than they were willing to listen to me	People took their time to make sure they understood what I wanted	It seemed like people understood me	The meeting went too fast for me to follow what was going on

It seemed like people were in a rush to finish the meeting	People tried really hard to understand what I needed	I felt like I was saying things that I'd already told people before	Before the meeting started, I expected people would listen to me	I understood who was responsible for what

	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
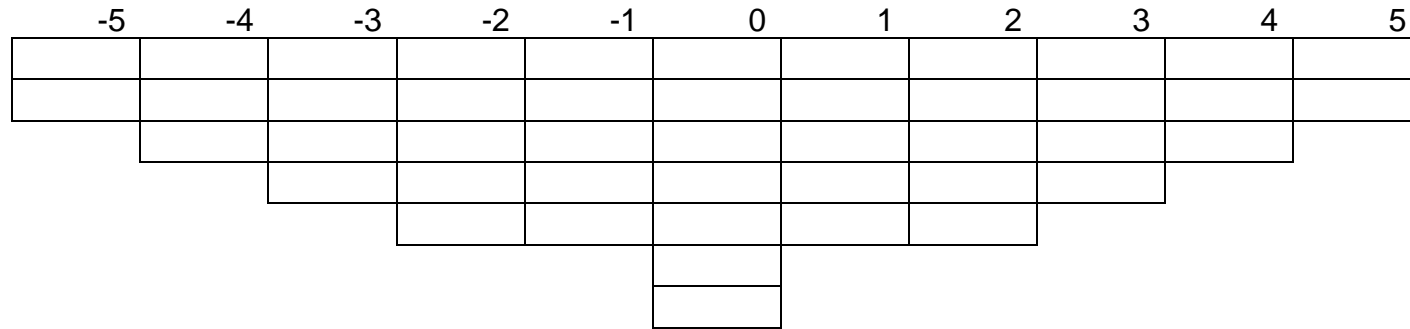
Phase five

The final stage of the refining process involved gaining input from my co-researchers. I met with two YP described as having SEND who attend a mainstream secondary school (I had originally planned to meet with three young people but one did not turn up). They had both been present at a recent meeting to review their EHCP (within the last two months). I spent three hours in total (plus a mid-point break) with the young people going through the statements and having a go at sorting them. Several statements changed, were added or deleted, as a result of this process.

- Some statements were difficult to understand
- Some were worded differently from how the YP articulated the same idea.
- Some seemed meaningless to the YP
- Some were particularly difficult to place on the grid.
- One statement was added – 'I felt confused' (item 23). Although neither of the co-researchers felt strongly about this idea, they thought that it could help to explain some of their placements for other items.

As a result of this process, a final Q-set was generated and consisted of 47 statements.

I listened to other people 1	I felt frustrated 2	I tried hard to take part 3	People were in a rush to finish the meeting 4	The meeting went too fast for me to follow what was going on 5	I could refuse to have an EHC plan 6
I felt like an equal 7	I was treated with respect 8	I understood the things people were talking about 9	I was nervous 10	I felt ignored 11	I was in control of the meeting 12
People focussed on things that I struggle with 13	People understood me 14	I was unsure why people had come 15	I was saying things that I'd already told people before 16	I am now more likely to say what I think in the future 17	It was OK for me to ask questions 18

It was helpful to know what other people thought 19	People already knew what I thought before the meeting 20	People tried to make sure I was included in the conversation 21	I knew what my options were 22	I felt confused 23	People seemed to care about me 24
I got all the help I needed for the meeting 25	I concentrated all the way through 26	People wanted to listen to me 27	The plan showed my ideas 28	I felt powerless 29	People understand me better because of the meeting 30
Being part of the meeting has made me more motivated to work hard 31	I felt uncomfortable 32	All the people I wanted to be there were at the meeting 33	It was OK for me to disagree with people 34	People wanted me to listen to them 35	People made sure they understood what I wanted 36

People tried really hard to understand what I needed	Before the meeting, I expected people would listen to me	I said all the things I wanted to say	I had a good idea what the meeting would be like	I understand why I have an EHC plan	If I'd wanted I would have been allowed to lead the meeting
37	38	39	40	41	42
I disagreed with people	I wanted to feel part of the conversation	People were trying to persuade me to do what they wanted me to do	I was bored	I knew what everyone was responsible for	
43	44	45	46	47	

Least agree   Most agree

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
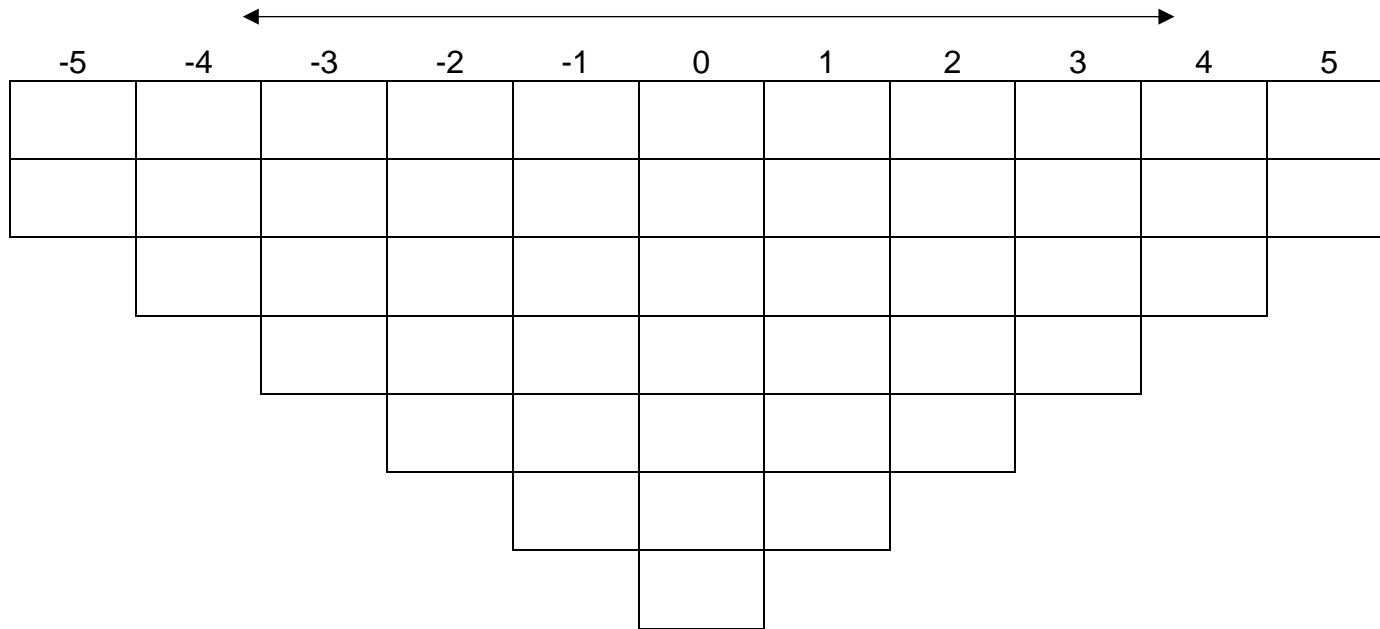
Appendix 5 – List of changes to statements made with YP

The following is a list of changes made during work with the co-researchers. Changes were made due to complexity of language, differences of view regarding meaning (eg. 'awkward' had a different meaning for the YP than for me) or because they were challenging to place. Two additional items ('people wanted to listen to me' and 'I felt confused) were added at this stage as the YP felt that these were missing ideas from the Q-set which they felt should be in it.

Statement prior to working with young people	Statement after working with young people
People focussed on things that I find difficult	People focussed on things that I struggle with
I felt like it was OK for me to ask questions	It was OK for me to ask questions
I made an effort to take part	I tried hard to take part
The final plan reflected my views	The plan showed my ideas
It seemed like people understood me	People understood me
I disagreed with some people	I disagreed with people
Being involved in the meeting has made me more motivated to work hard	Being part of the meeting has made me more motivated to work hard
I felt awkward	I felt uncomfortable
It seemed like people were in a rush to finish the meeting	People were in a rush to finish the meeting
I had all the help I needed	I got all the help I needed for the meeting
All the people I wanted to be there were there	All the people I wanted to be there were at the meeting
People understand me better as a result of the meeting	People understand me better because of the meeting

Some people were trying to convince me to do what they wanted me to do	People were trying to persuade me to do what they wanted me to do
If I'd wanted I could have refused to have an EHC	I could refuse to have an EHC plan
Some people already knew what I thought before the meeting	People already knew what I thought before the meeting
I understood who was responsible for what	I knew what everyone was responsible for
I understood why I was being assessed for an EHC	I understand why I have an EHC plan
People wanted me to listen to them more than they were willing to listen to me	People wanted me to listen to them
I felt like I was saying things that I'd already told people before	I was saying things that I'd already told people before
I had a good idea of what things I could plan to do	I knew what my options were
People tried to make sure I was included in the discussion	People tried to make sure I was included in the conversation
People took their time to make sure they understood what I wanted	People made sure they understood what I wanted
If I'd wanted to I would have been allowed to chair the meeting	If I'd wanted I would have been allowed to lead the meeting
I was unsure why some people had come	I was unsure why people had come
n/a	People wanted to listen to me
n/a	I felt confused

Appendix 6 – Sample Q-set to demonstrate and assess ability to rank items

Appendix 7 – Speadsheet used to check data entry

Formula bar: `=IF(COUNTIF($B$3:$B$4,N10)=1,-5,IF(COUNTIF($C$3:$C$5,N10)=1,-4,IF(COUNTIF($D$3:$D$6,N10)=1,-3,IF(COUNTIF($E$3:$E$7,N10)=1,-2,IF(COUNTIF($F$3:$F$8,N10)=1,-1,IF(`

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
1	Name:					Age:		16	Number:		14			1	FALSE		25	1
2		-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5		2	-3		26	FALSE
3		10	32	15	8	41	24	16						3	FALSE		27	0
4		29	23	11	37	36	13	40						4	-1		28	-2
5			7	2	20	38	14	25						5	-3		29	-5
6			5	12	42	27	21							6	-1		30	0
7			28	6	30	45					Zero:	0		7	-4		31	0
8	Status:	EHC - recent meeting - 2			4	44	43							8	-2		32	-4
9		weeks			31					Prime nee	SEMH			9	FALSE		33	FALSE
10														10	-5		34	FALSE
11														11	-3		35	FALSE
12	What	There was a meeting. I don't really pay much attention in the meeting. My mum as there. I was there all the way through												12	-2		36	-1
13	Happene	but didn't really say much. There were some other people there from school but I'm not really bothered about who they												13	0		37	-2
14	d:	were. It was a review of something to do with me.												14	0		38	-1
15														15	-3		39	FALSE
16														16	1		40	1
17		Don't feel like teachers at school respect me at all, so not being respected in the meeting is just what i expect. For a couple												17	FALSE		41	-1
18		of years - I 'always get done for things even when it wasn't me'. Didn't feel ilke people saw my opinion as being important.												18	FALSE		42	-1
19	Notes	Therefore not like an equal (7). People don't listen to me or treat me with respect 'so fuck it - in the future I may as well												19	FALSE		43	1
20		say what i think' (17). I didn't feel 'powerless - i could say owt'. Though I didn't feel powerful, 'just normal'. I understand												20	-2		44	0
21		why i had a statement but no-one has explained what an ehc is or why i have one of those now. The meeting 'was boring												21	1		45	1
22		[shrugs] - it was a meeting so it's going to be boring'. I don't know how it could ever be anything other than boring.												22	FALSE		46	FALSE
23														23	-4		47	FALSE

Appendix 8 – Co-written descriptions of EHC meetings

Participant	Co-written description of the participant's memory of the EHC meeting
1	I was told when the meeting was by mum. I had been to similar meetings before. I did not do anything to prepare for the meeting. When the meeting took place Mr W (SENCO) was there and my mum and Mr G who is the careers advisor. Mr W started talking first. He did most of the talking. I did not talk very much I was quite quiet. I was given chance to speak when Mr W asked me some questions. Mr G and my mum spoke as well. Mr G spoke about College and what I could do there and my mum spoke about me. My mum asked questions about what she wanted to know about college. It was a very talky meeting.
2	It was me, my mum, my year 6 teacher, Mr W (secondary SECNO), and the Head of Year 7, and my behaviour teacher. I was in all the way through. I didn't have to be there but I chose to go. We talked about when I come to high school and the rules. We talked about how good I'm doing in primary. I was getting far less negatives than I was in my old school. I improved in that school. I talked about school and how good I was in school. I had plenty of chance to talk.
3	It was near the end of school. I went to a meeting, but didn't really listen. My mum, I and someone from school and Mr W (secondary SENCO) were there. I didn't really have to talk in the meeting. It took place in the secondary school I was due to go to. I didn't really know anything about the meeting before, but my mum told me that I had to go.
4	We had a meeting about how my education and learning has been since year 7. We were talking about what would help me and what I should and shouldn't do to help benefit my learning. My parents, the SENCO, the school careers advisor, someone taking minutes, me and the educational psychologist were there. I think there was one other person but I forgot. It was just a meeting about my education – the educational psychologist and the SENCO did most of the talking. I talked quite a bit.
5	I can remember there was a meeting. Me, my mum Miss S (Learning support), Miss S (don't know her job (she's the EP), Miss H (learning support assistant), Mr E (used to be a learning support person) and someone else. We just talked - I don't know what about - I forgot. I didn't talk much but there was a lot of talking.

6	I was there, the EP, the SENCO and my mum and my niece who's 2 years old now. My niece sat on my knee and was trying to get pens and write on paper because she likes to colour stuff. It was in a small room. We just sat down round a table and we talked - I can't remember what about. I didn't talk much. Probably everyone but me did a lot of talking.
7	There was lots of talking about me. I wasn't talking much. College people were talking most - about how it would be like for in college. There were some teachers, another professional [EP], my mum, and some other people [SEN LA reps]. There were a few people there I'd never met before - only one of them made an effort to introduce themselves to me (the EP). There was lots of reading paperwork and checking my details and stuff. It felt alright - I just get to sit there and listen. I made a PowerPoint to present at the start of the meeting but the computer didn't work - the SENCO presented the PowerPoint as is usual in these meetings (it was printed out on paper) - I wasn't bothered about reading it out myself.
8	Lots of people were at the meeting. There was me, my mum, some staff from College including a lady who works with me in lessons, and some other people - I'm not sure who they all were. Before the meeting happened, I had my photo taken to be put on the EHC plan and someone from college asked me about what I thought and about what I wanted for the next year. I didn't stay in the meeting for very long as I get very anxious and I'd prefer to be in my lessons. Other people talked a lot while I was there. They asked me some questions like 'are you enjoying college? do you like your course? I said 'yes' to these questions.
9	I remember there was a meeting. I've been to lots of them before. This one wasn't really any different from previous ones. There were lots of people sat round a table in a room talking about things. Sometimes they asked me what I thought, but mostly I was pretty quiet. My mum was there. There were some people from college.
10	There was a meeting in school. Me, my mum and dad, the SENCO, the person who works with me in class, someone from college and a couple of other people were there. I've been to lots of these meetings before so know what to expect. People sit around a talk a lot. I didn't talk much but then I don't normally either.
11	It was a meeting in college. My mum was there, and two

	people from college and someone else I didn't know. We sat round a table and people talked to each other. They asked me what I thought and what I wanted to do after college.
12	It was a meeting with my tutor and someone else from college, and my parents. I was there for most of the meeting. We talked about college and how I am feeling. I talked a bit. I wasn't nervous because I knew the people there. They were very nice to me.
13	There was me and my mum and a couple of teachers from school. We talked about what I want to do when I leave high school, but I don't really know. I talked about what I do at home - but I live with my dad. I didn't talk that much. There were no snack or drinks. I didn't do anything to prepare for the meeting.
14	There was a meeting. I don't really pay much attention in the meeting. My mum as there. I was there all the way through but didn't really say much. There were some other people there from school but I'm not really bothered about who they were. they mostly talked to each other. It was a review of something to do with me.
15	It was in October - I think it was a Thursday the last day of half term. It was in a room next to the dinner hall in school. My nana, Mrs S (SENCO), Mrs A and 2 more people were there - but i can't quite remember who they were - one was a man teacher and I think my form tutor was there. I was there all the way through. There was no planning before the meeting. I think the meeting was so I could get more help in school. I can't really remember what we talked about.
16	It was a meeting about changing from a Statement to EHC plan. Talked about things I'm going to need to do before moving to college eg. communication skills, transport etc. There had been on outcome about me not being able to cope with exams, but I can so we crossed it off. There was a Lady from College, someone from another post-16 provider my mum, EP, SENCO, SENCOs PA. Me and my mum got across the points we wanted to get across.
17	It went very well. I did very well in exams. My mum was very proud. other people were proud too. She said that in the meeting. Miss H (SENCO) - 6 people altogether including me and my mum. The meeting was for my annual review to see how well I've been doing for the past year.

18	The meeting was in a room with a big table with some adults. My aunty and mum were there and some other adults - I think they were teachers from school. I was there all the way through. They gave us biscuits - that was good and made me happy. I didn't talk very much but I didn't really want to.
19	Mrs H (SENCO) and some college people and the Dyslexia teacher were there. We talked about me moving onto college and about my expectations for college. I was there and my mum and step dad were there. There was a lot of talking - talked about how I am in classes and my behaviour and stuff in classes. I just sat there - I talked about some things but mostly it was the adults talking to each other - but I don't mind cos I don't really like talking - not to adults anyway. Before the meeting I sat in a room with someone talking about what I wanted and stuff. During the meeting there were pieces of paper up on the walls and we filled them in with what I thought and my parents thought and what other people thought during the meeting (PCP).
20	There was a meeting in the room next door to here. It was me, my mum, Mrs H (SENCO), Mrs O who helps me in lessons and I think Mrs I (SMT?) was there too. The meeting was to see how I'm progressing in lessons and how I'm getting on at home. I think the meeting went well - I felt good at the end of it. We discussed whether I do chores at home - I didn't before the meeting but I do now. I feel pleased about that. Since the meeting I have also had a bath every Sunday night so I feel really fresh now.
21	I was there all the way through. My dad support assistant Miss H (SENCO) and possibly miss I. I knew everybody there. I just went along - but I'm not sure what they're for.

9.1 Factor 1

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
I felt powerless (29)	People were in a rush to finish the meeting (4)	I felt like an equal (7)	People made sure they understood what I wanted (36)	I concentrated all the way through (26)	People seemed to care about me (24)	I had a good idea what the meeting would be like (40)	I disagreed with people (43)	I was saying things that I'd already told people before (16)	I listened to other people (1)	I am now more likely to say what I think in the future (17)
I was nervous (10)	I felt uncomfortable (32)	If I'd wanted I would have been allowed to lead the meeting (42)	People tried really hard to understand what I needed (37)	People already knew what I thought before the meeting (20)	I was treated with respect (8)	It was helpful to know what other people thought (19)	I was bored (46)	I said all the things I wanted to say (39)	All the people I wanted to be there were at the meeting (33)	People wanted me to listen to them (35)
	I felt confused (23)	I was in control of the meeting (12)	Being part of the meeting has made me more motivated to work hard (31)	Before the meeting, I expected people would listen to me (38)	I got all the help I needed for the meeting (25)	I knew what everyone was responsible for (47)	I understood the things people were talking about (9)	It was OK for me to ask questions (18)	I knew what my options were (22)	

The meeting went too fast for me to follow what was going on (5)	I was unsure why people had come (15)	The plan showed my ideas (28)	People were trying to persuade me to do what they wanted me to do (45)	I could refuse to have an EHC plan (6)	People focussed on things that I struggle with (13)	It was OK for me to disagree with people (34)
	I felt frustrated (2)	I understand why I have an EHC plan (41)	People understood me (14)	People understand me better because of the meeting (30)	I tried hard to take part (3)	
		I felt ignored (11)	I wanted to feel part of the conversation (44)	People tried to make sure I was included in the conversation (21)		
			People wanted to listen to me (27)			

9.2 Factor 2

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
I could refuse to have an EHC plan (6)	If I'd wanted I would have been allowed to lead the meeting (42)	I concentrated all the way through (26)	I listened to other people (1)	I got all the help I needed for the meeting (25)	Being part of the meeting has made me more motivated to work hard (31)	It was OK for me to ask questions (18)	I said all the things I wanted to say (39)	I felt frustrated (2)	I felt uncomfortable (32)	I was nervous (10)
I was in control of the meeting (12)	I had a good idea what the meeting would be like (40)	I knew what everyone was responsible for (47)	I felt like an equal (7)	It was OK for me to disagree with people (34)	I was unsure why people had come (15)	All the people I wanted to be there were at the meeting (33)	People seemed to care about me (24)	People understood me (14)	I was saying things that I'd already told people before (16)	I was bored (46)
	I knew what my options were (22)	People were in a rush to finish the meeting (4)	The plan showed my ideas (28)	People already knew what I thought before the meeting (20)	I was treated with respect (8)	People were trying to persuade me to do what they wanted me to do (45)	People wanted to listen to me (27)	I felt confused (23)	The meeting went too fast for me to follow what was going on (5)	
	I understood the things people were talking about (9)	I wanted to feel part of the conversation (44)	People tried really hard to understand what I needed (37)	People tried to make sure I was included in the conversation (21)		I tried hard to take part (3)	Before the meeting, I expected people would listen to me (38)	People focussed on things that I struggle with (13)		

I understand why I have an EHC plan (41)	I am now more likely to say what I think in the future (17)	I felt powerless (29)	People wanted me to listen to them (35)	People understand me better because of the meeting (30)
	People made sure they understood what I wanted (36)	It was helpful to know what other people thought (19)	I felt ignored (11)	
		I disagreed with people (43)		

9.3 Factor 3

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
I felt ignored (11)	I was unsure why people had come (15)	People were trying to persuade me to do what they wanted me to do (45)	It was helpful to know what other people thought (19)	I felt uncomfortable (32)	All the people I wanted to be there were at the meeting (33)	I knew what my options were (22)	I had a good idea what the meeting would be like (40)	People made sure they understood what I wanted (36)	People tried really hard to understand what I needed (37)	People seemed to care about me (24)
I felt powerless (29)	The meeting went too fast for me to follow what was going on (5)	People already knew what I thought before the meeting (20)	I was saying things that I'd already told people before (16)	People focussed on things that I struggle with (13)	People understand me better because of the meeting (30)	The plan showed my ideas (28)	People tried to make sure I was included in the conversation (21)	I was treated with respect (8)	Before the meeting, I expected people would listen to me (38)	People wanted to listen to me (27)
	I was bored (46)	I felt frustrated (2)	I understand why I have an EHC plan (41)	I understood the things people were talking about (9)	It was OK for me to disagree with people (34)	I wanted to feel part of the conversation (44)	People wanted me to listen to them (35)	I listened to other people (1)	I tried hard to take part (3)	
	People were in a rush to finish the meeting (4)	I felt confused (23)	I concentrated all the way through (26)	If I'd wanted I would have been allowed to lead the meeting (42)		I was nervous (10)	It was OK for me to ask questions (18)	I said all the things I wanted to say (39)		

I was in control of the meeting (12)	I knew what everyone was responsible for (47)	I felt like an equal (7)	Being part of the meeting has made me more motivated to work hard (31)	I got all the help I needed for the meeting (25)
	I disagreed with people (43)	I could refuse to have an EHC plan (6)	People understood me (14)	
		I am now more likely to say what I think in the future (17)		

9.4 Factor 4

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
I felt confused (23)	The meeting went too fast for me to follow what was going on (5)	I felt frustrated (2)	I tried hard to take part (3)	I felt like an equal (7)	I knew what everyone was responsible for (47)	I understand why I have an EHC plan (41)	It was OK for me to disagree with people (34)	People tried to make sure I was included in the conversation (21)	It was helpful to know what other people thought (19)	People seemed to care about me (24)
I felt ignored (11)	People were trying to persuade me to do what they wanted me to do (45)	I felt powerless (29)	I concentrated all the way through (26)	I wanted to feel part of the conversation (44)	I understood the things people were talking about (9)	I got all the help I needed for the meeting (25)	People made sure they understood what I wanted (36)	I was treated with respect (8)	It was OK for me to ask questions (18)	People focussed on things that I struggle with (13)
	People were in a rush to finish the meeting (4)	I was bored (46)	I could refuse to have an EHC plan (6)	I was saying things that I'd already told people before (16)	I am now more likely to say what I think in the future (17)	I had a good idea what the meeting would be like (40)	People understand me better because of the meeting (30)	The plan showed my ideas (28)	I said all the things I wanted to say (39)	
		I felt uncomfortable (32)	I was in control of the meeting (12)	I was unsure why people had come (15)	I was nervous (10)	I knew what my options were (22)	All the people I wanted to be there were at the meeting (33)	People tried really hard to understand what I needed (37)		

If I'd wanted I would have been allowed to lead the meeting (42)	Being part of the meeting has made me more motivated to work hard (31)	I listened to other people (1)	People wanted to listen to me (27)	People understood me (14)
	I disagreed with people (43)	People wanted me to listen to them (35)	Before the meeting, I expected people would listen to me (38)	
		People already knew what I thought before the meeting (20)		

9.5 Factor 5

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
I felt powerless (29)	I felt confused (23)	People tried really hard to understand what I needed (37)	I said all the things I wanted to say (39)	If I'd wanted I would have been allowed to lead the meeting (42)	I was treated with respect (8)	People made sure they understood what I wanted (36)	I knew what my options were (22)	I had a good idea what the meeting would be like (40)	People wanted me to listen to them (35)	It was OK for me to ask questions (18)
People were in a rush to finish the meeting (4)	I was in control of the meeting (12)	I felt ignored (11)	I am now more likely to say what I think in the future (17)	I was unsure why people had come (15)	It was helpful to know what other people thought (19)	I listened to other people (1)	I felt like an equal (7)	People focussed on things that I struggle with (13)	People understood me (14)	Before the meeting, I expected people would listen to me (38)
	I felt frustrated (2)	I tried hard to take part (3)	I was nervous (10)	I could refuse to have an EHC plan (6)	I disagreed with people (43)	I understand why I have an EHC plan (41)	I got all the help I needed for the meeting (25)	I concentrated all the way through (26)	I understood the things people were talking about (9)	
		The meeting went too fast for me to follow what was going on (5)	I was bored (46)	I felt uncomfortable (32)	The plan showed my ideas (28)	People tried to make sure I was included in the conversation (21)	People wanted to listen to me (27)	People seemed to care about me (24)		
			Being part of the meeting has made me more motivated to work hard (31)	I was saying things that I'd already told people before (16)	I knew what everyone was responsible for (47)	I wanted to feel part of the conversation (44)	It was OK for me to disagree with people (34)			

People were trying to persuade me to do what they wanted me to do (45)	All the people I wanted to be there were at the meeting (33)	People understand me better because of the meeting (30)
	People already knew what I thought before the meeting (20)	

9.6 Factor 6

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
I was saying things that I'd already told people before (16)	I felt powerless (29)	I was nervous (10)	I was unsure why people had come (15)	I understand why I have an EHC plan (41)	People made sure they understood what I wanted (36)	I said all the things I wanted to say (39)	People wanted me to listen to them (35)	It was OK for me to ask questions (18)	I was treated with respect (8)	People seemed to care about me (24)
People were trying to persuade me to do what they wanted me to do (45)	I felt ignored (11)	I felt frustrated (2)	I felt confused (23)	People already knew what I thought before the meeting (20)	I am now more likely to say what I think in the future (17)	All the people I wanted to be there were at the meeting (33)	I knew what everyone was responsible for (47)	I felt like an equal (7)	People tried really hard to understand what I needed (37)	I got all the help I needed for the meeting (25)
	I disagreed with people (43)	I was in control of the meeting (12)	If I'd wanted I would have been allowed to lead the meeting (42)	I concentrated all the way through (26)	I had a good idea what the meeting would be like (40)	People wanted to listen to me (27)	People understood me (14)	People tried to make sure I was included in the conversation (21)	I was bored (46)	
	I felt uncomfortable (32)	People were in a rush to finish the meeting (4)	People understand me better because of the meeting (30)		The plan showed my ideas (28)	I could refuse to have an EHC plan (6)	I knew what my options were (22)	People focussed on things that I struggle with (13)		
		The meeting went too fast for me to follow what was going on (5)	Being part of the meeting has made me more motivated to work hard (31)		Before the meeting, I expected people would listen to me (38)	I listened to other people (1)	I understood the things people were talking about (9)			

I tried hard to take part (3)	I wanted to feel part of the conversation (44)	It was helpful to know what other people thought (19)
	It was OK for me to disagree with people (34)	

10.1 Factor 1

Participant 9 – 17 – SEMH

What Happened:	I remember there was a meeting. I've been to lots of them before. This one wasn't really any different from previous ones. There were lots of people sat round a table in a room talking about things. Sometimes they asked me what I thought, but mostly I was pretty quiet. My mum was there. There were some people from college.
Notes	I was neither powerless nor powerful (29). Other people were in control but I was able to get my point across. At times people were just talking to each other so I felt a bit ignored (11). I didn't really expect people to listen to me (38), but I just said what I thought anyway (17, 39, 34). No-one seemed like they were in a rush to finish the meeting - it was really long and got a bit boring at times (46).

Participant 14 – 16 – SEMH

What Happened:	There was a meeting. I don't really pay much attention in the meeting. My mum as there. I was there all the way through but didn't really say much. There were some other people there from school but I'm not really bothered about who they were. It was a review of something to do with me.
Notes	Don't feel like teachers at school respect me at all, so not being respected in the meeting is just what I expect. For a couple of years - I 'always get done for things even when it wasn't me'. Didn't feel like people saw my opinion as being important. Therefore not like an equal (7). People don't listen to me or treat me with respect 'so fuck it - in the future I may as well say what I think' (17). I didn't feel 'powerless - I could say owt'. Though I didn't feel powerful, 'just normal'. I understand why I had a

statement but no-one has explained what an EHC is or why I have one of those now. The meeting 'was boring [shrugs] - it was a meeting so it's going to be boring'. I don't know how it could ever be anything other than boring.

Participant 19 – 15 – C+L

What Happened:

Mrs H (SENCO) and some college people and the Dyslexia teacher were there. We talked about me moving onto college and about my expectations for college. I was there and my mum and step dad were there. There was a lot of talking - talked about how I am in classes and my behaviour and stuff in classes. I just sat there - I talked about some things but mostly it was the adults talking to each other - but I don't mind cos I don't really like talking - not to adults anyway. Before the meeting I sat in a room with someone talking about what I wanted and stuff. During the meeting there were pieces of paper up on the walls and we filled them in with what I thought and my parents thought and what other people thought during the meeting (PCP).

Notes

I think it should have gone faster (5) - it was an hour and a half!! Don't really want an EHC - don't want someone sat next to me all the time, but I know I need that sometimes for coursework, so though I could refuse I haven't done so. Meeting dragged on - one person in particular was talking a lot - when I said something, she said the opposite but it was added to my view as if i thought that! Like I had some ideas about what I wanted to do at college but this person came up with some other ideas that I didn't want to do but it was recorded as if they are what I want to do. That was really annoying. I think she was getting on other people's nerves. the bits of paper on the wall were distracting - I'd rather have just had a normal meeting where someone wrote things down. (16, 20) - I felt like I just kept repeating myself in the meeting - people kept asking me the same questions over and over, like what I wanted to do in college - they knew they'd

already asked me cos it was written up on the wall, but they kept asking me again and again! Pre-planning wasn't needed - I already knew what I was going to say before I went in.

Participant 21 – 13 – SL+C

What Happened:	I was there all the way through. My dad support assistant Miss H (SENCO) and possibly Miss I. I knew everybody there. I just went along - but I'm not sure what they're for.
Notes	I didn't want anyone there. I didn't need help (25). People don't understand me - one teacher does (one of my support assistants). I don't need anything other than food and water [so it's a bit pointless thinking about what else I need]. I don't need people in lessons with me but I have it anyway. I understand what people's jobs are but wasn't sure of their roles in the meeting. I really wasn't in charge - it was other people talking. I would have preferred no-one to have come.

10.2 Factor 2

Participant 15 – 11 – Cognition and Learning

What Happened:	It was in October - I think it was a Thursday the last day of half term. It was in a room next to the dinner hall in school. My nana, Mrs S (SENCO), Mrs A and 2 more people were there - but I can't quite remember who they were - one was a man teacher and I think my form tutor was there. I was there all the way through. There was no planning before the meeting. I think the meeting was so I could get more help in school. I can't really remember what we talked about.
Notes	People started talking and when I tried to say something they kind of ignored me. I nearly fell asleep - I was so bored. I tried in get in control - but I was ignored.

Participant 18 – 11 – Cognition and Learning

What Happened:	The meeting was in a room with a big table with some adults. My aunty and mum were there and some other adults - I think they were teachers from school. I was there all the way through. They gave us biscuits - that was good and made me happy. I didn't talk very much but I didn't really want to.
Notes	(He found the task difficult - particularly sorting the middle items. Though he was more clear about placement of the more extreme positive and negative items). I was really bored and nervous and really didn't want to be there. I really didn't want to have to talk but at least I got out of lessons - I find lessons really hard all the time.

10.3 Factor 3

Participant 8 – 18 – SL+C

What Happened:	Lots of people were at the meeting. There was me, my mum, some staff from College including a lady who works with me in lessons, and some other people - I'm not sure who they all were. Before the meeting happened, I had my photo taken to be put on the EHC plan and someone from college asked me about what I thought and about what I wanted for the next year. I didn't stay in the meeting for very long as I get very anxious and I'd prefer to be in my lessons. Other people talked a lot while I was there. They asked me some questions like 'are you enjoying college? do you like your course? I said 'yes' to these questions.
Notes	I didn't feel powerless (29) - I knew all the answers to the questions people asked me because it was about what I wanted like what job I wanted to do and things. People wanted to know

what I thought (27) so I felt like they cared about me (24) and didn't feel ignored (11). I didn't really have much say about how the meeting was run (12) and wouldn't know how to lead it - they probably wouldn't have let me anyway even if I did (42). I'd have been too nervous to do that anyway (10).

Participant 10 – 16 – SL+C

What Happened:

There was a meeting in school. Me, my mum and dad, the SENCO, the person who works with me in class, someone from college and a couple of other people were there. I've been to lots of these meetings before so know what to expect. People sit around a talk a lot. I didn't talk much but then I don't normally either.

Notes

It was helpful to have someone from college to explain what my options were (22), but I felt a bit like she was trying to get me to do a different course to the one I planned to do (45) - I'm not sure why. I think it was still OK for me to disagree with her though (34). I didn't feel powerless because the meeting was about me and people asked me questions that only I could answer such as what I like or what I want. I'm not really sure why I have an EHC (41) - I think it's so that I can have someone with me in classes to help me with my work. I'm happy with having someone in my classes but if I wasn't I think I could refuse to have them there (6). People showed they cared (24) by asking me things in a nice way that seemed like they really wanted to know what I thought. My previous experience of these meetings is that people wanted to know what I thought (40, 38).

Participant 12 – 19 – Cognition and Learning

What Happened:

It was a meeting with my tutor and someone else from college, and my parents. I was there for most of the meeting. We talked about college and how I am feeling. I talked a bit. I wasn't

Notes	nervous because I knew the people there. They were very nice to me.

| Notes | I didn't really manage to understand everything (9) - sometimes people were talking and I got a bit lost (5). I felt in control (12) as it was all about me. This meant that I wasn't bored or ignored - people kept asking me questions. I'm not sure what the final plan is (28). |

10.4 Factor 4

Participant 16 – 15 – SL+C

| What Happened: | It was a meeting about changing from a Statement to EHC plan. Talked about things I'm going to need to do before moving to college eg. communication skills, transport etc. There had been on outcome about me not being able to cope with exams, but I can so we crossed it off. There was a Lady from College, someone from another post-16 provider my mum, EP, SENCO, SENCOs PA. Me and my mum got across the points we wanted to get across. |

| Notes | People mostly understood me but kept trying to push the exam thing (they thought I was stressed about my exams) which I didn't think was a problem (14). I had the power to say what I thought - things weren't going to happen that I disagreed with. I didn't feel powerful. I didn't understand what people's roles were until they explained it - though not everyone explained their roles well - I wasn't sure why someone was typing things up. It would have been nicer if I could have had the opportunity to take charge of the meeting process but I had to wait for an opportunity. Partly, the process of going through all the paperwork seemed too complicated for me to be able to lead that. It seemed like all some people cared about was completing the paperwork - the meeting was shaped around this but all I wanted was to be able to |

say what I thought. I did get my point across but the meeting was focussed on the paperwork. I wasn't told whether or not I could refuse to have an EHC - as it happened I wanted one but for someone else, they might not know if they're not told they can refuse it. 'I really liked doing this task - it was really helpful to have the [statements] to help me remember and think of things - I wouldn't have thought about most of those things if you'd just asked me about [the meeting]'. Overall I think it's a good description of what I think.

Participant 17 – SL+C

What Happened:	It went very well. I did very well in GCSEs. My mum was very proud. other people were proud too. She said that in the meeting. Miss H (SENCO) - 6 people altogether including me and my mum. The meeting was for my annual review to see how well I've been doing for the past year.
Notes	I wasn't bored because I didn't know about my scores before the meeting. The meeting was about me but I allowed people to have their own opinions - so didn't feel powerless but also not powerful (29). I understand why I have an EHC but I couldn't refuse one because it's there because of what teachers think about me. Overall I think this Q-sort is a good description of what I think.

10.5 Factor 5

Participant 7 – 15 – SL+C

What Happened:	There was lots of talking about me. I wasn't talking much. College people were talking most - about how it would be like for in college. There were some teachers, another professional [EP], my mum, and some other people [SEN LA reps]. There were a few people there I'd never met before - only one of them made an effort to introduce themselves to me (the EP). There was lots of reading paperwork and checking my details and stuff. It felt

	alright - I just get to sit thee and listen. I made a PowerPoint to present at the start of the meeting but the computer didn't work - the SENCO presented the PowerPoint as is usual in these meetings (it was printed out on paper) - I wasn't bothered about reading it out myself.
Notes	I was nervous at the start but warmed up (10). I knew what my options were because it was discussed at length in the meeting (22). I'd only talk when I disagreed with stuff which wasn't much - I felt like I could talk at these points. I felt sort of powerful in the meeting because if they had questions about me I was best placed to answer them as I know most about me (29). Not bored as I missed my lesson and there was always something to listen to (46). People didn't really try hard to figure out what I needed (37) - they did seem to want to listen to me (27) and talked about both things I'm good at and things I struggle with (13), but didn't try really hard to find out about me.

Participant 13 – 15 – SEMH

What Happened:	There was me and my mum and a couple of teachers from school. We talked about what I want to do when I leave high school, but I don't really know. I talked about what I do at home - but I live with my dad. I didn't talk that much. There were no snack or drinks. I didn't do anything to prepare for the meeting.
Notes	I wasn't in control. I was brave to talk (so wasn't powerless). But had no control over how the meeting went or what we talked about.

10.6 Factor 6

Participant 1 – 16 – SL+C

What Happened:	I was told when the meeting was by mum. I had been to similar meetings before. I did not do anything to prepare for the meeting. When the meeting took place Mr W (SENCO) was there and my mum and Mr G who is the careers advisor. Mr W started talking first. He did most of the talking. I did not talk very much I was quite quiet. I was given chance to speak when Mr W asked me some questions. Mr G and my mum spoke as well. Mr G spoke about College and what I could do there and my mum spoke about me. My mum asked questions about what she wanted to know about college. It was a very talky meeting.
Notes	Didn't really listen very much to other people as I was bored. I don't know how it could have been less boring. However, I said all the things I wanted to say, and people listened to me. It felt like the meeting was all about me. Though I didn't disagree with people, I felt I could have done if I'd wanted. I wasn't in control of what happened in the meeting but I wasn't powerless because I was able to say things I wanted to say. I think people tried to make a plan based on helping me with the things I'm not good at (37) but they didn't seem interested in what I like or find interesting (36).

Participant 3 – 11 Physical

What Happened:	It was near the end of school. I went to a meeting, but didn't really listen. My mum, I and someone from school and Mr W (secondary SENCO) were there. I didn't really have to talk in the meeting. It took place in the secondary school I was due to go to. I didn't really know anything about the meeting before, but my mum told me that I had to go.
Notes	Overall, I felt like part of the group and treated with respect. Though I didn't talk very much, I said all the things I wanted to

say. I suppose I didn't really disagree with what other people were saying so I didn't really have anything much to add. I understand why I have an EHC plan (though Jonathan had to explain what an EHC was when I was completing the card sort). I think I could refuse one if I wanted but I want one so it doesn't make any difference.

Participant 5 – 13 – Cognition and Learning

What Happened:	I can remember there was a meeting. Me, my mum Miss S (Learning support), Miss Sc but I don't know her job (she's the EP), Miss H (learning support assistant), Mr E (used to be a learning support person) and someone else. We just talked - I don't know what about - I forgot. I didn't talk much but there was a lot of talking.
Notes	I was proper bad before and now I'm good (motivation). My mum cares about me and she loves me. Loads of people cared about me. Talking about rugby would have made it more fun - I'm really good at rugby. The top 3 or 4 lines were hard o chose between which I agreed with most. My plan is to go to special school which I want to do.

Appendix 11 – Factor crib sheets

Factor 1 interpretation			*If tied - change from blue to red*
Item #	How many tied?	Item rank	Statement
Plus 5			
17			I am now more likely to say what I think in the future
35			People wanted me to listen to them
Items ranked higher in this factor than other factors			
1		4	I listened to other people
6	1	1	I could refuse to have an EHC plan
22		4	I knew what my options were
33		4	All the people I wanted to be there were at the meeting
34		3	It was OK for me to disagree with people
43		2	I disagreed with people
			#N/A
			#N/A
			#N/A
			#N/A
Items ranked lower in this factor than other factors			
7		-3	I felt like an equal
8	2	0	I was treated with respect
14		0	People understood me
24		0	People seemed to care about me
27		0	People wanted to listen to me
32		-4	I felt uncomfortable
36		-2	People made sure they understood what I wanted
38		-1	Before the meeting, I expected people would listen to me
			#N/A
			#N/A
Minus 5			
29			I felt powerless
10			I was nervous

Other important items			Rationale
5		-3	The meeting went too fast for me to follow what was going on	Somewhat able to engage as well as confident participant in the meeting? - but still could have done with a little more help to engage in the meeting (25,0).
37		-	People tried really	People didn't make sure they understood

		2	hard to understand what I needed	what I wanted (36, -2) or try hard to understand what I needed (37, -2), so didn't understand me (14, 0). Cf.13
30		1	People understand me better because of the meeting	They didn't understand me and I'm not sure the meeting really helped
3		2	I tried hard to take part	relates to 44 - I'm not sure I wanted to be part of the conversation
41		-1	I understand why I have an EHC plan	relates to 6 - I'm not sure if I understand why I have an EHC plan (6, 1)
45		0	People were trying to persuade me to do what they wanted me to do	not listen to me and to some extend trying to persuade me to do what they wanted me to do
47		1	I knew what everyone was responsible for	Although all the people I wanted to be there were at the meeting (33, 4), I wasn't really sure what everyone who was there was responsible for (47, 1).
39		3	I said all the things I wanted to say	relates to 18 (Ok to ask questions) and 14 (people understood me) - also, not nervous (10) or powerless (29).
4		-4	People were in a rush to finish the meeting	More negative connotations than in other factors - therefore bored rather than taking time to listen to me
23		-4	I felt confused	relates to 10, 32 (not nervous or uncomfortable)
25		0	I got all the help I needed for the meeting	despite not feeling nervous or confused (10, -5; 23, -4), I still could have done with more help.
13		2	People focussed on things that I struggle with	focussed on things I struggle with, but didn't try really hard to understand what I needed (37)
46		2	I was bored	relates to 4 - people weren't in a rush
16		3	I was saying things that I'd already told people before	participant 19 - people kept asking me the same questions over and over - ie interpreted differently by participants in this factor
44		0	I wanted to feel part of the conversation	I'm not sure people wanted to listen to me (27, 0), but then I'm not sure how much I wanted to feel part of the conversation (44,0). I made an effort to take part (3, 2).
9		2	I understood the things people were talking about	not confused (23) and the meeting didn't go too fast for me to follow what was going on (5)
18		3	It was OK for me to ask questions	It was OK to disagree with people (34, 3) and to ask questions (18, 3)

Factor 2 interpretation			*If tied - change from blue to red*
Item #	How many tied?	Item rank	Statement
Plus 5			
10			I was nervous
46			I was bored
Items ranked higher in this factor than other factors			
2		3	I felt frustrated
5		4	The meeting went too fast for me to follow what was going on
10		5	I was nervous
11		1	I felt ignored
15		0	I was unsure why people had come
16		4	I was saying things that I'd already told people before
23		3	I felt confused
29		0	I felt powerless
30	1	2	People understand me better because of the meeting
32		4	I felt uncomfortable
45		1	People were trying to persuade me to do what they wanted me to do
46		5	I was bored
Items ranked lower in this factor than other factors			
1		-2	I listened to other people
6		-5	I could refuse to have an EHC plan
8	2	0	I was treated with respect
9		-3	I understood the things people were talking about
12		-5	I was in control of the meeting
21		0	People tried to make sure I was included in the conversation
22		-4	I knew what my options were
25		-1	I got all the help I needed for the meeting
26		-3	I concentrated all the way through
28		-2	The plan showed my ideas
34		-1	It was OK for me to disagree with people
40		-4	I had a good idea what the meeting would be like
41		-3	I understand why I have an EHC plan
42		-4	If I'd wanted I would have been allowed to lead the meeting
44		-2	I wanted to feel part of the conversation
47		-3	I knew what everyone was responsible for
Minus 5			
6			I could refuse to have an EHC plan
12			I was in control of the meeting

Other important items				Rationale
18		1	It was OK for me to ask questions	relates to 34 - kind of ok to ask questions, bit less ok to disagree with people
39		2	I said all the things I wanted to say	relates to 16 - saying things I'd said before but there wasn't much else I wanted to say…?
14		3	People understood me	people understood the things I did say
24		2	People seemed to care about me	see 38
27		2	People wanted to listen to me	see 38
38		2	Before the meeting, I expected people would listen to me	relates to 27 - my expectations were not very high and my experience met my expectations

Factor 3 interpretation			If tied - change from blue to red
Item #	How many tied?	Item rank	Statement
Plus 5			
24			People seemed to care about me
27			People wanted to listen to me
Items ranked higher in this factor than other factors			
3		4	I tried hard to take part
12	1	-2	I was in control of the meeting
24	2	5	People seemed to care about me
27		5	People wanted to listen to me
31		1	Being part of the meeting has made me more motivated to work hard
36		3	People made sure they understood what I wanted
37	1	4	People tried really hard to understand what I needed
42		0	If I'd wanted I would have been allowed to lead the meeting
44	1	1	I wanted to feel part of the conversation
			#N/A
Items ranked lower in this factor than other factors			
5	1	-4	The meeting went too fast for me to follow what was going on
11	1	-5	I felt ignored
13		-1	People focussed on things that I struggle with
15		-4	I was unsure why people had come
19		-2	It was helpful to know what other people thought
20		-3	People already knew what I thought before the meeting
22		1	I knew what my options were
29	2	-5	I felt powerless
33	1	0	All the people I wanted to be there were at the meeting
46		-4	I was bored
Minus 5			
11			I felt ignored
29			I felt powerless

Other important items				Rationale
45		-3	People were trying to persuade me to do what they wanted me to do	relates to 22 - I wasn't sure what my options were but didn't feel like people were trying to persuade me to do things they wanted me to do
40		2	I had a good idea what the meeting would be like	cf. 38 - fairly high expectations
38		4	Before the meeting, I expected people would listen to me	cf 40 - fairly high expectations
21		2	People tried to make sure I was included in the conversation	relates to 3 - I tried really hard to take part and other people also tried to make sure I was included
1		3	I listened to other people	relates to 3 - I tried hard to take part eg. by listening to others
35		2	People wanted me to listen to them	relates to 1 - people wanted me to listen to them and I did. Also 27 - people wanted to listen to me more than they wanted me to listen to them
28		1	The plan showed my ideas	cf 22 - not sure of my options or of how much the plan reflects my ideas - so although I felt listened to I don't know how much impact that has had on my life
10		1	I was nervous	relates to 3 - a bit nervous but tried really hard to take part anyway
14		1	People understood me	relates to 27 and 30 - people wanted to listen to me but I'm not sure they understood me
30		0	People understand me better because of the meeting	see 14
9		-1	I understood the things people were talking about	relates to 1 - I listened but didn't always understand people
41		-2	I understand why I have an EHC plan	Again is about feeling like they understood what was going on and the purpose of it
26		-1	I concentrated all the way through	relates to 3 - although I tried hard to take part, I still struggled to concentrate all the way through

Factor 4 interpretation	How many tied?	Item rank	*If tied - change from blue to red*
Item #			Statement
Plus 5			
24			People seemed to care about me
13			People focussed on things that I struggle with
Items ranked higher in this factor than other factors			
13		4	People focussed on things that I struggle with
19		4	It was helpful to know what other people thought
20		0	People already knew what I thought before the meeting
21	1	3	People tried to make sure I was included in the conversation
24	2	5	People seemed to care about me
28		3	The plan showed my ideas
30	1	2	People understand me better because of the meeting
39		4	I said all the things I wanted to say
41	1	1	I understand why I have an EHC plan
			#N/A
Items ranked lower in this factor than other factors			
5	1	-4	The meeting went too fast for me to follow what was going on
11	1	-5	I felt ignored
23		-5	I felt confused
35		0	People wanted me to listen to them
			#N/A
			#N/A
			#N/A
			#N/A
			#N/A
			#N/A
Minus 5			
23			I felt confused
11			I felt ignored

Other important items				Rationale
29		-3	I felt powerless	talked about by participant 16
6		-2	I could refuse to have an EHC plan	relates to 41 - I have some understanding of why I have an EHC plan but really don't think I could refuse to have one
40		1	I had a good idea what the meeting would be like	cf 38 - not quite sure what to expect from the meeting
38		1	Before the meeting, I expected people would listen to me	cf. 40 - not quite sure what to expect from the meeting
42		-2	If I'd wanted I would have been allowed to lead the meeting	cf 12 - limited control
12		-2	I was in control of the meeting	cf 42 - limited control
4		-4	People were in a rush to finish the meeting	relates to 5 and 23 - the pace was good and I was able to follow what was going on
43		-1	I disagreed with people	cf 34 - I didn't disagree with people much but felt like it was OK to disagree if I wanted
34		2	It was OK for me to disagree with people	see above
10		0	I was nervous	a bit nervous
14		1	People understood me	participant 16, item 1 - people focussed on things I struggle with and they didn't always understand me when I told them these things weren't problems
37		3	People tried really hard to understand what I needed	...but focussed on deficits (13)
33		2	All the people I wanted to be there were at the meeting	relates to 47 and 15 and mentioned by participant 16
47		0	I knew what everyone was responsible for	see 33
15		-1	I was unsure why people had come	see 33
18		4	It was OK for me to ask questions	relates to 39 - able to say what they wanted to say. But 34 - slightly less ok to disagree with people

Factor 5 interpretation			If tied - change from blue to red
Item #	How many tied?	Item rank	Statement
Plus 5			
18			It was OK for me to ask questions
38			Before the meeting, I expected people would listen to me
Items ranked higher in this factor than other factors			
9		4	I understood the things people were talking about
14		4	People understood me
18		5	It was OK for me to ask questions
26		3	I concentrated all the way through
38		5	Before the meeting, I expected people would listen to me
40		3	I had a good idea what the meeting would be like
41	1	1	I understand why I have an EHC plan
44	1	1	I wanted to feel part of the conversation
			#N/A
			#N/A
Items ranked lower in this factor than other factors			
2		-5	I felt frustrated
3		-3	I tried hard to take part
4		-5	People were in a rush to finish the meeting
8	2	0	I was treated with respect
17		-2	I am now more likely to say what I think in the future
29	2	-5	I felt powerless
31		-3	Being part of the meeting has made me more motivated to work hard
33	1	0	All the people I wanted to be there were at the meeting
37		-3	People tried really hard to understand what I needed
39		-2	I said all the things I wanted to say
Minus 5			
29			I felt powerless
4			People were in a rush to finish the meeting

Other important items				Rationale
12		-4	I was in control of the meeting	really not in control
23		-4	I felt confused	relates to 14 and 9 - people understood me and I understood them
36		1	People made sure they understood what I wanted	relates to 37 and 21 - people really didn't try hard to understand what I needed and I'm not sure they made much effort to make sure they understood what I wanted or made sure I was included in the conversation
21		1	People tried to make sure I was included in the conversation	see 36
22		2	I knew what my options were	mentioned by participant 7
13		3	People focussed on things that I struggle with	mentioned by participant 7
35		4	People wanted me to listen to them	cf 27 - people wanted me to listen to them more than they wanted to listen to me
27		2	People wanted to listen to me	see 35
43		0	I disagreed with people	cf 34 - I disagreed with people a bit and felt kind of OK about doing so
34		1	It was OK for me to disagree with people	see 43
30		1	People understand me better because of the meeting	14 - people understood the things I said but 39 - I didn't say all the things I wanted to say so I'm not sure how much people understand me better because of the meeting
20		-1	People already knew what I thought before the meeting	relates to 30 - I'm not sure how well people understood me before the meeting and I don't know if the meeting has helped them understand me any better.
10		-2	I was nervous	relates to 46 and 32 - nervous, bored and uncomfortable
46		-2	I was bored	see 10
32		-1	I felt uncomfortable	see 10
45		-1	People were trying to persuade me to do what they wanted me to do	not respected (8)

Factor 6 interpretation			*If tied - change from blue to red*
Item #	How many tied?	Item rank	Statement
Plus 5			
24			People seemed to care about me
25			I got all the help I needed for the meeting
Items ranked higher in this factor than other factors			
6	1	1	I could refuse to have an EHC plan
7		3	I felt like an equal
8		4	I was treated with respect
21	1	3	People tried to make sure I was included in the conversation
24	2	5	People seemed to care about me
25		5	I got all the help I needed for the meeting
37	1	4	People tried really hard to understand what I needed
47		2	I knew what everyone was responsible for
			#N/A
			#N/A
Items ranked lower in this factor than other factors			
16		-5	I was saying things that I'd already told people before
30		-1	People understand me better because of the meeting
43		-4	I disagreed with people
45		-5	People were trying to persuade me to do what they wanted me to do
			#N/A
			#N/A
			#N/A
			#N/A
			#N/A
			#N/A
Minus 5			
16			I was saying things that I'd already told people before
45			People were trying to persuade me to do what they wanted me to do

Other important items				Rationale
29		-4	I felt powerless	cf 10, 32 - not powerless, nervous or uncomfortable
10		-3	I was nervous	see 29
32		-3	I felt uncomfortable	see 29
11		-4	I felt ignored	cf 2 - not ignored or frustrated
2		-3	I felt frustrated	see 11
39		1	I said all the things I wanted to say	cf 27, 35 - genreally positive, BUT not really sure how much people wanted to listen to me or me to listen to them, and I didn't really get to say al the things I wanted to say
27		1	People wanted to listen to me	see 39
35		2	People wanted me to listen to them	see 39
41		-1	I understand why I have an EHC plan	relates to 6 - I could refuse an EHC and I'm not really sure why I have one
38		0	Before the meeting, I expected people would listen to me	cf 40 - not sure what to expect from the meeting
40		0	I had a good idea what the meeting would be like	see 38
26		-1	I concentrated all the way through	relates to 1, 3 and 46 - bored and didn't always concentrate
3		-1	I tried hard to take part	see 26
1		-1	I listened to other people	linked to 46 by participant 1 - bored so didn't reallt listen
46		4	I was bored	see 1
14		2	People understood me	relates to 30 - people kind of understood me but don't really understand me any better as a result to the meeting.
13		3	People focussed on things that I struggle with	gives item 37 (people tried hard to understand what I needed) a more negative deficit meaning
33		1	All the people I wanted to be there were at the meeting	appears to be placed in the middle as more of a 'I haven't thought about who I wanted at the meeting' so possibly interpreted differently by YP in this factor

Young people's views about their voice in EHC planning meetings: A participatory Q-study

Presentation and Discussion with EP Service

Plan

• Introduction
  • Aims
• Presentation of what I've done
• Read 6 views and explore EP response to each

What I did

• Q-methodology
  • Qualitative(ish)
  • To enable YP to formulate and articulate their view
• Participation
• Data collection
• Factor analysis
  • 6 views

Questions for discussion...

- What does this YP need?
- What do you think good EP practice would look like?
  - Is EP involvement relevant and if so what would this look like (e.g. when, where, how)?
  - What might promote / inhibit this?
  - How might our role as EP for the school conflict with our role as EP in the LA?
  - Should EPs only be involved in meetings or in other ways (eg. pre/post, training, developing LA procedure...)?

Appendix 13 - Notes from a focus group with an EP Service

Factor 1

What does this YP need?

- Knowledge and understanding of what an EHCP is and why they have got it.
- Are they able to have their views heard?
- Child led meeting might help
- 'Good' PCP practice, preparation, recording of views.
- The school needs to complete the paperwork. If this is being done in the meeting, it is not child centred.
- Importance of unconditional positive regard for pupils within this.
- Importance of adults valuing their views.
- Adults need preparation.

What do you think good EP practice would look like?

- Preparation of CYP
- Preparation of adults.
- Support external agencies / schools on <u>how</u> to listen to CYP. Eg. training.
- Supportive questioning to ensure CYP is able to understand what and why things are discussed / recorded.
- Acknowledgement of conflicting agendas.
- Move beyond tokenism.
- Focus on what is important not reading through the paperwork.
- How parents are prepared.
- EP role as agent of change.
- Good facilitator.
- Training / Modelling.
- Improving what we do eg. reading EHCP and checking.
- Advocate for the child – active feeding in to debate.
- Bring and impart knowledge and understanding of the process.
- Perhaps we need to rethink the LA representative form. [Currently it has a box to tick to say the CYP's views were represented.] Maybe there

needs to be more detail on what CYP's views being represented means or what it looked like in the meeting.

Factor 2

What does this YP need?

- Meeting to be more visual / structured / clearer / agenda
- Preparation for the meeting.
- EHCP meeting just one part of Plan Do Review process – should be held regularly.
- School ethos of pupil involvement / choice.
- Is there any real choice? (limited resources).

What do you think good EP practice would look like?

- Supporting school ethos of pupil involvement / choice.
- Supporting schools to feed pupil information into the plan.
- Use the Golden Thread document to inform targets.
- Supporting continuous Plan Do Review – How?   How can this be embedded in schools?
- Clarity of the needs.
- Share information – open and honest.
- Signposting.

Factor 3

What does this YP need?

- Clarity around follow-up to the meeting.
- Feel that their views have been heard – but what is the long-term impact of this?
- Recap of actions.
    - and specifically what this will look like.
- Written follow-up within 4 weeks
    - possibly a personalised letter.

What do you think good EP practice would look like?

- Recognising good practice.
- Feeding back and sharing this.
- Summarising /paraphrasing in an effective way.
- Organising a follow-up.

Factor 4

What does this YP need?

- Understanding purpose, role.
- Be listened to, included,
- Recognition of strengths in CYP.
- Who is the problem holder?

What do you think good EP practice would look like?

- Ensure adults and CYP grasp the distinction between things that are important to the CYP and important for – both!
- Active listening.
- Contribute to developing a collective understanding of roles – perhaps professionals don't always realise that they need to explain their roles more fully to CYP
- Have a clear understanding of the multiplicity of EP roles in the meeting – eg. facilitator, advocate for CYP / parents, LA representative with knowledge of LA procedures.

Factor 5

What does this YP need?

- To be valued.

What do you think good EP practice would look like?

- Pre-planning. Might include knowledge of processes.
- People generally know how to listen to CYP. Why don't they actually do it? What gets in the way. Maybe the role of EPs is to help people circumnavigate the things that get in the way rather than tell them how to do the job.

Factor 6

What does this YP need?

- Preparation for meeting.
- Explanation of purpose of meeting, ground rules, permission.

What do you think good EP practice would look like?

- Informed consent at point of assessment. Taking time to explain.
- Information sharing – eg. leaflet, video.
- Prior presentation / sharing of information (it shouldn't be a 'surprise' in the meeting – people feel more confident to praise or challenge).
- Ground rules → *Who we address*

      ↓

    Use of jargon