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**Just me, the bee and the iPad: Listening to stories told by
mothers of children with autism who have experienced school
exclusion**

By

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Abstract

My research highlights the practice of exclusion, its impact on children with autism and considers how these events have been experienced by mothers. Such exclusions have increased by sixty per cent in England since 2011 (Ambitious about Autism, 2018). Alongside this, there are numerous concerns about the adverse impact exclusions have on the outcomes for these children (Gazeley, Marrable, Brown & Boddy, 2015; Gill, Quilter-Pinner & Swift, 2017). As children with autism are over-represented in the statistics, they are more vulnerable to these harmful ramifications.

Three mothers tell their stories illustrating the complex forces impacting on them and their families. I employ a qualitative narrative methodology to privilege their voice and adopt feminist principles. The narratives told were co-created using unstructured narrative interviews. Narrative interviews allow an appreciation of how people make sense of themselves and their experience (Bruner, 2004). The narratives were analysed using Brown and Gilligan's Listening Guide (1993). A critical realist perspective is taken which accepts knowledge is created as a product of interpretation and social construction (Morton, 2006).

In my analysis and discussion, I consider what characterises these stories. I reflect on issues of power, the traumatising effects of power and oppression, and the mothers' attempts to mitigate and advocate for their child in the face of such power. I conclude with recommendations on how these stories can be used to guide the work of Educational Psychologists.

Key Words: exclusion, autism, mothers, qualitative, narrative, power, trauma

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Abbreviations

ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
AP	Alternative Provision
BESD	Behaviour Emotional and Social Difficulties
CIN	Child in Need
DA	Discourse Analysis
DfE	Department for Education
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
EBD	Emotional Behavioural Difficulties
EP	Educational Psychologist(s)
EPS	Educational Psychology Service
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
LA	Local Authority
LAC	Looked after Child
LD	Learning Disability
LG	Listening Guide
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator(s)
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
TA	Teaching Assistant
TEP	Trainee Educational Psychologist
UK	United Kingdom

Chapter 1: Introduction

1:1 Overview

In this chapter I present my reasons for undertaking this study and provide the reader with an understanding of my positionality.

My research seeks to listen to the stories of school exclusion recounted by three mothers whose children have autism. There is currently limited research in this area despite concerns about the increasing numbers of children with autism experiencing exclusion. Employing a person-centred qualitative approach, my research seeks to highlight the experiences surrounding these exclusions from these mothers' perspectives. I do this in order to amplify their voice and utilise their expert knowledge, thereby providing a richer understanding of exclusions. I hope too that suggested ways forward might lead to better outcomes.

1:2 Positionality

In the interest of transparency and my commitment to reflective practice, I outline my positionality to the reader. Prior to embarking on my doctoral training, in what now seems a lifetime ago, I worked for many years with children who had experienced school exclusion and were consequently educated in Alternative Provision. The damaging impact of school exclusions on children and their households was evident to me. Over many years, exclusions continued to rise and more pupil referral units were opened. The children passing through our doors became younger, alongside an increase in children with SEND. This left me questioning the circumstances surrounding such exclusions.

In recent years, since becoming a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP), I have reflected on how we as professionals listen to parents. As a teacher, I was convinced that the relationships we had as a service with parents was a source of pride. In retrospect, I am increasingly less sure that we, or indeed I, ever *really* listened. Occupying a somewhat different role now, away from the scrutiny and targets of the education system, I am conscious of the freedom I have as a TEP to listen with an independent ear. I know that even now I do not always do this as well as I would like, when pressures of time and other pressures impede on my ability to be *present*. However, a phrase stays with me and I try to

remind myself of it in those moments when I find myself distracted – “What would I hear if I really listened?” (Woodcock, 2016, p.1). My thesis, then, is an attempt to listen.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2:1 Overview

I provide here an outline of relevant and current literature appropriate to the subject of my study. When embarking on this project I had a clear idea of the theme for my research which initially enabled me to contain my literature search to keywords around exclusion from school. Throughout the process, I was drawn to other research studies and articles which resonated for me as a researcher and also as a TEP. I made notes throughout this time concerned with the themes that were emerging for me and structured my wider reading further around these themes.

I begin by outlining recent exclusion statistics for England, considering the consequences of such exclusions and exploring the characteristics of those young people most at risk from exclusion. I move to consider some of the factors potentially contributing to the rise in exclusions with a focus on government policies relating to standards, behaviour and austerity. I then consider school-parent partnerships drawing attention to the problematic nature of these relationships and the ways in which parents, more particularly mothers, are held responsible and accountable by professionals. I consider their lack of voice within the literature and conclude with my rationale for my research.

2:2 Exclusion statistics, characteristics and consequences

The 1944 Education Act saw the introduction of school exclusion as a disciplinary measure available to headteachers in response to challenging and inappropriate behaviour. School exclusion is understood to be “a disciplinary sanction that prevents pupils from attending school either for a fixed period or permanently” (Gazeley, 2010, p.294). Statutory guidance outlines both the headteacher’s power to exclude, and the support of the government in doing so where such a sanction is warranted, alongside a duty to “be lawful, reasonable and fair” (Department for Education, 2017, p.6). An exclusion is deemed to be an appropriate disciplinary response but it is not one to be taken lightly. Guidance cautions headteachers to exercise care when using the measure particularly when considering pupils deemed to occupy positions in vulnerable groups, such as those with SEND (DfE, 2017).

Notwithstanding guidance, since 2012, exclusions in England have been rising (Figure 1, DfE, 2019).

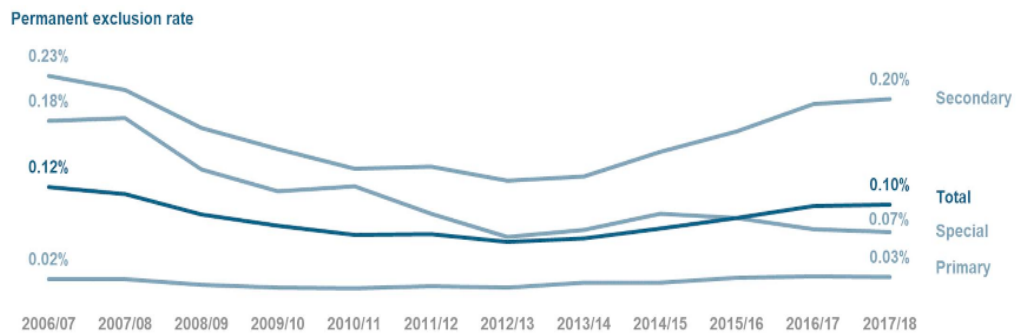


Figure 1: Permanent exclusion data for England 2006/07 – 2017/18 (DfE, 2019)

This increase is concerning because the negative consequences of exclusion are manifold. Gazeley et al. (2015) state that “concerns about the damaging impact of excluding a young person from school are wide ranging and of long standing” (p.488). Frequently young people are in receipt of a few hours of tuition; for others a wide range of “packages” incorporating tutoring, college and work experience make up their academic entitlement (Pirrie, Macleod, Cullen & McCluskey, 2011). More enduring effects of exclusion include damage to self-worth (Daniels & Cole, 2010; Parker, Paget, Ford & Gwernan-Jones (2016); academic and social disengagement (Daniels & Cole, 2010; Gill et al., 2017); poor work prospects (Gill et al., 2017); and becoming known to the police and legal systems (Daniels & Cole, 2010; Pirrie et al., 2011; Gill et al., 2017). Furthermore, exploration of exclusion data suggests that some young people from vulnerable groups are much more likely to experience exclusion and are thereby at greater risk of experiencing such consequences.

Consistently, concerns about the consequences of exclusion are mirrored by the long-standing representation of pupils from vulnerable groups within the exclusion statistics. Gazeley et al. (2015) highlighted the “persistent patterns of over representation in national data showing rates of exclusion” (p.487). Those groups overrepresented in exclusion statistics include boys (Strand & Fletcher, 2014); young people with African/Caribbean heritage (Bowman-Perrot, Benz, Hsu, Kwok, Eisterhold & Zhang, 2013; Strand & Fletcher, 2014); Looked After Children (LAC) (Strand & Fletcher, 2014, Gill et al., 2017); those with SEND (Bowman-Perrot et al., 2013, Gill et al., 2017); and children receiving free school meals (Strand & Fletcher, 2014, Gill et al., 2017). Children from traveller families and teenage mothers also have a greater chance of experiencing exclusion (Booth, 1996). The group most at risk of exclusion is that identified with SEND (Gill et al., 2017). This group, however, is not homogenous. There is some research exploring the differences in rates of exclusion based on type of SEND. Krezmien, Leone and Achilles (2006) found the odds ratios

of exclusion varied by category of disability and race. Students with Emotional Behavioural Difficulties (EBD) were found to be at greater risk of suspension across all racial groups. A further study conducted by Achilles, McLaughlin and Croninger (2007) mirrors somewhat the findings of the Krezmien (2006) study – there was a higher likelihood of exclusion in the EBD and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) group than the Learning Disability (LD) group. Bowman-Perrot et al. (2013) also found students with EBD are more likely to be excluded and repeatedly, with students with ADHD and LD also being at greater risk. These studies are, however, American studies and therefore may not be transferable to the United Kingdom (UK).

In the UK, concerns have been mounting about the increasing numbers of children with autism within the exclusion figures – a sixty percent increase since 2011 (Ambitious about Autism, 2018). Despite equating to only one percent of the school community, children with autism account for two and a half percent of exclusion data (Ambitious about Autism, 2018). Hatton (2018) states in 2016/17 the rates of permanent exclusion were up to three times higher for young people with autism. Such figures are possibly a sign of unmet need, a sign, perhaps, of SEND legislation failing to meet intended outcomes. Therefore, further exploration is urgently needed.

2:3 Exclusion: an outcome of interacting systems

The exclusion of a young person from school is not an isolated event within a closed system. Rather, schools are “open systems with permeable boundaries, in constant dynamic interaction with the wider environment and, in turn, interacting with the expectations and demands of society” (Burden, 1994, p.307). Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems model (1979) places an individual at the centre of five interrelated systems. The interactions within and between these systems is believed to influence outcomes. Bronfenbrenner (1979) theorised “a nested arrangement of structures, each contained within the next” (p. 22) and argued for the necessity to examine these nested structures as an interdependent and mutually influential whole in order to comprehend the varying forces impacting on an individual. This model provides a useful illustration and emphasis on the importance different systems have on behaviour and outcomes.

The first system, referred to as the microsystem, is believed to have the most direct impact on a young person’s development. It is in this immediate environment where the face to

face relationships that directly influence the young person are located, such as interactions with peers, school teachers and parents. Within the microsystem, interactions are considered to be bi-directional, for example between child-mother, child-father or child-teacher. In the school microsystem for instance, the young person has a direct role (a pupil), has direct experiences (attends lessons) and has direct interactions (playing with peers). It is in this environment that the young person experiences both formal and informal learning as well as the social aspects of education (Anderson & Boyle, 2014). Interacting factors within this system, such as learning needs not being adequately met, could impact on exclusion from school.

The mesosystem consists of different structures of the microsystem which are interconnected and interact with one another, for example school-parent partnerships are a social interaction between the young person's family microsystem and the young person's school microsystem (Neal & Neal, 2013). Ofsted (2009) attest that successful home-school partnerships can help minimise exclusions from school stating "joint working between the home and the school [leads] to much better outcomes for pupils; in particular, this help[s] pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those with low attendance or who [are] potentially vulnerable in other ways" (Ofsted, 2009, p. 5).

The exosystem is concerned with the social structures and systems that interact with one another and impact on the mesosystem and microsystem. One of these systems will not include the child directly, for example school leadership structure, but may impact on them indirectly. School policies, organisation, curriculum pedagogy and ethos are located here. Each of these factors can impact on the behaviour of the young person (Collins, 2013).

Other influences, such as laws, customs and societal values, are part of the macrosystem which permeates across the system. The macrosystem is considered to be the "societal blueprint for a particular culture" (Bronfenbrenner, Husen & Postlethwaite, 1994, p.6). It is the environment that encompasses the school and includes political and social contexts, government policies, and legislation, all of which effect both the structures and the behaviour of individuals both inside and outside of the educational establishment (Collins, 2013). Changes over time are positioned in the chronosystem.

From an ecological systems perspective, outcomes are a product of "the composition of these ecological systems as well as interactions between and within these systems"

(Eriksson, Ghazinour & Hammarstrom, 2017, p.419). The factors within each of the systems are not distinct from one another or fixed. They are instead interwoven as interactions within and across the systems occur. Research which illuminates the interactions between these systems may then provide valuable insight into the exclusion of young people from school. I consider literature reviewed in relation to this in the following sections of this chapter, including the influence of macrosystemic factors such as the standards and behaviour agenda and austerity politics. I also consider research which investigates mesosystemic factors, primarily home-school partnerships.

The new national curriculum and the standards agenda

UK government policy, situated in the macrosystem, impacts on schools and the decisions they make in a variety of ways. It has been argued that neoliberal education policies require schools to develop effective employees for the labour market. This requirement has, in turn, led to a concentration on standards, tests, achievement and outcomes at the expense of inclusion and differentiation (Gill et al., 2017). September 2014/15 saw the introduction of a new national curriculum in schools. This included the introduction of statutory assessments for grammar, punctuation and spelling as well as reading and maths in primary schools and reforms to GCSEs in secondary schools (The Key, 2017). Research has identified that ninety one percent of school leaders think there has been an increase in pressure with regard to performance measures in the last two years and eighty eight percent think the focus on testing, as a measure, is too great (The Key, 2017). Hedegaard-Soerensen and Grumloese (2018) argue in such environments, where the dominant culture is concerned with standards over inclusion, young people who do not achieve their performance targets are overlooked by teachers and excluded from school. Students who do not fit the dominant culture are pushed out of the school system to become the responsibility of specialists and not teachers.

Similar arguments have been made by researchers in other Western developed countries. Where schools are scrutinised and judged primarily on academic outcomes, this can incentivise exclusion of low attaining pupils (Gill et al., 2017). Leone, Mayer, Malmgren & Meisel (2000) argue where school's accountability is measured by academic performance, disruptive pupils – particularly those who have low attainment on tests that are used to make judgements about a school – are at greater risk of exclusion. However, Leone et al. (2000) provide no definition of those acts which are considered to be “disruptive”. Instead,

they refer to breaches in zero-tolerance policies ranging from threats of violence through to students being in possession of plastic knives needed to spread butter in lunch boxes. The term “disruptive”, therefore, provides little clarity, indeed potentially presents a reductive account of the situation.

In contrast to the studies outlined above, Power and Taylor (2018) identified headteachers as reluctant to exclude, and suggest they saw exclusion as reflecting a professional failure on their part. Exclusion was viewed as ineffective and potentially damaging to a student in the long term. This research was conducted in Wales where the number of exclusions is fewer than in England, ostensibly suggesting that exclusion is not a valued practice. However, Power and Taylor (2018) also point to the use of unofficial exclusions which, they argue, masks the data. Such unofficial exclusions include managed moves, inclusion units, nurture rooms, isolation rooms and the use of AP all of which are utilised in an attempt to avoid official exclusion.

Similarly, Gazeley (2010) also identified school use of alternative strategies to prevent exclusion including dual registration with a behaviour support unit, college placements, part-time timetables, and flexible arrangements such as work experience. Headteachers reported adjusting the curriculum to accommodate those at risk of exclusion with fewer academic subjects being offered. In such arrangements, the young people still remain on the school roll and are included in school attainment measures. There is much debate about the use of such strategies, unofficial exclusions and the use of Alternative Provision (AP) which is outside this study. However, where a child remains on the school roll their attainments are included in the school’s performance figures. In such situations then, it could be argued that the standards agenda appears to have had limited impact on exclusion figures.

The behaviour agenda

Alongside the standards agenda is a link in policy between behaviour and attainment. Armstrong (2018) argues student misbehaviour is described in policy as damaging to academic outcomes and impacts on a school’s ability to achieve its attainment targets. It is believed that the linking of the two in this way can have detrimental consequences for vulnerable students as their behaviour is framed as threatening academic attainment.

Armstrong (2018) draws on ideas proposed by Foucault (1977) to describe a “manage and discipline model” for considering the behaviour of young people in school. In such a model the school is placed in the role of moral and social regulator with the teacher enforcing the norms. The central ideas proposed are that behaviour can be measured and controlled; behaviour can be reduced to a set of variables which can be moulded and regulated; with correct training the teacher can have total control of behaviour in the classroom; teachers need necessary skills to ensure compliant behaviour; young people who fail to respond to this model are unmanageable and pose a threat to the school environment.

Armstrong (2018) argues that the manage and discipline model pervades the system because the government agenda (located in the macrosystem) requires schools to have a behaviour policy (located in the exosystem). Although this research relates to the government agenda in South Australia, equally DfE (2016a) advice in the UK states that the headteacher is required by law to “set out measures in the behaviour policy which aim to promote good behaviour, self-discipline and respect, prevent bullying, ensure that pupils complete assigned work, and which regulate the conduct of pupils” (DfE, 2016a, p.4). The advice further states where a pupil misbehaves or does not comply with rules then a punishment can be imposed. Often referred to as zero tolerance policies, it is argued such policies leave school leaders with no alternative but to apply sanctions (Leone et al., 2000). Yet such behaviour policies are contrary to research which highlights punitive responses to pupil behaviour can trigger a spiral of escalation towards permanent exclusion (Macleod, 2010; Armstrong, 2014).

In contrast, Tom Bennett, the DfE independent adviser on behaviour in schools, argues zero tolerance policies are *not* responsible for the increase in permanent exclusion; rather, they contribute to reducing it. Bennett (2018) describes zero tolerance as a red herring. Instead, Bennett highlights new rules which came into force in 2014 giving schools greater autonomy over exclusions as the likely reason for the increase. He writes the rise in exclusions “seems too small an increase to panic about” (p.2), and argues schools should not to be deterred from excluding; where zero tolerance policies are in force, “students feel valued as members of their school community – the need to exclude goes down” (p.2). Despite suggesting “it’s wise to be suspicious of anything that is claimed but not supported by evidence” (p.2), Bennett does not reference any such evidence to support his contentions.

The impact of austerity

In addition to an intense focus on standards and behaviour, 2008 onwards witnessed the introduction of a number of austerity measures in the UK. Austerity politics are a factor within the macrosystem which have impacted on schools directly, in the microsystem, through school budgets and indirectly, in the exosystem, due to the loss of support services. Austerity measures have a particular impact on a school's capacity to prevent exclusions because of both the reduction in support provided by external school agencies and preventative services, and the cuts to school budgets in real terms due to the rise in pupil numbers (Gill et al., 2017). A survey of school leaders identified school budgets as a grave concern with sixty eight percent planning to cut support staff; sixty four percent of secondary schools planning to cut teaching staff (the reduction in teaching staff possibly linked to plans to narrow the curriculum in response to budget constraints); sixty-eight per cent of secondary schools planning to increase class sizes; forty-six per cent less investment in continuing professional development (The Key, 2017).

This is in line with research from the National Education Union (NEU) (2018) suggesting funding cuts have led to a reduction in SEND posts. Moreover, concerns exist that the consequences of such cuts mean those with SEND will not receive appropriate support and will, therefore, be more likely to experience school exclusion. The NEU reports "the Government's funding cuts are cutting so deep that schools cannot provide the support SEND pupils need and are struggling to access external support because this has been cut too" (NEU, 2018, p.1). At the same time, concerns have been raised by the Local Government Association with regard to the projected shortfall in funding for special needs – identifying a £536 million funding gap as a consequence of an increase in need for SEND services (Weale, 2018).

Parents are also expressing concerns about the lack of funding. The introduction of the Children and Families Act (2014) was intended "to fully reform services for vulnerable children, by giving them greater protection, paying special attention to those with additional needs, and also helping parents and the family as a whole" (Virtual College, 2014). Despite this, reports indicate that "many parents say their LAs are already failing to meet their legal responsibilities and complain of having to fight long battles and repeatedly appeal to tribunals to try to secure the support to which their children are legally entitled" (Weale,

2018, p.17). Such budget cuts to external services and reduced funding for schools arguably impact on the increase in school exclusions.

Headteachers concur, suggesting the increase in exclusions can be attributed to cuts to school funding for schools because such cuts make it difficult to implement early intervention strategies to prevent problem behaviour. The Association of School and College Leaders attribute increasing exclusions both to cuts to children services and school budgets (Busby, 2018). Similar sentiments are reported by McInerney (2018) who states cuts, not headteachers, are responsible for the rise in the number of exclusions. McInerney (2018) contrasts the funding that was available in the mid-2000s that meant schools could provide an array of pastoral support including key workers and help with housing and attendance officers, alongside a more flexible curriculum. She argues present day cuts mean there is less chance of help for a pupil experiencing difficulties. She further states that even if the school could afford support, the services are not there to access. Gill et al. (2017) also identifies that a rise in the numbers of young people with a combination of complex needs – including poor mental health, difficult family situations and learning needs – has coincided with headteachers reporting a lack of training in mental health and limited support from external services. Overall, the data indicates that schools are inadequately resourced to meet SEND obligations.

Looking at exclusion from a systemic perspective, the policies outlined above – the standards and behaviour agendas, plus recent austerity measures – all influence and, at times, impinge on the settings in which young people find themselves. Within these contexts, policies and practice appear to combine to work against young people with SEND. Exclusions could then be considered to occur due to the SEND needs of young people not being met by the system.

Whilst completing my literature review, I wondered whether consideration of other parts of the system might offer further insights. Recent government policies have intended to encourage the working together of schools with parents in order to ensure academic achievement (DfE, 2006; Ofsted, 2011). Exploration of the literature concerned with such partnerships warranted further investigation.

2:4 School-Parent partnerships

Government policy and School-Parent partnership

UK Government policy is clear on the importance of parental influence on achievement at school. DfES (2006) asserts the “most significant factors behind a child’s achievement are social, and in particular, parental” (p. 35). Ofsted (2011) states “parental engagement can be a powerful lever for raising achievement in schools and there is much research to show the value of schools and parents working together to support pupils’ learning” (p.6). Equally, the Children and Families Act (2014) highlights that LAs “must have regard to the views, wishes and feelings of the child or young person, and the child’s parents” (DfE and Department for Health, 2015, p.19).

Yet, such policies are not without their critics. Gazeley (2010) draws attention to education policy which emphasises the importance of family background on educational attainment. She criticises the emphasis placed on what happens outside school, the aspirations and support of parents being one such factor cited as impacting on educational attainment. Instead, Gazeley (2010) suggests low attainment is more attributable to conditions within school than without. Other researchers concur also criticising this emphasis for placing the blame on working class parents with low aspirations and requiring *their* behaviour to change (Cassen and Kingdon, 2007).

Equally, Peters (2011) discusses the UK government agenda of “parental determinism” which sees parents positioned as the central determining feature in their child’s future. It is argued that alongside this focus comes policies promoting interventions to encourage parental responsibility (Easton, 2011). Such policies position parents as needing to be more responsible and, thus, to blame when things go wrong (Broomhead, 2013). Parents are positioned as recipients of advice rather than as knowledgeable about their child, thereby making school-parent partnerships problematic (Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2008).

School-Parent partnerships and exclusion

The research around parental involvement in school and exclusion is conflicted. Christie, Nelson and Jolivette (2004) identified low parental involvement was associated with higher rates of suspension and exclusion. The opposite was found by Bowman-Perrot et al. (2013)

where higher levels of parental involvement related to higher levels of exclusion. It is suggested that this is counterintuitive and may reflect parents being involved in negative ways, like attending a meeting to discuss problem behaviour. In contrast, Achilles et al. (2007) found *no* relationship between parental involvement and exclusion but did find a link between parental satisfaction and exclusion – parents with children with EBD and LD, who had been excluded, reported less satisfaction with the school. Duchnowski and Kutash (2011) found mixed results around the measures of parental involvement. They report a lack of consistency that is viewed to be indicative of the complexity of parental involvement and the need for a more comprehensive measure of this construct. Bowman-Perrot et al. (2013), concur and highlight the need for research that examines factors such as the quality of parental involvement.

Much research points to the problematic nature of school-parent partnerships, especially around the area of exclusion. Todd and Higgins (1998) claim a power relationship exists between schools and parents and that exclusion is the expression of professional power. This interesting perspective warrants further research. Research exploring the views of school-based professionals may provide additional insight into this complex dynamic.

School-professional perspectives of parents and exclusion

Researchers have tended to find school professionals have negative perceptions of parents involved in the exclusion process. Macleod, Pirrie, McCluskey, and Cullen (2013), in research around young people excluded from AP, found providers view parents as part of the problem and describe a set of powerless positions that parents can occupy. These perceptions are shaped by how far the parents comply and agree with the providers, as well as the social class of the parents and their ability to access capital (both financial and cultural). Some parents were identified as to blame or too limited by a lack of resources, both personal and financial, to be able to create change. Others were seen as too demanding and unrealistic. Macleod et al. (2013) argue that parents are held responsible for their child's behaviour and, at the same time, are positioned as incompetent. Even parents perceived as competent, for example middle class "resourceful" parents, were "regarded as trouble because of their pursuit of appropriate provision for their children" (p.398). The only parents that escaped negative perceptions were those with the necessary means to support their child *and* who did not question or push the LA about provision.

Other researchers have identified similar accounts dominant in school cultures. Gazeley (2012) describes how difficulties experienced by young people are often attributed to a family deficit while professionals link the quality of parenting to gender and a belief that single mothers struggle to control their children. In contrast, more affluent parents were seen “as more powerfully positioned within school exclusion processes as they were felt to be more knowledgeable, more of a threat and more able to exert influence” (Gazeley, 2012, p.305). Gazeley (2012) and Macleod et al. (2013) concur that such positioning of parents as problems is not the best foundation on which to build partnership. Attributing difficulties in this way leaves educational professionals with a belief that there is little they can do to intervene successfully as it is the family that is dysfunctional (Gazeley, 2012). The discourse about parents in schools is, therefore, potentially damaging as school professionals can abdicate responsibility, thereby negating the need for self-reflection and engagement with problem solving in order to secure better outcomes.

Research exploring how parents experience the relationship with schools and, in particular, how they experience school partnership when their child is involved with disciplinary processes is discussed below.

Parent perspectives of schools and exclusion

Research highlights that parental experiences of schools during the exclusion processes are usually negative. Gazeley (2012) claims parents have to navigate a complex path through the school system; this is not only about processes around fixed term exclusion and permanent exclusion but also about decisions made by schools concerning AP, college, or work placements which are not subject to the same protections as “official” exclusions. When a child also has SEND, parents are often involved in these processes as well (Gazeley, 2012).

Research in this area is further complicated as parents involved in the exclusion process do not occupy homogenous groups. Differences have been identified both in the personal circumstances of parents and their levels of involvement with educational professionals (Gazeley, 2012). Despite these differences, parents report a number of negative experiences including feeling blamed for their child’s behaviour; feeling lonely and isolated, especially in meetings where they are a lone figure surrounded by people with nothing positive to say about their child and having no idea, at times, the purpose of the meetings; a lack of

transparency in relation to rules that should protect their child; feeling pressured to withdraw their child from school to avoid exclusion; emotional cost to themselves; financial costs due to having to take off time from work to attend meetings; and, as school placements continue to break down, diminishing aspirations for their child (Gazeley, 2012).

Other researchers have found similar patterns of negative experiences with parents reporting a lack of choice about provision (Pirrie et al., 2011), experiencing “invisibility and powerlessness” (Smith, 2009, p.98) and “feeling judged as unworthy parents” (McDonald & Thomas, 2003). Where positive experiences are identified, these are usually in relation to a key person who “held their story” or successful placements being found following exclusion (Pirrie et.al 2011).

Parental experiences of school when a child has SEND

As the group most at risk of exclusion is that identified with SEND (Gill et al., 2017), I believed it was important to look at research that focussed on SEND parents and their experiences of school processes, procedures and professionals.

The school-related experiences of parents of pupils with a diagnosis of ADHD have been explored by some researchers. In such studies, school-parent relationships are difficult. Carpenter and Austin (2007) describe contrasting experiences of mothers of children with ADHD: perceived as a threat when they have greater knowledge than educational professionals *or* alternately “misunderstood and judged by medical and educational professionals and to be told rather than listened to” (p.663). Mothers reported trying to avoid confrontation by being silent. Silence was also used as a means of not being judged or to avoid the label of not coping.

Gwernan-Jones, Moore, Garside, Richardson, Thompson-Coon, Rogers, and Ford (2015) completed a systematic review of the literature that considered parental experiences of school when their child had a diagnosis of ADHD. Common themes included parent-teacher conflict as the norm, with school professionals described as judgemental and conflict arising due to parents and schools having different understandings of ADHD (conflicts were either in schools not recognising the syndrome or in pushing for a diagnosis when this was not wanted by the parent whose child only exhibited difficulties within the school environment). Mothers reported feeling ineffective when trying to intervene in school in response to their

child's unhappiness. Little difference was found between the experiences of middle-class and working-class parents. Despite their greater social and financial capital, middle class mothers, like working class mothers, reported feeling blamed and silenced. Relationships were described as one way with "parents to be passive receptors of expert advice" (p.295). Where a parent did have greater knowledge around ADHD, this was viewed as a challenge to professional status thereby adding an additional barrier to partnership.

Most home-school interactions are undertaken by women in their maternal role and it is, arguably, the value judgements made about mothers that impact on their experiences with professionals:

"women are vulnerable to discourses of motherhood that insist that they are utterly responsible for any and all facets of their children's wellbeing and experience, and further, are vulnerable to the concomitant belief that a child's unhappiness, failure at school, or illness, or disability is the mother's fault"

(Carpenter & Austin, 2008, p.36).

Such positioning contributes to many women experiencing both a sense of responsibility and guilt *and* feelings of being a "bad mother" (Carpenter & Austin, 2007, 2008).

Where mothers are positioned in this way, they can become the target of blame for their child's behaviour. Mother blame appears frequently in the literature particularly in relation to young people identified as having Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs. These difficulties are often attributed to poor parenting and ineffective discipline (Francis, 2012; Peters, 2011; Broomhead, 2013). The extent to which this blame is felt by mothers of children in differing SEND categories is unclear as there has been limited research in this area.

Francis (2012) explored experiences of parents of children with a variety of SEND in an American context, concluding that parents of children with physical conditions did not experience blame. Other researchers have suggested that diagnoses and labels are sought in an attempt to reduce the feelings of parental blame by shifting it from the parent to a biological condition over which there is no control, from "mother-blame" to "brain-blame" (Ryan & Runswick-Cole, 2008a; Blum, 2007). In such cases, parents are viewed by the

authors as being in a no-win situation – parents who push for a diagnosis are perceived as pathologizing and seeking a medical model for their child.

Within disability studies some research has been undertaken into parent-professional relationships. Hodge and Runswick-Cole (2008) report barriers to partnerships which include parents feeling disempowered in interactions with teachers. Hodge and Runswick-Cole (2008) argue professional knowledge is privileged which leads some parents to develop knowledge in an attempt to redress the power imbalance. Relationships with professionals are viewed as stressful (Hodge, 2006) whereby “mothers of disabled children start off as worriers and become warriors” (Ryan & Runswick-Cole, 2008b, p.204). Despite the problems in parent-professional partnerships, in some cases there are good examples of practice which are characterised by having an open mind and willingness to explore different perspectives, engaging with parents as experts on their children and working with professionals who are interested in their child and not just their disability (Hodge and Runswick-Cole, 2008).

Parental experiences of school exclusion when a child has SEND

There are relatively few published studies concerned with exploring the experiences of parents of children with SEND who have been excluded from school.

Parker et al. (2016) researched the experiences of parents of primary school children, as well as those in year 7 at secondary school, to gain their experiences and perspectives of fixed term exclusions. This research was completed as part of a wider quantitative study and utilised 35 semi-structured interviews conducted with parents identified by a professional in education or mental health. No further detail was provided about methods of parental recruitment. The group was not homogenous and a range of difficulties was experienced by the children including ADHD. Some children had statements of special educational needs, others were waiting assessment. Some had academic difficulties, including dyslexia, while others were described as bright but not challenged academically. Research interviews focussed on parental perceptions around why their child struggled in school, what support was provided and what they would have liked to have been done differently. Whilst relatively open-ended as questions, their structuring in this way potentially shaped and limited the responses received.

Parents described a variable range of experiences. A main theme was that of a “complex journey of exclusion...not usually experienced as a discrete one-off event but highlighted a crisis point during a fluctuating level of difficulties” (Parker et al., 2016, p.137). The reasons behind exclusion were understood differently by different parents. Some felt the exclusion was not in the best interests of the child or used without consideration of the known difficulties their child was experiencing and before suggested interventions had been given a chance to work. Equally, views varied as to the purpose of the exclusion, with some regarding it as the school building a case to justify permanent exclusion. Other parents felt more positively, that exclusion was a way of the school obtaining additional resources and providing a gateway to services.

Another crucial theme related to communication. Parents reported feeling not listened to, nor their experience valued. Many parents wanted an open and honest conversation but mostly only individual people within a system were seen as helpful. This mirrors research conducted by Pirrie et al. (2011), considered earlier, in which a key worker was identified as making a difference.

Parker et al. (2016) highlighted differences in the way some parents were able to negotiate the system. Some had a better understanding of the system and their rights, knowledge of available support and resources and a greater ability to advocate for their child. Other parents perceived the school as experts or were unable to advocate in the same way.

Most schools were viewed as reactive rather than proactive, with a rigid approach to discipline and a focus on targets and results. Parents identified a number of school factors, for example class size, the availability of Teaching Assistants (TA) and a feeling that schools themselves need help and advice, all of which impacted on the decision to exclude.

Generally, parents’ feelings were that exclusion was ineffective and impacted negatively on them and their child, including missing school time both academically and non-academically; causing emotional distress for themselves as well as their child; difficulties with managing during the time their child was not in school; feelings of guilt, a sense of failure and feeling they could have done something to prevent it; job loss due to school meetings or exclusion; and financial costs.

Sproston and Sedgewick (2017) researched the perspectives of eight autistic girls who had been excluded and those of their parents. Semi-structured interviews considered their experiences of school and AP (where this had been provided), as well as their experiences of exclusion processes and their current placement. Thematic analysis of the transcripts identified problems with school environments including the sensory environment, difficult school relationships including poor communication, and a lack of support or an appropriate understanding of need. These difficulties resulted in “battles” between parents and school professionals (Sproston & Sedgewick, 2017).

These findings generally mirror research undertaken around parent voice and exclusion of young people without identified SEND. Overall, it appears that parent-professional relationships are problematic. From a systemic perspective such relationships are important as the interactions between the different systems directly impact on the individual child at the centre of the system.

2:5 Summary and rationale for my research

Research indicates the numbers and rates of permanent exclusions in England are rising (DfE, 2019). Those with SEND continue to represent the largest group affected by this disciplinary consequence (Gill et al., 2017, DfE, 2019). At the same time, the number of children with autism who are excluded is rising disproportionately to their number in the school population as a whole (Ambitious about Autism, 2018).

Policy discourse promotes school-parent partnerships to secure good outcomes in terms of both achievement and attainment for children and young people (Ofsted, 2011). However, research considering these partnerships has generally exposed negative experiences and problematic relationships (Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2008; Gazeley, 2012; Macleod et al., 2013; Parker et al., 2016). Differences in the quality of reported interactions have been identified by parents and are often influenced by the SEND category occupied by their child (Broomhead, 2013). Further, discourses surrounding mothers and the attachment of mother-blame have been found by some researchers to shape how mothers are viewed by practitioners and also to shape the positions some mothers choose to adopt (Carpenter & Austin, 2007; Ryan & Runswick-Cole, 2008b).

Research exploring school-parent relationships *and* the exclusion of children occupying different SEND categories is not extensive. Ryan and Runswick-Cole (2008b) highlight that the literature treats “disabled children as a homogenous group and, yet, the experiences for families with different types of impairment are markedly different” (p.207). Therefore, the experiences of parents of children with autism who have been excluded from school warrant exploration.

My literature review considered exclusion from an ecosystemic perspective and highlighted a complex series of factors that could be impacting on exclusion rates including government policies, school policies, and interactions and relationships between participants within the system. I am aware that Bronfenbrenner’s ecological theory (1979) placed importance on the role of fathers for a child’s development. Fathers are “microsystem partners with whom children can experience good ‘proximal process’ promoting development” (Pleck, 2007, p. 200). It has also been argued that fathers occupy a “unique” position as their interactions with their children are considered to be different from those of mothers (Pleck, 2007). Despite this possible perspective, my study is a qualitative study that aims to illuminate the circumstances surrounding these exclusions and deepen our understanding of such events by listening to the narratives of mothers. It is their consideration of events that is of particular interest as I perceive their voice to be one that has been silent in the literature.

In this research, I hope to re-story mother-blame and child-blame and, instead, bring to the forefront mothers’ stories of school exclusion of children with autism. I do this in the hope that hearing their voices may enable an understanding from their perspective of the complex systems they have to navigate. In turn, this may offer ways in which the systems around them can better understand and accommodate need, potentially, leading to more positive outcomes. I present my reasons for exploring mother’s perspectives further in the next chapter.

2:6 Research questions

- 1) What characterises the stories told by mothers whose children with autism have experienced school exclusion?

- 2) How might these stories further our understanding of the exclusion of children with autism from school?

3) What are the implications for EP practice?

Chapter 3: Methodology

3:1 Overview

I begin this chapter by outlining the philosophical underpinnings of my research and explaining my ontological and epistemological position. Within this I consider what autism is and explain how it is taken up in my study. I give my reasons for choosing qualitative methods generally and for choosing narrative methods as opposed to other qualitative methods – Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and Discourse Analysis (DA). I discuss quality issues in qualitative research and consider how I have tried to ensure quality assurance drawing on the principles advocated by Yardley (2008, 2017) and Riessman (2008).

3:2 Ontological positionality

Guba (1990) describes positionality as a set of beliefs that, in turn, influence action. Thomas (2017) describes positionality as how we think about the world. The outline below describes my positionality within this research. I discuss the philosophical assumptions that underpin the study both in how they relate to the nature of knowledge (epistemology) and also how they relate to the nature of reality (ontology). Within this study I have adopted a critical realist ontological perspective.

Critical realism, whilst being seen as an “alternative to both positivism and constructivism... draws elements from both methodological strains” (Fletcher, 2017). Bhaskar (1998), from whose work critical realism emerged, argued that positivism limited “reality” to that which could only be understood through empiric methods, for example scientific experiments. Constructivism is similarly critiqued in that, through this lens, reality is perceived to be a product of human knowledge and construction (Fletcher, 2017). Instead, critical realism maintains that the nature of reality, what is real, what exists in the world (ontology), cannot be reduced to *how* we know about the world, our knowledge of reality (epistemology) (Fletcher, 2017).

I have found Fletcher’s (2017) iceberg model of critical realism ontology (see Figure 2) useful in considering the philosophical underpinnings of my own research. Within this model, reality is perceived on three levels. The first, identified as the empirical level, relates to events that are experienced, observed and understood via human interaction and

interpretation. The second, described as the actual level, is where events, whether or not they have been experienced or filtered through human experience and interpretation, occur or not. At this level, events that have been generated by mechanisms are located. In the final level, causal mechanisms are found. These mechanisms are considered to be the structures or objects that cause events in the empirical and actual level to occur. Therefore, “a central idea of critical realism is that natural and social reality should be understood as an open stratified system of objects with causal powers” (Morton, 2006, p.2).

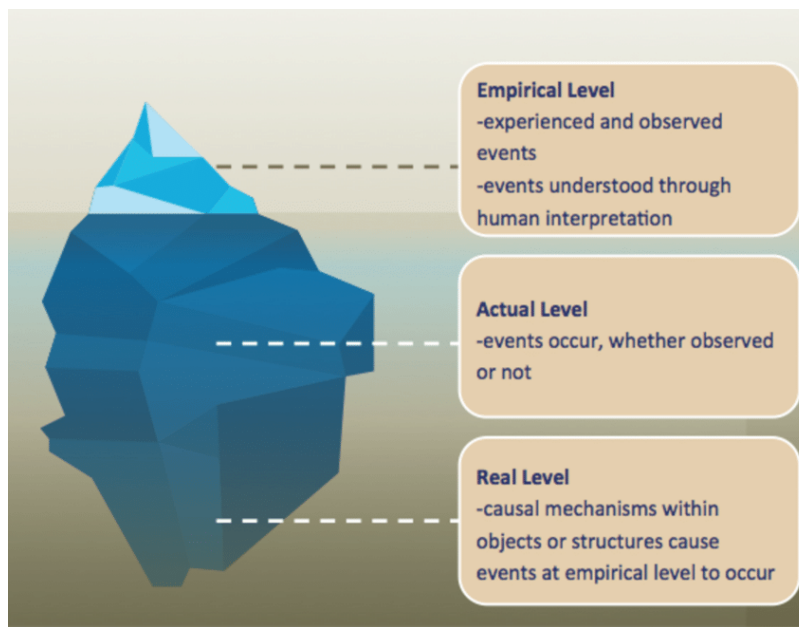


Figure 2: Fletcher’s (2017) Iceberg metaphor for critical realism ontology

Each of the levels are equally “real” and interactions occur between the levels. Discourse, located in the empirical level alongside social ideas and meaning making, is considered to be real and to have causal effects. Fletcher (2017) asserts “causal mechanisms are social products that can ultimately be understood through – and indeed, that exist within – phenomena at the empirical level (e.g. human actions and ideas that are generated by these mechanisms” (p.183).

- **My understanding of autism in this study**

“The more researchers have learnt about autism, the harder it gets to sum up the condition in a single sentence” (Fletcher-Watson & Happe, 2019).

I acknowledge that autism as a concept is complex and contested and that ideas of autism are in a constant state of change (Verhoeff, 2013). Autism is generally considered in “contemporary (global North) cultures “ (Runswick-Cole, Mallet & Timimi, 2016, p. 12) to be a biomedical condition (Kanner, 1943; Baron-Cohen, 2000, Frith, 2010), one that is a “lifelong developmental disability that typically appears during early childhood and can impact a person’s social skills, communication, relationships, and self-regulation” (Autism Society, 2020). In such a model, autism is perceived as a cognitive disorder or disability with a biological cause.

This understanding of autism is not without its critics. Recently some researchers and activists have begun to conceptualise autism within a “difference” rather than a “deficit” model, a model that is related to a variability in brain structure (Kapp, Gillespie-Lynch, Sherman, & Huntman, 2013). Through this lens autism is seen as a different way of being. The neurodiversity movement argues that “neurodivergent people may find that their experiences of the world and of other people do not align with the norm...neurodiversity dictates that neurodivergent people are *different, not less*” (Fletcher-Watson & Happe, 2019, p.23).

In contrast, the social model of disability positions disabilities as a result of the disabling environments one finds oneself within. Rather than “the problem” being within the individual, the social model challenges oppressive practice. It seeks to challenge “the systems, attitudes, and environments that disable people with autism” (Runswick-Cole, 2016, p.30).

Each of these theories of autism are based on ideas linked to a medical, real, and biologically based understanding of autism (Runswick-Cole, 2016). Authors within critical disability studies have attempted to “trouble” these concepts and, instead, to consider autism through a narrative lens. Narrative is concerned with stories and how some stories come to become more privileged than others. Authors in critical disability studies “trouble” the dominant biomedical story of autism and seek to “re-frame autism as one of the stories...not the only, or crucially, the most important story” (Runswick-Cole, 2016, p.33).

As an outsider (I do not have autism, I do not not have a child with autism) I try to be mindful and led by those on the inside, whilst at the same time acknowledging that there is no single view that is more valid than another. I am aware that there are times when I will

get it wrong. I am aware that for some people a diagnosis of autism is seen as a positive thing, a gateway to much needed resource. I am also aware that labels, at times, fail to offer protection and the open door that was hoped for remains closed.

Whilst acknowledging this complexity, my research seeks to elicit an understanding of the circumstances and events surrounding the school exclusion of children with autism and to explore how mothers experience such events. Therefore, it promotes their subjective knowledge, meaning-making and experience and, in so doing, complies with a critical realist ontology. Experiences of school exclusion occupy the empirical level. In addition, I accept that there are causal mechanisms that exist at the “real level” and believe these mechanisms can directly impact on experienced events.

In keeping with the critical realist perspective adopted in this study, I take the view that autism is experienced by individuals. I also believe that by seeking to understand the circumstances surrounding school exclusion there is something “real” to be considered. I accept that there are causal mechanisms and structures influencing events and experiences at the actual and empirical level. I believe too that these structures have shaped the reality of school exclusion and, in turn, have had real effects.

3:3 Epistemological positionality

Epistemology is concerned with a theoretical understanding of knowledge in terms of what knowledge is, how it can be discovered, shared and appreciated (Thomas, 2017). Positivist and Interpretivist epistemologies contrast in their view of how knowledge can be obtained and sit at opposing ends of an epistemological continuum (MacIntosh & O’Gorman, 2015). The epistemological position taken in this research aligns with a critical realist ontology for “Critical realism accepts a subjective epistemology or that knowledge is a product of the mind’s interpretive activity and is also socially constructed” (Morton, 2006, p.1). In keeping with this ontology, I acknowledge that there are multiple perceptions of reality. I am not seeking to find or uncover a “truth”. Rather, I accept that the views gathered are co-constructed, mediated and subjective and, therefore, cannot allow access to “truth”. However, Bhaskar (1979) theorises that careful analysis of data can allow us to “approach” reality. In seeking to highlight the exclusion of young people with autism from school *plus* consider how these events have been experienced by mothers, I also look to “approach” the reality of their experiences.

3:4 Choosing qualitative research

As outlined in my epistemology, I concur with Willig (2013) that there are multiple knowledges and realities of experience and that these are constructed and reconstructed. My research was concerned with studying complex social phenomena that could not be understood via reductionist quantitative approaches (Emmerson & Frosch, 2009). I was looking to obtain a rich and detailed picture of experience, one that could not be accessed by the use of direct observation, large scale surveys or structured interviewing. Instead, I hoped a qualitative methodology, one that explored the subjective experience of the participants and their viewpoints, would provide the information necessary to answer my research questions.

In addition, an important aim in the research was for mothers of young people with autism who had received school exclusions to have voice without the restriction of predetermined, researcher led variables; quantitative methodologies could not achieve this. Willig (2013) argues that the use of quantitative methodologies, with their predetermined variables, lead to the researcher's meanings and understandings being imposed. In this sense, quantitative methodologies set an agenda and control the information produced. It was important instead to choose a methodology that would do justice to their voices without constraint. Further, I was aware that my research might touch on sensitive topics and that discussing the experience of exclusion might be emotionally challenging. The words of Hart and Crawford-Wright (1999) resonate for me: "It is possible to enter someone else's world in many ways and for many different reasons. It is important that when we do so, we understand and accept our own motivations, and do everything possible to enhance that world rather than harm it" (p.213). With these considerations in mind, I felt it vital to use a methodology that was person-centred in its approach. Such a methodology serves to position the mothers at the centre of the process; power is relinquished from the researcher to the researched, and the researcher's role is to support the conversation in a non-directive and empathic way.

I employed a qualitative methodology that aimed to gather opinions, thoughts and understandings voiced by individuals (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013) using a responsive and relational approach (Brown and Gilligan, 1993). The approach used was an interpretative one. Being interpretative, the focus is on sense making and creating "thick descriptions", not to seek objectivity, causation or generalisation (Thomas, 2017). Due to its interpretative

nature, I accept that readers of this thesis may draw different interpretations from the research.

3:5 Research method

I felt it crucial to identify a research method that could elicit views and experiences in a sensitive way, as well as one that respected participants' needs, opinions and perspectives. I considered a number of qualitative methods before finally opting for my chosen research method. Below, I outline my thinking about methods and my reasons for discounting certain ones. I then outline my reasons for choosing narrative methods.

Early on in my research journey, I was initially drawn to Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). IPA's theoretical underpinning comes from phenomenology which is the study of lived experience. IPA focuses on an individual's experience, understanding and viewpoint. It is interpretative in that it tries to clarify and understand an individual's experience of their world. Smith et al. (2009) outline that IPA's focus is with establishing generalisations and general themes for homogenous groups. In order to use IPA successfully, researchers need to bracket or set aside their own opinions, assumptions and prejudices from the research.

Whilst initially being drawn to IPA as a way of understanding the lived experience of my participants, I believed that it had limitations with regard to my research. IPA does not acknowledge the co-construction of meaning that occurs in the interactions between participant and researcher. The necessity of a homogenous group was also problematic to me as I did not consider my participants to be homogenous. Mothers whose children have experienced exclusion differ in many ways including age, ethnicity, culture, economic status and education. This, therefore, meant that I could not make generalisations about them. My research focus was not to generate global themes or to describe the participants as a group. Rather than being "category-centred" (Reissman, 2008, p.12), I was concerned with voice; I wanted mothers' voices to speak for themselves, as their experiences are largely silent in the literature. I was equally concerned to value each contribution as a unique experience believing that close analysis of individual accounts may provide different ways of understanding and, therefore, greater insight of the experience of exclusion. For these reasons I rejected IPA.

I also considered Discourse Analysis (DA) (Potter & Wetherell, 1987) as a possible method. DA embraces a social constructionist paradigm and, in so doing, places importance on language. Individual perception, including thoughts, objects and phenomenon, are deemed to be constructed by language (Willig, 2013). DA attests that there is no objective reality. Rather, realities are subjective and experienced through language, conversation and construction. In many ways this conforms with my own viewpoint – data obtained by researchers cannot allow access to reality – and indeed, in my research, knowledge has been co-constructed. However, DA does not acknowledge the importance of the real effects of structures and language. DA “does not make claims about the nature of the world, the existence of underlying causal laws or mechanisms, or entities that give rise to psychological phenomena” (Willig, 2013, p.125). This contrasts with my viewpoint as I believe these structures are real, important and that they are causal mechanisms which contribute to children with autism experiencing school exclusion. For this reason, I rejected DA.

3:6 Choosing a narrative methodology

I will now explain my reasons for adopting narrative methods for my interviews and analysis and outline my understanding of narrative methods in research.

As well as choosing a method appropriate to my research questions, it was important to me to identify a methodology that was respectful of the mothers who agreed to participate. My study’s focus was on the school exclusion of children with autism and, consequently, it could be argued that the mothers of those children have *themselves* been placed in a marginalised group. To some extent, they could also be considered vulnerable because of this. I saw my research as a potential vehicle “to promote inclusion and collaboration and to recognise and give credence to the voices of both individuals and communities” (Aldridge, 2016, p.8). Christensen and James (2008) assert researchers should utilise techniques that are suitable for the individuals involved. Therefore, I needed a method that would provide the collaborative structure and setting in which mothers had voice, whilst also being respectful of individuals who may, by virtue of their circumstances, be seen to be vulnerable.

Whilst still considering the appropriate method for my research, I experienced training that was concerned with using therapeutic approaches in educational psychology (EP) casework, namely narrative approaches. Narrative approaches have been identified as valuable for EPs’ practice as well as an approach for inquiry (Billington & Williams, 2017). Following this

training, I was able to use narrative methods (White & Epston, 1990; Morgan, 2000; Morgan, 2002) within my placement as a TEP. This allowed me to appreciate the benefits of narrative techniques. Through narrative style questioning, I was able to privilege voice and elicit a rich and meaningful account. As techniques they were sensitive and person-centred. My research was not intended to be therapeutic in this sense. However, I did like the idea that narrative methods could offer a respectful approach, one that would welcome complexity rather than reduce experience to superficial explanations (Warham, 2012).

Narrative is concerned with the stories people tell about their lives and the meaning that is conveyed and understood via this process. Murray (2003) suggests narrative “ provides a coherent causal account of an event that has occurred” (p.98). Hiles and Cermak (2008) discuss how stories are conversational tools contributing to a “sense-making process that is fundamental to understanding human reality” (p.149). Critical Realism and narrative methods are, therefore, complementary as a methodology.

There is not a single accepted narrative method and multiple disciplines use narrative methods in a variety of ways (Riessman, 2008). Authors who have contributed to the field do, however, outline a number of features. Within the narrative field, stories are used to enhance understanding of the challenges and events in people’s lives (Bruner, 1990). Stories are viewed as a way to “reveal truths about human experience” (Riessman, 2008, p.10). Story allows individuals who are “experts” in their own lives to share their experience (Gilligan & Eddy, 2017, p.77). These narratives can be seen as containing considerable “knowledge” about how parents and their children are positioned within the system. Consequently, they have unique insight into how the system functions and its outcomes. I hoped that hearing mothers’ stories would answer my research questions, enhance our understanding and provide insight to inform policy and practice.

3:7 Quality in my research

Narrative research is a qualitative method and so rejects a positivist stance, valuing, instead, language and subjective experience (Willig, 2013). As such, it cannot be held up for scrutiny against the positivist assumptions of generalisability, validity and reliability. These quantitative concepts are irrelevant to qualitative studies (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Yardley, 2000). This is not to say that quality cannot be claimed. It is, instead, necessary to judge qualitative research using alternative concepts. A number of researchers have

suggested standards for considering quality in qualitative research and the principles recommended are similar (Cohen & Crabtree, 2008). Therefore, I have adopted the broad categories offered by Yardley (2008, 2017) and Riessman (2008) and outline how I have attempted to address these within my research.

- **Sensitivity to context**

Yardley (2017) describes the need to be aware of, and sensitive to, individual perspectives and contexts. Importance is given to recognising the social, economic, cultural and historical factors within which the researcher works. Each of these criteria are seen to influence both participant *and* researcher. This influence is witnessed in the ways that researcher and participant both understand their experience and their co-production of meaning through the conversation. The mothers who took part in this research were not passive responders but part of a co-construction (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). Mothers within my research will have reflexively related to me, or not, as a white British female; I do not have children; as mentioned in my introduction, I have worked with young people who have experienced school exclusion for many years. I see school exclusion as a social justice issue and one which marginalises young people and families. Such beliefs will have impacted on my study.

Hollway and Jefferson (2013) draw attention to intersubjectivity in research and posit that it is the interaction between the researcher and researched that creates the space for intersubjective knowledge production. Within this space “both will be subject to projections and introjections of ideas and feelings coming from the other person” (p.42). Whilst completing the narrative interviews, I tried to remain conscious of my body language, my feelings, thoughts and responses, knowing that all of these might shape the narrative process. After each interview, I reflected on the interview and kept notes in my research diary.

I believe that my reflexivity within this project has enabled me to fulfil this principle. I have sought to be both reflexive *and* reflective throughout. I am conscious I will have shaped the research process through my response to, and conversations with, the participants. My own principles, morals, experiences, understandings, knowledge, and skills will have informed my work and the understandings I have reached (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Hollway & Jefferson, 2013; Woodcock, 2016).

The need to be reflective equally contributed to my decision to use The Listening Guide (LG) (Brown & Gilligan, 1993) to provide the structure for my data analysis. This is explored further in chapter four. However, it is pertinent to note here because The LG requires a researcher to “be mindful of and take note of his or her own responses, questions and confusions” (Woodcock, 2016, p.4). In this way, I hoped I would be able to build in reflexivity and, in so doing, strengthen the quality of my research.

Whilst being sensitive to context, attention should also be paid to the power balance within the research relationship (Yardley, 2008). It was important to me throughout to be mindful of power. Foucault theorised power “as productive of social structures and knowledge” (Turek, 1990, p.170) and knowledge to be a product of discourse. Further, he theorised that discourse is controlled by protocols and the ability to access discursive spaces. It is argued that those in powerful positions, those with education and social status – predominately white, upper class men – have access to these spaces and, therefore, it is their stories, their knowledge that is privileged whilst others are marginalised (Phillips and Bunda, 2018).

I recognise that power can be seen as existing in all social relationships (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013) and that these power differences can shape the accounts obtained. I have attempted through my choice of research method to address issues of power. Riessman (2008) argues that power imbalances can be mitigated when researchers follow the narrative path of the participant. Allowing the participant to take the lead and select what they feel are the important details to tell about their own experiences can lead to greater empowerment (Elliot, 2005). With this in mind, I chose a research method that positions the individuals that take part as experts in their own lives. Narrative interviews are a recognised method to appreciate how people make sense of themselves and their experience (Bruner, 2004). My research used unstructured narrative interviews to allow the participants the freedom to say as little or as much as they wished about their experience and the events that mattered to them. Using an initial question, followed by prompts, allows a story to be told about *their* experience of school exclusion.

I rejected survey or semi-structured interviews because they are perceived to set the agenda and control what information is obtained. Instead, the narrative interview unfolds and progresses in line with the participant’s understandings (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). It seeks to gain knowledge that has not been suppressed or shaped by individuals to meet a perceived research agenda (Emmerson & Frosh, 2009). Further, semi-structured interviews

have been critiqued as potentially giving power and control to the researcher, in that the researcher retains control of the content, the language, and the structure and boundaries of the conversation (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). I chose an unstructured narrative interview so that the participants could give their own accounts and provide their understandings of *their* experiences (Thomas, 2017). I wanted participants to control the process and not be led by my agenda, or by their perception of my agenda, in order not to stifle storytelling (Mishler, 1991), restrict stories and, hence, affect knowledge gained.

I sought throughout to empower participants in the decision-making process. In summary, I tried to ensure they felt respected and comfortable in a number of ways: participants were consulted about venues for our meetings and when to meet; they were given the option to choose their own pseudonyms; I ensured that they understood that they were leading the conversation and that they could share as much or as little detail as they were comfortable with; they could conclude the interview at any point and ongoing consent was sought throughout; they were offered the opportunity to see the transcript and redact information and were also offered access to the final analysis with the opportunity to add comments.

I acknowledge that there are potential challenges in adopting this approach, including the time necessary beforehand to build trust and rapport, the investment of time to hear the accounts and also the need to control sensitively the direction of the interview (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). I hoped, however, that the benefits of this approach from a quality, as well as an ethical, point of view would outweigh the challenges.

Throughout my research I was keen to adopt methods that mitigated against the effects of power. Consequently, I chose to use the Listening Guide (LG) (Brown and Gilligan, 1993) as the method for analysing the mothers' accounts. This method appealed as it is viewed as "a qualitative, relational, voice-centred, feminist methodology" (Woodcock, 2016, p.1). I was keen to identify a method that would support my understanding of the stories elicited and one that "honours the role of the researcher-researched relationship, the intricacies of voice and silence" (Woodcock, 2016, p.2). By observing feminist principles, I hoped that this research might potentially offer resistance to privilege to contest "the privileged, all-knowing, objective position of the researcher; viewing the "naive subject" of study as a participant in the process of creating knowledge; and using research methods aimed at transforming an oppressive culture" (Mahlstedt, 1999).

- **Commitment and rigour**

Guidelines around commitment and rigour are concerned with the competency of the researcher in relation to the procedures used both to collect and analyse information obtained (Yardley, 2017). I have attempted to meet this principle in a variety of ways. Prior to starting this research, I read widely about narrative methods. I attended seminars at university that discussed narrative approaches. As a TEP, I have used narrative approaches whilst conducting therapeutic casework and also in the conversations I have with a variety of parents, professionals, and others with whom I have engaged as part of my work. In addition, I have drawn upon over twenty years experience of working with mothers whose children have experienced exclusion from school and the knowledge I have obtained through this (Yardley, 2008).

- **Transparency and coherence**

Transparency is concerned with ensuring the reader can see clearly how the researcher's interpretation has been obtained from the data. Coherence relates to the clarity of the analysis (Yardley, 2008). I have addressed these considerations throughout the research. I have been transparent about my decision making and the outcomes from this and have attempted to explicate this in outlining such decisions throughout my thesis. I have a record of the research process followed, including notes and documents used. I have provided clear transcripts of my data and hold audio recordings of the narrative interviews on an encrypted flash drive. The recordings can be made available, if desired, to ensure my transcripts are accurate. I have been clear about how the analysis was conducted and how my interpretations have been influenced including making links to the academic literature where relevant. I have drawn upon the advice and expertise of my supervisor to assess and critique my work throughout. This process has allowed further reflections and ensured that the research has met the principle of coherence.

- **Impact and importance**

Yardley (2008) views impact and importance as perhaps the most significant principle: a "study will have impact and importance if it builds on what we already know, to take us a step further and answer questions that matter to people and society" (Yardley, 2008,

p.268). Riessman (2008) describes impact and importance as a study having pragmatic usefulness. Both, therefore, are concerned with the need for research to provide useful knowledge. Knowledge is judged as useful if it is of practical value or proposes hypotheses or contributes to how we think about the world (Yardley, 2017).

I see the mothers in my study as marginalised by virtue of their child's exclusion from school and also how their voice, knowledge and experiences are under-represented in the research literature. Thus, my research is important as it seeks to make *their* experiences more widely known. Current research with regards to exclusion is often limited to statistics. There is limited research exploring the school exclusion of children with autism and few qualitative studies that provide a space for the consideration of the experience *as told by* mothers. Mothers' voices are often devalued and discredited (Carpenter & Austin, 2008; Gwernan-Jones et al., 2015; Ryan & Runswick-Cole, 2008a); it is important to redress this imbalance. I hope that my research will have impact as the data gathered is intended to be detailed and allow for insight into the experience of exclusion for young people with autism and their mothers/families. I hope this insight can help inform and influence professional practice.

3:8 Ethical considerations

Throughout my research I have utilised the guidelines provided by the British Psychological Society's (BPS) Code of Ethics and Conduct (2018) and the professional guidance provided by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) Guidance on Conduct and Ethics for Students (2016). The participants in my research are viewed as potentially vulnerable and, therefore, reflecting on ethical considerations and providing justifications were important to minimise potential risks that might arise from involvement in the study. Approval for this study was sought and gained from the University of Sheffield ethics board (Appendix 1 contains the ethical approval letter).

- **Recruiting participants, protecting confidentiality and providing anonymity**

My research was initially advertised via a number of gatekeepers that administered parent/carer forums and websites. Information sheets (Appendix 2) were provided to outline the research including its aims, methods, what participants would be expected to

do, how the data would be treated and stored and details regarding informed consent. My contact details were made available to allow participants to self-identify. Using this method, I was able to recruit my pilot participant. Unfortunately, no other participants self-identified through this method of recruitment. Following a conversation with my supervisor, I resubmitted my ethics application for approval to change my recruitment method (Appendix 3 contains the second ethical approval letter). EPs from within the service where I was based as a TEP agreed to take on the role of gatekeepers. The gatekeepers were provided with information sheets detailing the research (Appendix 4). It was, therefore, at the discretion of the gatekeepers to identify potential participants and to send the information provided.

In order to ensure confidentiality, I did not ask for any identifying details of potential participants. In the write up of the research, I have also sought to maintain confidentiality by using pseudonyms and ensuring that educational and other settings and areas are not identified.

- **Informed Consent**

All the necessary Information about the research and its aims and its procedures were shared via the use of participant information sheets (Appendix 2 & 4). This fully briefed participants about what they were consenting to. In addition, I met with participants prior to the data gathering stage, so that each participant had an opportunity to ask any questions about the research before giving consent. Only after receiving this information were participants asked to sign the consent form (Appendix 5). I ensured that participants knew that they could withdraw from the process and sought on-going consent throughout. This was achieved by verbally gaining consent at the start of the interviews and again at the end.

- **Minimising risk**

When I designed this research, I was aware that exclusion could be a difficult experience and talking about it may lead to psychological distress. My research topic might highlight sensitive experiences and, therefore, it was important to consider how to minimise risk of distress to participants. Arguably, the individuals in my research could have been viewed as vulnerable

because school exclusion marginalises young people and their households. However, whilst accepting that individuals can be vulnerable by circumstance, Aldridge (2016) argues that vulnerability should be viewed as a more complex construct and “that self-perceptions of vulnerability may not always accord with those of others, or according to external identifiers or classifications” (p.12). Yet, whilst acknowledging that some participants are vulnerable, there is also risk in excluding vulnerable subjects from research. By not engaging with vulnerable participants, our understanding about their experiences and the opportunity to utilise their expert knowledge remains limited (Aldridge, 2016). One of the aims of this research was for individuals to have a voice. Consequently, it was necessary to weigh the risks of involvement and then seek to mitigate these in order that voice could be heard.

I adopted a number of safeguards in order to minimise the risk of harm to participants. Silver (2013) writes “it can take time for a person to tell their story... it is vital to ensure that participants are put at ease and feel comfortable” (p.146). In order to share their experience, it was important to establish connections based on trust and respect. I have considerable experience of creating rapport and as a TEP I extend my practice in this area daily. Rapport involves “conveying empathy and understanding without judgment” (Patton, 2015, p. 458) and I built this in a variety of ways. I met with each of the participants in an informal setting of their choosing before the more formal interview phase. This provided an opportunity for them to meet me, to be able to ask questions or seek further clarification before agreeing to take part in the research. These preliminary meetings served to begin to establish rapport and familiarity and to ensure that the participants could feel comfortable discussing their experiences with me. Prior to the second meeting, I once more provided reassurance that the study was interested in their opinions and experiences, that I had no expectation that they should discuss anything that they were not comfortable doing and, equally, that there were no right or wrong responses. Throughout the interviews, I was attentive to participants’ responses, used active listening and reflected back using participants’ own words.

Participants in this research gave on-going informed consent. This happened at the start of the interview, after transcription and when we met to discuss my analysis of their accounts. Risk was also mitigated by the use of narrative approaches which provide freedom for individuals to tell their stories and experiences in the way they choose. Further, participants could pause or end the interview at any point. Ireland and Hollway (1996) maintain that risk can be lessened if interviews are conducted sensitively. Through a variety of roles, I have

gained experience in talking with people who could be viewed as emotionally vulnerable. I believe my previous experience provided me with the knowledge and skills both to do this and also to identify if the participants were becoming distressed. Should this have occurred, I would have stopped the interview; I would have respected and empathised with their emotions. I would have explained that they did not have to continue. The participants would have had the choice to continue or not and time to reflect on this decision. Should they have wanted to proceed, they would have had control over the circumstances in which that would occur. I also built in time to debrief at the end of the interview and provided participants with several helpline numbers to call should they need them.

- **Power**

Power imbalances are a further ethical consideration. I have previously outlined my understanding of power and how I have sought to mitigate its influence in section 3:7 “sensitivity to context”. In the interests of not repeating that which has already been said, I direct the reader to that section whilst also acknowledging that power is an ethical issue as well as one relating to quality.

3:9 Summary

- My research adopts a critical realist position
- I argue for the application of qualitative methods in general and narrative approaches specifically to understand and learn from the experience of mothers whose children with autism have experienced exclusion
- I outline how the study should not be held accountable to positivist criteria and propose alternative standards upon which the issue of quality should be judged
- Reflexivity is considered to be important and has been addressed by keeping a research diary and using a reflexive method of data analysis
- The research complies with the British Psychological Society Code of Ethics and Conduct (2018) and Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) Guidance on Conduct and Ethics for Students (2016)

Chapter 4: Procedure

4:1 Overview

This chapter outlines the pilot work undertaken and the procedure used to recruit participants. It describes the procedure employed to conduct narrative interviews and the different stages of analysis that informed my research. The research was conducted in a LA in the East Midlands area of the United Kingdom.

4:2 Pilot work

I conducted my pilot study with a mother, Heather, whose daughter, Elizabeth, had a diagnosis of autism and had experienced exclusion from her primary school. I conducted the pilot study in order to familiarise myself with the method of unstructured narrative interview and to evaluate its appropriateness. The pilot was also necessary to identify the time taken to complete the interviews and to verify that my initial questions and unstructured narrative interview, would be an appropriate method to provide answers to my research questions. Additionally, I was keen to explore with Heather that the process adopted was useful for her and that it allowed her to feel comfortable in telling her story.

Following the pilot interview, I asked six questions that considered issues such as the efficacy of the pre-interview stage or not, whether having sight of the initial questions to be discussed during the interview stage was helpful or not and the appropriateness of the method used. The questions asked and Heather's responses can be found in appendix 6. Given the success of the pilot study, it was not necessary to make any changes to the research design. Having completed the pilot, I was able to recognise and feel comfortable that the research design would allow mothers to tell their stories and that this method would be likely to produce detailed narratives that would address the research questions.

After the success of the pilot study, I conversed with my supervisor regarding the use of Heather's story within the main study. I was genuinely concerned to respect and share her account. It felt wrong for me not to include it and for me to continue to silence a voice that through exclusion had already been suppressed. I also felt that the potentially valuable insight garnered from the story Heather had so bravely shared would be lost. In order to

include Heather, I asked Heather if she would be prepared to give revised consent to allow her story to be told.

4:3 Sample

I used purposive sampling to identify and recruit participants because I was seeking to shine a light on, and learn from, the experience of a specific population.

Wells (2011) argues that there is not an imposed number of participants required to complete narrative research. Instead, the requisite number should be judged by weighing the aim of the study, the breadth and depth of the information collected and the richness of the information required. Riessman (2008) outlines the method of narrative interview as an experience, in which “two active participants who jointly construct narrative and meaning...[to] generate detailed accounts rather than brief answers or general statements” (p.23). The information elicited, therefore, can be considerable. There was a time limit for completion and transcription of the interviews. This necessitated restricting the quantity of participants to an achievable number. With these considerations in mind, as well as the arguments of Wells (2011) and Riessman (2008) outlined above, I interviewed three participants. I believed that this number of participants, alongside the method of data collection used, would provide lengthy interviews which would enable participants to provide rich narratives and, therefore, allow a thorough analysis and interpretation.

4:4 Selection criteria

I chose to recruit individuals who were mothers specifically. My reason for this decision was because in my own experience it is mothers who provide the main family link between home, school and other professionals. In addition, my literature review had reflected on the experiences of mothers, (Carpenter & Austin, 2007; Ryan & Runswick-Cole, 2008b), and I thought that this was something that might warrant consideration when researching the school exclusion of children with autism. Selection criteria are further outlined in table 1.

Participants	Mothers whose children with autism have been excluded from either primary or secondary education.
Type of exclusion	I chose to include all types of exclusion, including permanent exclusion and unofficial exclusions (grey exclusions or managed moves), because I did not wish to exclude and silence a group that had already been unofficially excluded and silenced. The only criteria applied here was that the exclusion would have led to a change in school place.
The exclusion must have happened post 2015	Post the new SEND Code of Practice (DfE, 2015). The new code brought with it a number of requirements on schools including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A greater emphasis on keeping pupils and parents informed. ● An expectation that all children are entitled to an education that is appropriate for individual need, encourages high standards and allows children to achieve their potential. ● Not discriminating for a reason that comes about by virtue of a young person's disability (DfE, 2015).
Current educational provision	Their child must now be being provided with education other than home schooling. This was predominately an ethical decision as I was aware that exclusion might be a difficult event. I thought that recounting their stories whilst still experiencing its effects might have caused greater distress.

Table 1: Selection criteria for recruiting participants

4:5 Recruitment

Participants were recruited via third parties. Initial gatekeepers were administrators of parent/carer forums. As outlined earlier, this method of recruitment did not identify the required number of participants. Following further ethical review, gatekeepers were identified from within the EP service in which I was based as a TEP.

The gatekeepers were asked if they knew of any mothers who met the selection criteria outlined in Table 1. The gatekeepers were asked to contact potential participants and distribute the information sheet (appendix 2 or 4). If the contact expressed an interest in participating (via an email or phone call to myself), I arranged to meet with them to talk about the research including the information provided in the information sheet (appendix 2 or 4), and to answer any questions they may have prior to consenting to participate. This procedure was repeated until all three participants had been recruited.

4:6 Data collection

My research used unstructured narrative interviews (outlined earlier in greater detail in chapter 3 p.33 – 34). I arranged to meet with participants at a venue of their choosing for the initial and subsequent meetings. All of my participants chose to conduct the initial meeting at their own home. I followed the lone working policy of the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) in which I was based as a TEP. The initial meeting was important as I hoped that it would allow me to build rapport. As Thomas (2017) writes “establishing rapport is not simply a mechanical process to be gone through; it is a process of actually making contact – of proving that you are human” (p.202). At the initial meetings, I explained the process of the interview and informed participants of the two questions that would form the start of the conversation. This was to ensure they had time to consider their experiences before our second meeting. As outlined earlier, the meeting also provided participants with the freedom to ask me questions. Further meetings were then arranged at a time and venue of the participants choosing. Two mothers chose their own homes as the venue and one mother decided that a room in a local EPS building would be better.

Anderson and Kirkpatrick (2016) propose a number of skills that are required “to be a good narrative interviewer [including] being able to establish rapport and trust early on in the interview, then being a very good listener throughout, avoiding interruptions” (p.632).

Drawing on Anderson and Kirkpatrick's recommendations, at the start of the interview, I talked the participants through the consent form (appendix 5) and asked them to sign and date the form. I explained that they could stop the interview at any time. I also clarified that they were able to withdraw from the study up to four weeks later. I stated that my study was concerned with their experience of exclusion and that I also hoped to inform policy and practice in the future but that I was not looking for a specific 'thing'. I encouraged the participants to tell their story in the way they wanted to, to start where they wanted to start and to speak about the events and experiences that they wanted to around an open-ended question that was relevant to my study. The orienting question was "I understand (name of child) has experienced exclusion from school; can you tell me about that?"

Throughout the interviews I used active listening and reflective conversations to gather a deeper story of experience. Active listening is considered to be "listening with a purpose" (Pearson, Nelson, Titsworth & Harter, 2006) and seeks both to enhance a researcher's understanding of the participants' interests, opinions and thoughts and also to create a sense of being well listened to by the participant (Louw, Todd & Jimakorn, 2011). I employed techniques including paying attention to my own body language and gesture, in order that I was seen to be listening, maintaining eye contact, nodding and smiling, agreeing by saying 'Yes' or 'Mmm hmm' to encourage participants to continue. The aim of using such techniques was to provide feedback to the participant in order to make them feel more at ease and, therefore, encourage more open communication.

Reflective conversations build on active listening techniques to develop conversations further. They also serve to clarify the researcher's understanding of what has been said, that as a researcher I have understood the participants correctly. Reflecting includes "paraphrasing and restating both the feelings and words of the speaker" (skillsyouneed, 2020). Techniques such as mirroring – repeating almost verbatim what has been said – and paraphrasing – using alternative words that reflect what the participant has said – were used. These techniques allow the participant to consider what has been said and understood, to expand further, clarify or correct. I used additional questions such as "can you tell me more about that?" at pause points to encourage further elaboration. Thereby, the narratives obtained were "a product of the relationship between interviewer and interviewee" (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013, p.41).

I was aware that talking about their experiences may have elicited some painful memories. Consequently, I spent some time sitting and chatting with each participant after the formal interview stage. I also signposted participants to a variety of services that could offer support should they have felt that they needed it.

Interviews were audio recorded and lasted for 1 hour (Carol), 2 hours 55 minutes (Jenny) and 1 hour 13 minutes (Heather). Shortly after the end of the interviews I made reflective notes. Interviews were later transcribed verbatim (appendix 7, 8, 9) using the Jefferson (2004) conventions in table 2. Audio data and transcriptions were anonymised and pseudonyms used as agreed in the confidentiality agreement. All recordings and files will be deleted on completion of my doctoral studies.

Symbol	Explanation
(.)	Pause - less than one second
(3)	Pause - length in seconds
((laughter))	Non-verbal communication
[Overlapping speech
(inaudible)	Unable to decipher speech

Table 2: Jefferson (2004) conventions used in transcriptions

4:7 Analysis of narratives

In considering narrative analysis, Bruner (1987) discusses ideas commonly associated with narrative thinking. Bruner (1987) posits that within people’s stories we see both a “landscape of action” and a “landscape of consciousness”. Narratives are composed of characters, actions and events, which take place in settings (the action landscape). They also incorporate ideas, emotions, reflections and interpretations (the consciousness landscape). There is not a defined method that narrative researchers use when analysing stories. No single method has been identified as the gold standard to allow access to the landscape of action or consciousness. Rather, a variety of methods exist. It is widely accepted that the exact method used is not critical. However, the method does need to meet the criteria of being thorough and transparent as well as generating “insights into the structure of the narrative, its functions and its social and/or psychological implications” (Willig, 2013, p.146).

For reasons already outlined in chapter three, section 3.7, I utilised the methods proposed in The LG (Brown & Gilligan, 1993) to analyse the narratives elicited in my research. The LG is a semi-structured process that looks for ideas and patterns running through a narrative. The authors of the LG recommend a number of phases or listenings to the narratives from which it is possible to explore individuals “sense making”. Brown and Gilligan (1993) define the guide as “a pathway into relationship rather than a fixed framework for interpretation” (p.15). This method allows the researcher to recognise themes within an individual’s story, to consider the structure of the narrative and the purpose of the stories told. It offers a way for the researcher to identify cultural accounts within the stories and allows for consideration of conflicts, ambiguities and tensions. A number of *listenings* are recommended following a stepped process that concentrates the researcher on the intricacy of voice.

Step one requires the researcher to attend “to the landscape of the interview” (Gilligan, 2015, p.71). The idea is to listen for the plot, to survey the scene, listen for the stories being told, look for characters – those that appear and those that are absent – and identify context, key events, emerging themes, images and metaphors. Consideration is given to listening for recurrent and resonant words, themes and phrases (Gilligan, 2015). Such a listening allows the researcher “to articulate a succinct, yet rich synopsis of the basic trends and themes emerging from the first listening” (Woodcock, 2016, p.3). This first stage produces a description; there is no attempt to interpret at this point.

As well as the description, there is also a focus on reflexivity. Brown and Gilligan (1993) emphasise the need to “reflect on ourselves as people in the privileged position of interpreting the life events of another and consider the implications of this act” (p.15). I acknowledge that I occupy a privileged position. This position holds power and influence that will have impacted on the story told. In addition, my own thoughts, feelings and associations will have influenced my subjective response to the story told. There is a need to be transparent about this response “by identifying, exploring, and making explicit [my] own thoughts and feelings about, and associations with, the narrative” (Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg & Bertsch, 2006, p.257). In order to demonstrate this reflexivity and provide transparency, I have made reflective notes in purple alongside the LG analysis of transcripts. I have also highlighted the LG transcripts in the same colour to identify which section prompted the reflection. These transcripts can be found in appendix 10, 11 and 12.

The second listening tracks the use of the first-person reference and involves the creation of “I poems”. The purpose of the “I poems” is to encourage attention to “the first-person voice” (Gilligan & Eddy, 2017, p.79). The “I” poems allow consideration of how the narrator talks about themselves and how they consider themselves with respect to others (Woodcock, 2016). Gilligan et al. (2006) argue that this is a crucial component of the voice-centred relational method because it highlights what the participant knows about herself. I constructed the “I” poems by identifying statements beginning with “I”, along with any verb or seemingly meaningful associated words which were accredited to the participant (highlighted in green LG transcripts appendix 10, 11 and 12), and then extracting them from the text. Each “I” statement was ordered in a sequential manner and stanza. Stanzas were created by listening for shifts in focus of the “I” statements (Gilligan, 2015). As well as “I” statements, I also noted the use of “you”, “we”, and “they” in order to explore further the stories told.

The third listening requires what Gilligan calls listening for polyphonic (also referred to as contrapuntal) voices. This stage looks for harmony, coherence and congruence *as well as* discord and tension. Consideration is given to that which is not said, that which is silenced. It requires the researcher to consider the different voices that are apparent within the story. It looks for possible discord between voices and considers tensions between them. Woodcock (2016) describes this stage as a means to question the way themes connect or contradict. I have identified contrapuntal voices within the transcripts and highlighted them in blue (appendix 10, 11, 12).

The final stage requires paying attention to the socio-cultural context which the participant inhabits. Here the aim is to focus on dominant discourse. This stage considers culture, context, and power – both relational and structural. At this point, the different stages of listening are also pulled together and the analysis is composed. Gilligan and Eddy (2017) highlight the need for the researcher to be clear about how the information obtained has contributed to interpretation. Analysis was recursive and required listening and reading of the transcripts multiple times. The interpretive analysis was conducted following completion of all four stages of the LG. Gilligan et al. (2006) state that each stage of listening should “be brought back into relationship with one another to not reduce or lose the complexity of a person’s expressed experience” (p.267).

4:8 Sharing the interpretation

I shared my analysis and interpretations with each participant. It was important to me that they were comfortable with what I had written. I was also interested in how they felt having their stories represented this way. I encouraged them to be honest with me about their feelings and not to look after mine. Sharing the interpretation was twofold; as well as providing rigour in relation to my interpretations, it was also a continuation of the consent process. The British Psychological Society (2014) necessitate “that consent should be an ongoing process and that a fuller appreciation of the research and the nature of participation will often become more apparent to participants during the course of their involvement” (p.21). Whilst I had explained the research at the beginning of the process, sharing the analysis provided greater clarity about the nature of their involvement and how their stories had been understood. It was therefore important to gain ongoing consent.

4:9 Summary

- I used a purposive sample of mothers who had children with autism and who had experienced school exclusion
- Participants were interviewed about their experiences using an unstructured narrative interview
- Interviews were transcribed using selected Jefferson (2004) conventions
- I analysed the transcripts using “The Listening Guide” (Brown & Gilligan, 1993)
- I was reflective in my approach
- My analysis and interpretations were shared with the mothers in my study

Chapter 5: Analysis and Interpretations

5:1 Overview

I present in this chapter my analysis and interpretation of the stories shared by Carol, Jenny and Heather.

5:2 Carol's story

Narrative synopsis

Carol is mother to Zane, a fraternal twin. She lives with her husband and their three older children. Carol tells a chronological story, Zane's entry-exit from several educational institutions. There are numerous characters in her story none of whom are named. Her story is clear and succinct, narrated calmly, rarely emotionally. Carol's narrative has authority in the telling; it is confident, knowledgeable and self-aware. As it continues, voices of anger, distress, loneliness and loss can be heard.

School is a troubling place for Zane, somewhere he is rarely understood and cared for, a place where he mostly experiences rejection in the form of part-time timetables or exclusions. Carol similarly, despite wanting to work in partnership with school staff, is dismissed, blamed and powerless in a system that fails to meet her son's rights. We hear her growing frustration and anger as she battles to advocate for Zane. Even when, finally, Zane is happy and doing well, Carol herself, though battle weary, must be ready for the next fight.

I asked several times...they said no

Early in the narrative Carol describes how she seeks collaboration with school. On entry to nursery, she explains that Zane is 'different' and has been referred to hospital. She asks them to help by observing Zane and his interactions in order to provide evidence to the hospital. This co-operation is not forthcoming: "I asked several times if they'd noticed anything and they said no". The use of the word "several" here possibly indicates this is effortful for Carol and that she feels nursery staff are unhelpful in their interactions with her. We see this again later when Carol insists Zane can read and with her having to ask them "repeatedly to test him". Carol is either dismissed – "Oh well he's always like that"

and “we didn’t realise that’s the kind of difference you wanted” – or told she is wrong; she tells them “Zane could read to which they told me he couldn’t”.

Carol’s engagement with professionals and her futile attempts at collaboration with nursery staff are expressed in the “I” and “They” poems witnessed at this point in the narrative:

I informed	They told me
I felt	They wouldn’t listen
I asked	They said “No”
I could	They classed it
I needed	There wasn’t anything they could do
I also informed	They disregarded
I said	

Carol’s “I” statements are purposeful and active whereas “They” seem powerful, uncooperative. “They” are expert and seemingly disregard her voice. Such statements perhaps reflect her sense that she is without agency.

The transition to reception sees Carol again seeking to engage Zane’s new teacher. The “I” and “They” statements also highlight Carol’s continuing quest for acknowledgement of her personal awareness of her son’s capabilities:

I spoke	They said
I spoke	They held him back
I’ve noted things	They wouldn’t allow
I asked them repeatedly	
I went	
I know	

Carol’s voice remains purposeful and certain. Yet the outcome is much as before with “They” asserting power. As the narrative unfolds, there is an increasing sense of how Carol’s voice and agency are eroded while the negative effects of this power imbalance also impact on Zane.

I was permanently pulled in

As school becomes increasingly problematic for Zane, Carol's interventions become less certain. She is "permanently pulled in because one thing or another had happened", "pulled" intimating action without Carol's agency or volition. Carol describes a time in which, whilst struggling with difficulties school creates for Zane, she cannot always ensure her other children are in class on time. Instead of support, Carol paints a picture of isolation with school staff standing by and offering no help:

I was permanently pulled in	They'd never questioned
I had to go	They'd never asked
I think	They didn't seem to care
I don't know	They just stood never helped
I can't comment	
I just know	
I would have (staff watching)	
I had (two other children)	
I was too busy	

There is a contrast for Carol in the way she and Zane are held accountable and the way they are treated when Zane is hurt. Here Zane is ignored and Carol receives "empty apologies". We sense that Carol and Zane are dismissed, seem unworthy of respect or sincerity. Carol wonders about this inequity asking "is it because he's a problem child". She states she doesn't know and "can't comment" in almost a dismissive way. I wonder if this is because it is too painful to think about. There is sadness here, a sense of loneliness and vulnerability. We hear the voice of sadness again when Carol describes how Zane "wasn't read to very often in reception. He was ignored from other children because he would play up".

As the narrative continues it is evident that for Carol systems are neither transparent nor trustworthy. The end of reception year sees her enquire about an EP assessment, a possibility she is only aware of through Zane's hospital assessment. She is told he is on the list but later discovers this is "a lie". Initially, Carol trusts this system declaring "I just thought well let's see what happens". When, later, she chases this referral, she is treated as if she has "two heads", suggesting she feels alienated. This othering image – colloquial, flippant, almost humorous – also potentially conceals distress. As Zane's Year 1 experience

deteriorates, he starts to “meltdown in class” and Carol begins to receive calls to collect him early from school because “he was misbehaving”. School appears to view this situation as “within-child” whereby the problem is situated within the mind/body of the child and the behaviour is a choice.

The “I” and “They” poems reflect Carol and Zane’s lack of agency during this time:

I asked	They had Behaviour Support
(as if) I’d got two heads	They manoeuvred
I asked	They excluded
I didn’t even know	They’d closed (the door and held it)
I discovered	(then) They opened the door
I met	They all just stood
I’d been told	They just
I believe	They’d ring me
I got a call to collect him	
I got there	

The attribution of Zane’s behaviour as one of volition, where he is viewed as having full agency over his behaviour rather than responding to anything in his environment, alongside the imbalanced power dynamic, is evident in Carol’s description of an event in which, during a “meltdown”, Zane swings his bag and hits the deputy head. The deputy head holds a position of power and therefore, despite that “it was an accident”, Zane receives a two-day exclusion. Carol’s feelings of injustice are evident here; it is “They” who have agency when “they couldn’t have that, so they excluded him”. Her disappointment and sense of being conflicted are also evident because she perceives now Zane has “got what he wanted”, a chance to be away from school. Briefly, in this moment, Carol describes Zane as holding a position of power. Instead of “meltdowns”, Carol describes Zane as “aggressive” and then “upping his game”. In contrast, a few sentences later, Zane is but a little boy on his sixth birthday “having a meltdown”, four members of staff having closed the door, watching him. Listening to Carol tell this story was heart-breaking to hear.

By Year 2 Carol’s interactions with school are continually ones in which Zane is either excluded or Carol is called to take him home. She describes a state in which exclusion is “a

pattern”; repetitive, predictable, it “continued and continued”. Carol seems almost resigned to the relentless nature of these events and her evident powerlessness.

There is brief respite when Carol seeks the support of parent partnership and “had a wonderful lady who came and saw me”. Here we sense warmth and for the first time in this story Carol appears supported as evidenced by her words:

I spoke

I believe

I cried

I got angry

In the “I” poem above we sense the range of emotions Carol has had to manage around the treatment of both her and Zane. We hear a change from the previous resigned voice to an “angry” mother. So too, power dynamics shift, albeit temporarily, Parent Partnership support in school meetings asking “why they were doing illegal exclusions”. Carol’s statement, “I wasn’t aware that they were”, evidences a lack of transparency. At the same time, Zane receives a diagnosis of autism. This appears to trigger the involvement of other agencies. Carol describes “they had the Educational Psychologist in. They had behaviour support in. He’d got his diagnosis so they had others in”. The support of Parent Partnership alongside the diagnosis seems to initiate action on the part of the school. School promises accommodation, assign Zane a Teaching Assistant (TA). Three times Carol tells us how the TA “understood Zane”. Carol is appreciative and relieved.

But collaboration is short-lived once a new Executive Head enters the narrative. The Executive Head is a strategic leader of a chain of schools and has overall control above the individual headteacher of a given school. Carol sees the Executive Head as deliberately unhelpful. His actions exacerbate Zane’s distress. Carol describes a “battle of wills” in which the Executive Head uses power to withdraw support and dictate what Zane can and can’t do. In this part of the narrative Zane’s difficulties, identified by the autism diagnosis, are set against a figure who seemingly goes out of his way to “trigger a meltdown”. Zane is identified as a problem to be removed:

He would go in
He would go in (and say he can't)
He didn't want (troublesome kids)
He was making it difficult

Despite the diagnosis, despite the support, Zane is "excluded again". Power reverts once more to the school as we see Carol almost despair with the statement "again". There is a sense of an unremitting struggle at work here too. Carol tries to rally and work with school. We hear she is away visiting her mum and not immediately on hand, so attempts to divert problems by seeking support from the school and prewarning them. To no avail:

I was at (my mum's)	I got the phone call
I'd told school	I asked why
I'm not around	I says
I'm actually away	I did argue
I won't be able	I thought he was being too hard
I went	

Here we see Carol's growing frustration with the situation. Responsibility falls to Carol as, despite being away, *she* receives the phone call "telling me to come and fetch him", not her husband whom she had left in charge. Again, it seems, school continues to have power to tell her what to do. There is an interesting juxtaposition here between Carol and her husband. The only point in the narrative where he appears, we see him "angry" with the school. He states "we're done, we can't have this" and takes the children out of school. The Executive Head, however, chooses to ring Carol, to confront her. In the conversation that follows, Carol states "I did argue with him". She is almost apologetic as though she shouldn't have argued with him, here a contrast between her anger and frustration, its acceptability or not, and that of her husband.

This event marks a further turning point for Carol. She takes on the voice of advocate for Zane. She sees the Executive Head being "too hard" on him. Carol also seeks the support of other parents to help her make sense of the situation. She is distrustful of school, feels Zane's treatment is unjust and is frustrated by the situation. Carol explains "this didn't seem to add up to me", "he'd been excluded yet again", "it wasn't correct". When she discovers what led up to the exclusion we hear a voice of disbelief: "he slammed the door an' he was

excluded for it". Carol tries to seize agency and challenge the school but once more feels dismissed. There is no apology, only "don't worry we'll not put it down as an exclusion".

This narrative unfolds in the "I" poem:

I'd been part (of the school)
I wanted to know
I don't
I feel that it wasn't correct
I had five parents telling me
I spoke
I knew (that was the response) I got

The dismissal is another example of the inequitable power at play here. There is a sense of loss and sadness expressed by the shift from present to past tense – "I feel", "I had", "I spoke" and then the resolving "I knew" followed by the passive and helpless "I got". Despite Carol's efforts, power ultimately remains with school as she tells us "his timetable was still reduced, it always had been".

Shortly after, Carol describes a distressing event which ultimately leads to Zane's permanent exclusion. Carol describes staff watching while Zane climbs "a six-foot fence with spikes on", "nobody tried to stop him". This is not the first time Carol has described the lack of intervention by staff and seeming disregard for her or her son's safety or well-being. In Carol's story, school is an uncaring place for both her and her son where she is held accountable and Zane is seemingly either a problem or ignored. At numerous points in the narrative Carol talks of "staff watching", exemplified when Zane "smashes his head off a glass panel". Instead of care and empathy, Carol is told "you'd best take him home, we'll have exclusion papers for you when you pick the others up". At other points, we hear sadness as she describes Zane being isolated: "they would take thirty children out of the classroom and leave him locked in the classroom while he had a meltdown." There is no sense of compassion here but, instead, Zane is almost represented as non-human as "they manoeuvred" him at times of distress.

The final incident sees Carol speak in an increasingly angry tone. The "I" and "we" statements distinguish battle lines:

I was walking	What were we (supposed to do)
I got up there	We stuck to his IEP
I got up there	We can't intervene
I said	We can't touch him
I went "yeah but"	We can't touch him

It is Carol versus "We" whereby "We" is collective and exclusive. The Executive Head uses procedures to defend his position. The representations of power and powerlessness in this exchange are complex and confusing. The school voice expresses helplessness, the repetition of "we can't" indicating that staff feel helpless or position themselves as such for strategic reasons, i.e to justify Zane's exclusion. The next day, Carol and Zane's level of powerlessness is complete when Carol is "handed exclusion papers and told it was gonna be permanent".

"Thank God he's out. Thank God he's out"

Carol emerges from this moment relieved – "thank God he's out. Thank God he's out" – battle-worn and despairing at the injustice. Despite her exhaustion, Carol continues to advocate for her son yet is also conflicted because of her appreciation of the TA who "had been excellent":

I sighed (with relief)
 I thought (thank god)
 I was told
 I didn't feel like that
 I felt
 I needed
 I didn't want
 I wanted to fight
 I was conflicted

Carol speaks at the governors meeting. We hear how no-one on the panel speaks for or supports her and Zane. In this power dynamic, a parent governor "may as well of been a teacher governor" whilst another is "married to the deputy head of another school"; the rest are school staff. Carol's is a lonely voice here. She tells how Zane's difficulties are

“outlined” and accepts “they are his difficulties, I can’t deny them”. We hear too Carol’s voice challenging Zane’s illegal exclusions, the misspelling of his name in the paperwork, and how the actions of Zane and another child, both viewed as troublesome, are conflated. The governors tell Carol these are spelling errors but she disputes this, telling them “these are not Zane’s incidents because Zane weren’t in school... he wasn’t here he was excluded so you can’t have him excluded and then say it’s a spelling error”. Carol tells me she also suspects the incidents belonging to the other child were deliberately inserted to “make Zane’s behaviour seem worse”. We sense a profound lack of trust and sense of betrayal.

Despite Carol’s strength and advocacy, we end with resignation. Carol has tried to stand against power before. It is as though she already knows how this concludes. Carol tells us “the exclusion stood that were fine, that were perfectly fine. I still had two children in the school, I still had to be polite”, to maintain a respectful relationship with the school for the sake of her other children. This feels like the school’s power and the exclusion finally silence her, as reflected in the following “I” poem:

I pulled (that up)
I went “No”
I still believe
I believe
I also believe
I knew
I still had to
I still had to be polite

This is definitely not what it says on the tin

Following the permanent exclusion, Carol tells of provision put in place for Zane’s education. We hear Carol’s disappointment and anger as she and Zane are let down by a system offering an education that is “definitely not what it says on the tin”. For two months, Zane receives no education until Carol receives a phone call full of promises: “they’d teach him Makaton, they’d have a centre for him to go to”, Zane will be receiving a programme that is “individual to Zane and his condition”. However, Carol is quickly disappointed; Zane’s education is again part-time, “two hours a day roughly”. Staff change without warning or explanation. Zane is transported to somewhere distant from home and the phone calls to

collect him recur. Carol's voice is weary and frustrated as she explains the difficulty of getting lifts because she cannot drive. As has been evident throughout the narrative, the responsibility to manage this lies with Carol.

Things come to a head two months later when Zane is returned home early. Carol describes an event in which a staff member is rude and she feels disrespected. She learns that the teacher lacks understanding of Zane or that he has autism. Carol becomes angry as again she has to fight for Zane's education. She contacts the Integration Team to say "this is not an individual programme, this is not what you told me".

The "I" and "They" poems reflect the broken promises and their consequent difficulties:

I was led to believe	They promised
I didn't drive	They'd teach
I got a phone call	They'd have a centre
I had to get lifts	They do this
I couldn't drive	They do that
That was the attitude I got	They were in touch
I said "you do understand"	They came
	They were taking him
I rang	They were honest
	They were honest
	They don't get paid
	They come and go

Hearing how the Integration Team cannot provide an education for Zane, Carol is concerned and demands "we need to get him a school now...we've already damaged him in the two years he's been at school we're now damaging him further". This is a stressful time where Carol is angry about the effects of Zane losing his education. The onus is again on her to advocate for him and to insist on his opportunity to attend a school.

He finally saw the inside of a classroom

In a rare moment of parental choice, Carol chooses a junior school for Zane and he “finally” starts in January, having been excluded six months earlier. In huge contrast to Carol and Zane’s previous experience of school, there is a sense of inclusion and partnership. The Integration Team support the transition into school, Zane is allocated a TA, and adjustments are made to the classroom. Zane has “a safe space... his own work station ... a visual timetable”. We hear how Carol feels “the staff worked really well with me”. Carol’s involvement with a variety of agencies and school are positive and her voice is finally given weight.

Unlike the “We” at Zane’s previous school, which was excluding and set against Carol, now we hear a “We” that unites:

We had (meetings)
(discuss what) we should do next
We increased his time
We got him

Even when the other agencies cease their involvement, despite Carol’s understandable trepidation, “the school were fantastic”. Carol tells us “they did everything... things went really well”.

Do you always make excuses for his behaviour?

Year 5 sees the appearance of a new character, Zane’s new class teacher, and with her arrival Carol describes another rapid deterioration for both Zane and herself. Battle lines recommence with the class teacher not understanding Zane and Carol defending them both. Carol tells how she would go to collect Zane “to her saying I’ve had to move thirty children around him cos he’s refused to move”. She advocates for Zane “because he has autism and you can’t just spring something like that on him”. Carol is again disrespected and blamed. She tells “that was the kind of attitude I got from her”. With her parenting questioned – “do you always make excuses for his behaviour” – Carol feels judged and is distressed. She sees more conflict ahead and thinks “I can’t have this, I can’t keep doing this”. Carol takes control and asks to see the head:

I went in
I can't even remember
I went "well"
I'm sorry
I don't understand
I went "hold on"
I'm asking
I went "right"
I was upset
I went away (upset)
I'd not done that for quite a while
I can't have this
I can't keep doing this
I asked
I've got five children
I'm not here to have my parenting questioned
(would she like it) If I questioned her teaching

Carol's "I" poem reflects her feeling of judgement and her need to defend herself. She is not a bad mother, has other children to prove this. Carol feels she has been heard by a "sympathetic" headteacher. Some weeks later we hear the teacher is replaced by a new teacher who was a "lovely woman" but "the damage had already been done". Carol is resigned to what is to follow.

Once more language changes at this narrative point: "We" becomes "They" again. Carol describes incidents where Zane would "storm out" and "because they was frightened... that he would be aggressive", he was locked out of the classroom and kept locked in a small room which made Zane panic. Carol has to advocate again (rather than work in partnership) at the six-week meeting. She insists the school find an alternative way of managing the situation. Once more we hear of Zane being "manoeuvred" and "steered", his timetable reduced. Carol is called to the school to calm him and internal exclusions follow. Carol describes the situation as "desperate" as they wait on the EHCP decision. It is a rare use of an emotional word and perhaps reflects the distress and frustration of this time.

A further incident in school concludes with Zane having “completely lost it” and attempting “to attack a member of staff” and then “being heartbroken”. He narrowly avoids permanent exclusion only because of the EHC application. His timetable is reduced further and “we manage to muddle him through” until at the end of Year 5 Zane is offered a place at a “Specialist Provision” school.

Carol ends this part of the narrative with “he’s now at the specialist provision and doing well and full time”. It is a voice of pride. It is a voice of relief.

There’s no “Oh God here comes naughty kid”

In this section of the narrative, Carol considers Zane’s experience in both settings. She describes mainstream as a place where Zane is “even with a label... labelled naughty”. Staff have limited knowledge of autism. They are not trained and “instantly go for the kill”. The image here is a violent one with no sense of tolerance. In contrast, we hear her appreciation of the specialist provision and its atmosphere where Zane is welcomed, the curriculum works for him, he is relaxed and the staff well-trained with an understanding of autism. Zane is happy and not judged: “there’s no ‘oh god here comes naughty kid’”, “he knows he’s wanted in school... he knows they won’t get upset with him or judge him”. Carol’s relief for Zane at this point was palpable. I was struck by this and the huge difference for Zane and wondered how things had been different for Carol. Her response at this point brings together all of the emotions that have been present throughout the narrative.

We have heard her sadness at the loss of Zane’s education; it was and still is important to her. At nursery she “repeatedly” tells school he can read and questions and challenges: “have you given him a reading book”, “why can’t you”. We hear how “they held him back” and that for Carol “that’s mistake number one”. His timetable is “reduced, it always had been”. We hear the story of a boy who “never went on a school trip ever in two years”, how “he missed out on everything”. Carol wants “him to do SATs...to have an education”. The loss of this is strong at this point in Carol’s story.

We hear too, albeit wrapped in a note of humour, the impact of Zane’s restricted timetable on Carol’s ability to work. She says “he was only doing a couple of hours a day. I mean to be fair it’s a good job I didn’t work cos he was home ninety percent of the time”.

When asked how things have been different for her, Carol draws the losses and the struggle all together as we truly hear the impact this experience has had:

I've spent the last four five year in hell
I've got five children
I've got his twin sister and his brother that's a year older
I've had to deal with all of 'em, all schools in all aspects
I've had to deal with his twin sister being pulled out of class
Because they didn't know what to do
I've had to deal with them doing that to his brother
I've had to deal with having Zane at home and not being able to work
I've had to deal with judgemental professionals
Who believe they know what's best for my son
Finally, there's a tiny little light at the end of the tunnel
I know I'm also gearing up for another fight

Even now when Zane is seemingly in a safe place, Carol can only be relieved "currently". There is no sense of safety for her, no opportunity to relax. She waits for the next battle, one she fears will be with "people in offices that've never met these kids" making decisions "that don't help me".

At times, Carol's story was hard to hear. It both moved and distressed me. When asked what she thought needed to change, the power in Carol's voice was strong. We hear the voice of warrior, activist and hope. I end with her words...

Mainstream is in dire need of change
When it comes to special needs there's too many needs for them to be
professional at them all
They're taught minimal, what once a term maybe?
I live it every day
I have done for the last ten years
They treat me like I don't know my own son and they know better than me
because they are professional
They don't know better than me
If they'd listened to me from day one he'd still be at his original school we
could've got him through
I was ignored and over-ridden
And then it failed and that failed Zane
Mainstream need to accept when they fail these kids
And acknowledge they've failed
It's important to me to know that they realise they went wrong
They need to be more transparent I was lied to I was ignored
The Integration Team is an absolute nightmare I suppose it's the government's
fault for funding
They can't pay bills on fresh air
As a parent I don't want my child in a PRU
(Mainstream) need to know we know better than they do
When it comes to our children and their needs
They need to work with parents not against them
Just because they're an academy and they can pick and choose
It doesn't give them the right to exclude the special needs side of things
Zane went to Alton Towers Wednesday
He'd done so well this term
They treat that child like he's an angel and get zero recognition
all their money goes on them kids on making sure them kids feel welcome
It's important to remember the kids are not naughty they are just in a
different world at times they can't express that so they do it with aggression
which ok, is not the greatest way to do things but it's the only way they know
how
It's important to know that today may be a bad day
But tomorrow might not

5:3 Jenny's story

Narrative synopsis

Jenny is mother of Alex an only child. They live together with her husband, Seb. Alex has recently received a diagnosis of autism. Jenny is unsure about the diagnosis.

Jenny tells a non-linear story. Everyone is named. Their relationships with one another and the events surrounding them are described in detail. As Jenny ponders events and tries to make sense of actions and outcomes, it is as though she is reflecting on the story in the telling. It is as though she has not yet clarified events for herself. Her narrative involves four primary schools, a host of other agencies, and a future secondary school. Voices run rich through this story. We hear the words of Jenny as well as those of Alex, teachers, headteachers, a variety of multi-agency workers, other parents and the occasional friend. These voices are not always harmonious. They are occasionally supportive but many provide a chorus of hostility, judgement and condemnation.

School is problematic for Alex. It is a place where he is bullied and experiences few friendships, where others have opportunities, succeed and are recognised. In contrast he is rarely understood, supported or valued. School represents rejection to Alex. He has experienced exclusions and part-time timetables. Jenny, whilst initially wanting and seeking advice and support, similarly experiences rejection and condemnation as she fights to advocate for her son.

I'm made to feel like some form of monster, inadequate parent

Jenny's narrative begins with the story of an "educated person who is keen to get involved in academia and support schools" – yet is baffled by the circumstances in which she finds herself. We hear how she "still feel(s) two years later ignorant of the system, the potential diagnoses, what that means, what that means for the future". Here Jenny conveys a sense of powerlessness and confusion where despite "reading a lot of things" she is "not grasping a body of work that is leading me in an informed way" but struggling to find answers. We hear her feeling let down by a system that doesn't educate parents about "neurodiversity", that "you're just not prepared for it in any way". The other parents "have no idea either" and, consequently, "you feel so lonely".

The story here is one of difficulty and isolation, searching for support that is hard to find. We hear how “teachers can’t help you or aren’t helping you”, not “even to tell you where to go” and “the MAT workers they haven’t helped either”. In desperation, Jenny “ended up ringing Gifted Futures” an organisation who provide assessments to identify gifted children. Here she was grateful to hear a rare reassuring voice – “yes that’s normal, yes that is typical” – instead of being made to feel like “some form of monster, inadequate parent”. The journey to this point has been difficult for Jenny; she has been judged and condemned by parents, teachers and social workers alike. She tells how she is “not that bothered about what people think about me” but this experience has meant that *even she* is “a bit bothered”. We then hear how affected she has been by this experience in the statement “it’s absolutely soul destroying and you feel like there’s nobody who can help”. Loneliness, difficulty and lack of support can be heard in the segment of the “You” poem at this point in Jenny’s story:

You’re just not
You feel so
Can’t help you
Aren’t helping you
Even to tell you

Jenny uses the pronoun “you” here as opposed to “I” or “me”. It is possible that this is a defence mechanism to distance the self from the emotions. When “I” or “me” is substituted for “you”, the voice heard is much more vulnerable:

I’m just not
I feel so
Can’t help me
Aren’t helping me
Even to tell me

She turns to school for support when Alex is in Year 1. During this emotional and stressful time, Jenny is not working and there is “less money”. She is unsure what is causing the difficulties, questions whether different events are “the problem” or not. School seemingly reassure her saying “well I’m sure you’ll be pleased to know we don’t see anything like this at school”. On the advice of her sister, Jenny visits the GP and is referred to a parenting

course. She encourages Seb to attend a course too and they put in place some of the strategies recommended. Jenny is proactive, seeking knowledge and advice and acting on it.

Has anything changed at home... might be his brain growing wrong

In Year 3 school becomes particularly problematic. Alex experiences his first exclusion which sets a pattern for the next two years. Jenny's narrative is one of confusion, disbelief, and judgement as she tries to piece together events that have led to Alex's exclusion from four schools.

Initially Alex attends the "small school" in the village. Jenny is told these schools "work like a family" and is hopeful that this will provide an experience for Alex that is "like siblings". As the story progresses we hear how *instead* of being welcomed, part of the close-knit community, Alex and Jenny both remain outsiders. Alex is not allowed to "join in with the playground games" and is "bullied by exclusion". Jenny is sad for her son who is "constantly not allowed to join in". Alex is different, academically bright, "already book number 40", while the Year 4 boys are just starting to read the series. Jenny tries to make sense of this situation, wondering if this is one of the reasons why they reject him. Or is it maybe she and Seb, "did we do something wrong then"? This a voice of self-blame as Jenny tries to process events. We hear also that this small community is a "welded mesh of social cliquey cohesiveness an we were outside it". Alex and Jenny are let down by the teachers too, with events not "seen by the teachers" and moments of "nepotism" – the headteacher whose "husband was the running partner" of a parent and her favouring her own daughter who also attended the school. This is a "situation... built up" over time, one in which Jenny is unaware of the complexity until later, where she has no control and where she and Alex are judged and blamed.

As the exclusions begin, we see Jenny called in to school and told "can you take him to the GP for a second opinion? We're not sure has anything changed at home... might be his brain growing wrong". Later, Jenny desperately asks the headteacher "shall we move schools?" to be told "there's no point in moving, it's in him it will always be wherever he goes", suggesting school views any issues as "within-child". Events climax with the last PE lesson of the year and the headteacher's intrusion into and cancellation of Alex's Year 3 boys' day, a private event arranged by his family where all the boys in his year are due to come for a party after school. Here the narrative themes are of power and judgement and their impact

on Jenny and her son. The headteacher comes “knocking on the door... Alex’s in the classroom on his own throwing things, the others are practising songs for the show”. Jenny arrives at school to find Alex alone and distressed, “jabbering away”. She struggles to understand what he is saying as he is “crying” but it is “the same thing over and over again”. Eventually, she realises the words being repeated are “you would’ve thought it would be fair in class”. This is a scene of such sadness as we hear of a little boy who has been excluded all year from the playground games now not being allowed to take part in an event that has been organised by teachers – even *they* do not care for him or make it fair. We hear of a headteacher watching “through a glass slot in the window” as Jenny tries to help her son, then arriving with a camera “to take a picture of what he’s done to the room for records”, as though Alex is an exhibit to be catalogued and recorded. The lack of compassion is evident within this story.

The narrative continues with the headteacher informing other mums of the incident and suggesting they should “review” allowing their children to attend Alex’s private boys’ day. Jenny’s agency has gone completely as we hear her say “I do mind but I can’t stop you doing what you are doing”. A segment of the “I” poem at this point in the narrative illustrates her isolation and powerlessness:

I don’t know
I was left on my own
I think what are you doing here
I do mind
I can’t stop you
I was again left on my own
I understand from the other mums
I don’t know
I was still
I can’t make them come

By the end of this scene Alex and Jenny are acutely distressed, both “crying” or “virtually crying”. Alex is excluded from school for two days. Jenny is judged and condemned by other parents, asked by one “have you been to see a doctor?” and then told she is “rewarding bad behaviour with a treat” if the private party goes ahead and that they “can’t support this”, they will not be bringing their children to the private event, instead they “will review it in

September". This marks a turning point for Jenny; she states with anger and despair "as if I'm open to their reviews...there's no future for us at this school". Finding agency, Jenny decides to move Alex to a different primary school.

Jenny is active and purposeful. She has heard about "trial days" from another parent, contacts the prospective new school "to have a meeting" with the headteacher. She seeks collaboration and is almost bewildered by the headteacher whose response is seemingly more concerned for the budget of the other small school Alex may be leaving knowing "what it feels like to lose that". Despite this, Jenny takes control by interviewing both schools about their "gifted policy" and decides that Alex should attend the new school.

It was just me, the bee and the iPad

Unfortunately, school remains a place of loneliness and injustice for Alex. Jenny's story highlights how Alex experiences humiliation as he is "sent to face the wall" as punishment following an incident in PE. Humiliation is not new. We hear how previously he had been made to write his name on the board when he had not answered to his name. He is isolated and the "odd number", therefore, unpartnered in paired work in class. He sits alone on the coach on a school trip with "the bee", an insect that flew in the window, "and the iPad" for company. With a voice of sadness, Jenny tells us "he was quite sort of resigned to this is his lot in life". Alex receives no approbation whilst others "are adored and praised...and you're not. Whatever you've achieved is not really worth anything". Rather, Jenny explains, there is blame and judgement as "we'll keep putting out all these bad things and saying more about them". The final straw, a "dispute" with a girl in the playground over a football, sees Alex throw a ball rather than pass it; it bounces on her elbow and hits her face.

Jenny struggles to process this event describing the situation as "a bit of a mish mash". This can be seen in the "I" poem:

I'd been told
I don't know
I think it's probably true
I don't know
I went
I said

I said
I think
I can't
I don't think

The outcome *is* clear for Alex is “excluded” again. A story of injustice emerges here with Alex not listened to and where Jenny sees no future for him at the school because of this. The exclusion is later converted to a managed move to another primary school, supported by the Pupil Referral Unit and Individual Provisions where Alex has attended for the last term of Year 4.

Once more, Jenny attempts to be proactive. She tries to arrange trial days at what will be Alex’s new school in Year 5, hopes to organise a private event for other children and Alex “so that come September they’d all know each other”, all to no avail. There is one trial day but nothing else. With a voice of sadness, we hear “the other parents weren’t interested... it didn’t work”. Jenny, despite trying to grasp agency and to care for her child, remains unsupported.

The managed move to the new school is short-lived. It is “only a couple of mornings”. Managing the part-time timetable and homework activities proves problematic, as is communication with the school about it. During her engagement with the teacher at this time we hear the phrase, “I said” “She said” repeated:

I asked	
I said	She said
I said	She said
I said	She said
I said	She said
I can see	She said
I said	
I said	
I said	
I said	
I asked	
I said	

There is a sense here that Jenny attempts to deal with this situation but, despite conversations between her and the teacher, there is little understanding. We hear the teacher blame Alex; it is for him “to take control of his homework and pay attention”, “he should listen in the lesson”, only to hear that Alex hasn’t had “a French lesson ‘cos they’re in the afternoons” and he is “only there in the mornings”. There is no co-ordination and Jenny is left unsure about what is happening and whom to trust, not knowing “who’s telling the truth”.

Jenny is also unaware of the timeline for the completion of the managed move. Here in the narrative, power lies with the headteacher who, surprisingly to both Jenny *and* the headteacher of the PRU, tells them “actually tomorrow I’m deciding whether to stop it”. There appears to be no consultation, no collaboration, no agency for Jenny. Control rests with the headteacher who will make the final decision. Jenny, however, decides for herself “this isn’t the right school for us anyway”. Once more Individual Programmes provide education for Alex until November when, Jenny tells us, “the money ran out”.

I don’t think he’s autistic anyway, he’s got serious mental health issues

Stress and difficulty are unremitting as Jenny continues to chase an education for her son. She has to take “parental leave” and later, to stop work altogether. We hear her pursuing a referral to an EP only to hear the headteacher of the PRU declare “county council will let you know which school they have chosen for him”, power all theirs and she not consulted. Jenny seems to be lost here, has no idea what is happening, her phone calls ignored. A previous contact offers some support and suggests she tries another primary school with a reputation for not excluding. Jenny manages to arrange trial days and Alex starts in January. Initially full-time, by February it is part-time once more.

This school placement again ends in exclusion when Alex copies the actions of another boy and is reprimanded when other students have not been. The unfairness of this, too much to bear for Alex, ends with him being restrained and with staff “sitting on his leg, cornered”. Jenny arrives at the school to be told Alex is “never coming back”, he is “destined for prison”. The headteacher states “I don’t think he’s autistic anyway, he’s got serious mental health issues”. With Alex judged and condemned, Jenny is given four options, all of them meaning exclusion whilst being wrapped in the language of choice. She is told “I can either home school”; “I can find him another placement somewhere”; “I could do a managed

move”; “or he can be taught out of school until the money runs out”. All of these solutions have dubious legal status. Despite these apparent choices, Jenny is powerless and her son is excluded.

Here the story returns to present day. Alex is currently educated by Outside Teachers. We hear glimmers of hope and relief in the narrative. Jenny tells how “they’re teaching him at his level” and that “everything’s better now they’ve taken away the bad influence of school”. Jenny is appreciative, they “are doing something that’s working”. Finally, she feels “listened to”. Individual Programmes have tested Alex and found results similar to those obtained when Alex was assessed by Gifted Futures; these results show “that we’re not biased wrong”. Alex is gifted in both English and Maths and Outside Teachers are “trying to build a posse around Alex” to teach him to his level and his interests. We hear that staff treat Alex with understanding and compassion as Jenny represents the voices of these new helpful professionals with the “forget school all that unpleasantness, we’re here for you, we’re listening to you, you can trust us”. Jenny also feels supported and valued when she tells us how one of the teachers “talks to me normally in the middle of things while she’s waiting for Alex”.

What happened to the routine, what happened to the boundary, what happened to my job?

This current experience is a huge contrast for Jenny. Previous relationships with professionals have meant being told “you’re wrong, you’re bad, you’re to blame...the parents are bad parents”. We hear how at meetings with MAT workers and headteachers Jenny was criticised: “we haven’t put enough routines in place and we haven’t put enough boundaries”. Her experience is one in which professionals are “ganging up against you” and you are made to feel like “rubbish parents”. Those people from whom you seek support, those meant to be “people that are helping”, condemn her in the end. Jenny’s opinion about professionals and their ability to help has been changed through a series of events. She has gone from the parent in Year 1 seeking and acting on support, followed by the parent in Year 3 chasing support but with no agency to access it – “they wouldn’t speak to me because I hadn’t been referred by the school” – to feeling powerless and a sense of “here we go again” when having to “welcome into our house” MAT workers and Family Support Workers. Jenny’s description of one worker who describes her own nephew and niece with Asperger’s as being “nerdish...socially awkward...they’re probably alright in their

own little world later on” is an example of those professionals who use disrespectful terms which cause hurt and damage.

Towards the end of Jenny’s story is anger and activism as Jenny seeks to advocate for her son and others with a similar diagnosis. She sends an email to the worker described above telling her “I’ve read a lot to know that many people with this diagnosis have special skills as well and we... are benefitting from” that. We hear the voice of activist in “they should be celebrated for their skills, not ostracised, pitied, bullied and we of all people should start that vocabulary and understanding”. Within her role as activist we hear Jenny re-framing the negative story and re-claiming humanity.

Jenny is rejecting of those she feels have condemned her and her son as “bad”. She questions their right to pass judgment on her, wondering with the exclusions “what happened to the routine, what happened to the boundary, what happened to my job”? She asks “how’re you meant to balance that, you can’t”? Rules apply to her but not to authorities which always let her down. It is “paperwork two or three weeks later than they said it was”, a struggle with Jenny “constantly ringing up, ringing up, ringing up” and being ignored. With a voice of anger, she tells how she “know(s) austerity...everybody’s pushed” but she feels let down by a system that promised “somebody holding our hands and they’re not there not answering the calls...what sort of holding hands is that”. Instead, Jenny highlights here a promise of “care” not fulfilled.

Evident in the stories is that authorities have power and their decisions affect Jenny’s life, impact on Alex and her dreams for him. Jenny, whilst hopeful that Alex will attend an identified secondary school in the future, worries “is this all gonna happen (again) when he’s in year 7 and 8”? Her voice of loss is heard in the statements Alex “wouldn’t pass an exam now” and “I feel like I’ve got to slow down all my aspirations and just be led by what Chris [the co-ordinator of Outside Teachers] can do”.

Unless you walk in my shoes you do not know what it’s like

A key theme of Jenny’s story is one of loneliness and isolation both for her and Alex. We hear it is like “you’re under this stone” and it is to this that she returns when considering what needs to change. Jenny desires support and for parents “to be put in touch with other people who’ve been through the same thing”. This comes from an experience of being

judged by other parents and professionals alike, “have you been to the doctors” a phrase repeated a number of times in Jenny’s narrative. She has experienced little empathy, instead been on the receiving end of those who “know so much but they don’t know, unless you walk in my shoes you do not know what it’s like”. This difficulty with other professionals, who “were telling us stuff...and none of it was the same”, leaves Jenny feeling confused and unsupported, wondering “if you don’t know how are we meant to know”?

The curriculum and the school system are problematic and also demand change. Her voice is one of understanding, accepting the difficulties schools face, when she tells how they have “got their budget which is restricted... curriculum which is restricted...SATs to worry about...a lot of restrictions, limitations, hard work before they’ve even started... I just don’t think they can cope with it”. At the same time, the system offers no flexibility to accommodate difference, “it’s like it is literally like trying to put a square peg in a round hole”. Schools need to not “force them all to be the same”, should instead “give them opportunities”. Yet there is no hope this will happen any time soon and Jenny is left “just literally holding on ...knowing that this is going to continue until he’s 18”. Likewise, she worries that the experience for Alex will lead to “a real possibility he might say I can leave at 16, I’m out”. Jenny is hanging on for now, but her story ends with hope and a voice of aspiration “that when he’s 18 and he can do what he wants he will succeed in doing something, he will find success”.

5:4 Heather’s story

Narrative synopsis

Heather is mother to Elizabeth, and two younger children. They live with Heather’s partner. At the start of Heather’s story, we hear how Elizabeth has been on a pathway “for a couple of years, on and off”, receiving the “official diagnosis” in Year 4. Initially hesitant in the telling, Heather’s difficult journey is often downplayed in the seemingly casual language she chooses as well as the humour she intersperses throughout. Heather grows in confidence telling a story of trust and betrayal, of the powerful over the powerless and the catastrophic effects such power can wield. We hear a child hurt by a system that has rules that require conformity. We hear a mother desperate for support, trying to advocate for her child and navigate a “broken system” that forces families to fight one another.

She basically said I'm going to have to permanently exclude her

Heather tells how Elizabeth hates school, often refusing “to get dressed in the morning” or “to get in the car”. It is so distressing that “she would try to escape and try to break through the security door”. This is also a time of struggle for Heather. “Imagine(d) or not”, she perceives people in the playground are “judging” and “whispering” about her parenting skills, thinking maybe Elizabeth “needs a bit more discipline” and viewing her as “the parent of that kid that’s naughty”. Early in the narrative we sense this is a difficult situation but also hear a voice of partnership between Heather and school, both working to support Elizabeth. We hear how “we managed to put in a little reward system in place to get her back into going to school”, “managed to sort of strip it all back” and “gradually built it back up again”. The school is accommodating, one pastoral manager – “fantastic”, Elizabeth’s timetable adapted. Heather appreciates how the new Year 5 teacher seeks to communicate with her wanting “to know as much as we can so that we can really try and help her”. This sense of partnership is reflected in the “We” poems:

We’d had

We did

We managed

We’ll sit

We’ll chill

We’ll see how we go

At the end of Year 4 Elizabeth is “doing ok”, a language choice which appears to downplay difficulties *and* hides a shock revelation. Early in Year 5, Heather receives a call from school, itself surprising as “they didn’t normally need me to go in”. What follows is experienced in a state of shock and disbelief. Elizabeth has “had a meltdown”. Heather is confused, trying to make sense of events when the headteacher “pulls me in and she basically said I’m going to have to permanently exclude her”. Heather describes how Elizabeth is “confined” in a room that is in a state of chaos, where “displays had been ripped off the walls”. Emotions are heightened; Elizabeth “didn’t even recognise” Heather and Heather has to “step out” to “calm” herself. The words “sort of” are repeated three times as Heather tells how she tries to manage the circumstances in which she and Elizabeth find themselves. Things don’t make sense, are outside of Heather’s experience, in contrast to the headteacher who “pulled” Heather in and tells her “I’ll send all the paperwork”. The headteacher knows the system

and retains power whilst Heather “didn’t really have that much headspace to deal with it” and “didn’t really understand what it meant”. The “I” and “They” poems reflect this power-knowledge dynamic seen here:

I goes in	They needed me
I got right rather upset	They didn’t
I’m taking her home	They took me
I said “Ok”	They wouldn’t
I didn’t really understand	They wanted
	They still wouldn’t
	They rang

Subsequently, confusion continues as Heather “sort of” and “kind of” receives the incident reports. These reports highlight the school voices of authority and control set in contrast to both Heather and Elizabeth. We hear how teachers explain to Elizabeth that they are “implementing something” at lunchtime and that she should meet with them at this time but they are not there when they are meant to be. Elizabeth, who in response wants to go and do what she would “normally do”, is prevented from having agency. Instead, with a voice of sadness and distress, Heather tells how “they wouldn’t let her get out” but “kept her in this room”, the exclusion report, sent later by the school, claiming “they wanted to keep all the other children safe”. Here Elizabeth is portrayed as dangerous even though Heather, in a voice of disbelief, says this is “ridiculous because she’s never attacked another child”. Despite all of this, Heather believes “it was unavoidable to be fair”. This voice of fairness and trust inextricably interweaves with betrayal throughout Heather’s narrative.

Post exclusion, a letter from the LA informs her that Elizabeth is “not allowed out during school hours... and the local authority will be in touch”. The power of the system exerts itself as Heather and Elizabeth are left in limbo waiting for the LA to make contact. Heather embarks on research where she gathers “more and more information”. It is a time of confusion and anxiety, later described by Heather as “absolute hell”. Circumstances are already difficult; she has had a miscarriage, another pregnancy, moved house, her partner’s mum recently died. The exclusion intensifies pressure. Heather is lost asking “now what do we do?”. The exclusion forces Heather to gather knowledge but she feels anxious and out of her depth describing it “an absolute jumble...so so complicated.” Nameless people from

the authority tell her “this is what’s gonna happen”. Heather appears almost dazed as things “didn’t really sink in”.

Heather and her partner decide to appeal the exclusion. We hear Heather seeking knowledge, gaining agency and advocating for Elizabeth. She contacts the National Autistic Society who send “so much information it was fantastic”. Heather is supported, armed with knowledge she feels she needs to fight Elizabeth’s corner at the governors’ meeting. She points out the school’s shortcomings in terms of its failure to follow its own policies. Yet, despite this, the system manipulates and interprets all the rules. Heather is silenced; we hear the school say “we thought that’s what she’d [Elizabeth would] want” and the governors “basically said no we’re gonna uphold the decision”. Later in the narrative Heather expresses “if we weren’t in such a stressful situation with all the other things, then we probably would have gone to a solicitor for disability discrimination”. But this event has come at a breaking point emotionally – Heather explains “I just didn’t have the mental space to stand up and fight” – and her agency dissipates.

It’s been absolutely awful ever since to be fair

Permanent exclusion marks a turning point for Elizabeth, Heather and the family. Heather twice tells us in a voice of despair that “it’s been absolutely awful ever since”. Elizabeth now experiences anxiety and depression and lacks trust in others. Later, we hear that Elizabeth feels “they punished me for being autistic”. At this point in the story, we hear Heather’s emotional distress in her struggle to articulate the effect on her daughter. With pauses and indrawn breath, we hear Elizabeth is “not happy anymore”, Heather’s seemingly throwaway comment towards the end of this section, “so that’s the basic side of it. Yeah ((laughter))”, perhaps an attempt to mask the pain.

Heather communicates a sense of loss for Elizabeth, and how she feels betrayed by a school whom she had thought were working with her. We hear Elizabeth was “looking forward” to playing a musical instrument and “she had the residential coming up as well”. Referrals had been made to outside support agencies, “a referral to Autism Outreach... accepted”. The phrase “we feel a little bit let-down” seemingly underplays this loss. The sense of betrayal comes slightly later in her account with the statement “they didn’t really give anything a chance”; “they had been amazing up until that point and it was just heart-breaking that they’d given up”. Later in the narrative, these themes recur with Heather stating “They

didn't give us all the options...she got excluded and it's made things a thousand times worse...it's quite heart-breaking".

The exclusion impacts on Elizabeth *and* her family. Elizabeth's younger brother lacks understanding: why does he have to go to school when Elizabeth can stay home? It is a time of great difficulty for Heather and her partner as she describes the event as "a lot of pressure", of it being a "massive strain" as "me and my partner don't really get much time to do things together". Elizabeth doesn't want "to leave the house...didn't want to leave her room sometimes". In turn, it affects Heather. Here is a voice of loss and loneliness with Heather saying "I can't have a normal job", "it's been very isolating". Word choices like "massive", "absolutely", "I can't" repeated and her "I've got no-one", all serve to indicate emotional strain and loneliness before she "((trails off))", the pain and loss perhaps too difficult to articulate.

They're the professionals at the end of the day... I don't know how the system works

The narrative continues with Heather telling of a system in which she lacked knowledge and, consequently, agency. Heather has learned that despite thinking school was doing a good job, "*there was more they could have done to help*". Heather's voice, blaming of a system that has failed her and her daughter, now understands "they could've had behaviour service support", "they didn't give a chance with Autism Outreach", "there were other referrals that should have been made". She tells us "hindsight's a wonderful thing".

Until this experience, Heather has trusted the system to help. She says she believed "they're the professionals at the end of the day... I don't know how the system works". Heather tries "to deal with things as best I can as a mum" but lacks knowledge of a system and the services that could support. Others ask questions of her later, which highlight the trust she placed in the system, the failure of that system to act and Heather's position – in the dark, uncertain:

“Well did they do this?”

“No, they didn’t do that”

“I didn’t even know that was an option”

“Well what about this?”

“Not a clue”

The “I” and “They” poems again highlight themes of trust, power and knowledge:

I’m trying	They’re the professionals
I can	They’re meant to
I don’t know how	They don’t
I didn’t even know	They have to
I’m not sure	They have to
I’m not sure	They could’ve
I have no idea	They could’ve
	They just
	They just let us down
	They didn’t give

We hear a voice of disbelief and frustration as Heather outlines how other people seemingly have what they couldn’t; “why weren’t we given that option”. She feels the system lacks transparency; “it’s like a whole big secret”. The system remains confusing and bewildering for her as Heather explains “I have no idea, no idea how it works”.

Then they stuck her in a school she didn't want to be at

Heather's recounting of an unjust system wielding power over her and her family continues. Despite wanting to reintegrate Elizabeth quickly into school, there is neither choice nor consultation about where Elizabeth's education will continue. Instead "the local authority said...she's not ready to be in school full time". The description here highlights further the impact of the exclusion. Provision is inadequate, part time "six hours a week" at a centre Elizabeth isn't "keen on". Alongside this, a tutor provides "babyish" programmes for one hour a week and a further "half an hour lesson online". Heather's comment, "there wasn't really much in terms of education", is expressive of a profound loss. Elizabeth is only able to interact with others for short periods "which made her feel more and more isolated". Heather's voice, sad for her daughter and also angry with those in power, is heard in her comment "at the beginning they were like no she's not ready and when they said she was, she really really wasn't ready. And so, you've kind of made the problem worse here". Heather seems voiceless and powerless, the LA making all the decisions.

This power imbalance continues as we hear Heather tell how "they stuck her in a school she didn't want to be at" and how they have no choice of school even though "they made us think we did". Heather, with a voice of hope, describes how there was a school "that would have been fantastic" but this is dashed by a system that seems to take no account of individuals or circumstance; the caseworker tells Heather "unfortunately we've just put someone back into school in the same year and we don't particularly want ... a similar sort of personality being in the same year". We hear Heather trying to work *with* this system – "right ok I understand" – but from this point on Heather's agency and choice seem irrelevant when the system maintains all control. Once more we see this reflected in the "I" and "They" poems:

I understand

I don't think

I don't really want

I kind of went

They stuck her

They made us

They were looking

They suggested

They would

They've chosen

They have to

They went to meet with the Headteacher

Heather tries to advocate for Elizabeth by appealing against the authority's choice of school. Her voice is silenced as she is told her reason is "not a good enough reason". We sense despair and powerlessness when she says "we kinda realised that actually we don't really get a say in this, they've chosen a school". In contrast, the headteacher from the proposed school has power and is listened to when they tell the authority "I don't think it's right". Only then is Elizabeth allocated a different school. This possibly provides a much-needed win for Heather, "a bonus", that she is "pleased to hear". It is short-lived, however, as "they suggested another school". Here, though wrapped in Heather's characteristic masking humour, we hear how Elizabeth "really didn't get on with the teacher ((shaking head)) ((laughter))" and how this school is problematic for her.

It's like you just don't get it doesn't work like that

Reintegration to the new school brings further difficulties. Heather struggles to work with a school and system that seems to lack understanding and creates problems for both her and Elizabeth. This is a school where Elizabeth has been "stuck with a teacher who doesn't really get it". Heather speaks with a voice of despair and blame for because of this "the school placement hasn't really worked out very well".

Heather tells a story of school staff asserting their knowledge and understanding. The teacher's brother is "autistic and she's taught many autistic children over the years so she knows about autism". As the story progresses, we hear Heather's greater personal knowledge of her daughter set against an authoritative professional discourse. Heather recalls an incident in which the school insists Elizabeth wears a blue jumper. Heather tries to comply with this whilst also acknowledging the difficulties such rules will create for Elizabeth. We hear her attempt to negotiate this in her comment "I can try and get a plain black one but you won't get her in a royal blue jumper". Instead of partnership, here we see school staff are "quite patronising" and appear to lack understanding with their statement "the other children will feel a little bit left out". This is a frustrating time for Heather evident in her statement "that's your problem it's not mine ((laughs))". It also seems to be a time where she feels judged as she explains "you end up getting a bit of a thick skin really". Heather is developing coping strategies. She speaks with a pragmatic voice when she describes having to pick "your battles" with Elizabeth. At the same time, she also advocates for her, as witnessed in "I don't care about the other children, I only care about my daughter and if this having a different coloured hoodie means that she is in a classroom at least trying

to get an education then you can all go away”. This is a strong voice, fiercely protective of Elizabeth and implicitly critical of the school and its codes.

Heather recounts a further incident with school staff insisting Elizabeth says “good morning” because it is polite. Here societal and professional norms supersede the difficulties such rules create for Elizabeth. Instead of acknowledging distress, they treat Elizabeth as the one who is rude; she must say “good morning” and “this kept going on and on”. This is a story of the powerful over the powerless. The teacher “kept saying that she was rude... they made a big deal out of it the worse it got, the more anxious she was”. This scene illustrates those who have voice and those who do not. Elizabeth cannot say what they insist she must. Heather tries to advocate, she tells us “we said in one of the meetings ... you need to not give her any demands”. Her voice is ignored, in contrast to those who *do* have voice – the teacher who “kept saying” and the TA “employed by the school” (not a choice made by Heather or Elizabeth) who insists “she would need to learn to respond to people politely”. This lack of compassion and rigid conformity results in Heather being called in because Elizabeth is “really upset...she needs to come home”.

In retelling this story, Heather is critical of the school’s behaviour, something evident in her description of how the events could and should have been managed:

“teacher says good morning”

“Elizabeth obviously doesn’t say anything back”

“I can see that you are here, we’ll move on”

To audience: “And move on leave it, not na na na na na you’re so rude blah blah blah”

Here we recognise a rare voice of anger at how this situation was managed. This anger possibly comes from a place of betrayal for Heather initially believes that she has been heard. In meetings she thought she was listened to, that “we had agreed that yes these will work”. We sense collaboration, fairness and understanding with Heather describing the headteacher as wanting to try to accommodate: “maybe we could try this or ok we’ll listen to this”. Heather describes this as “fantastic” and feels “these people are listening to me”.

Yet this turns out not to be the case. Earlier in the narrative, Heather states the teacher “didn’t get the point at all”. At the end of the “good morning” scene, this is repeated when she says “it’s like you just don’t get it doesn’t work like that”. Heather’s voice criticises and blames. It is full of disbelief. By now these meetings are places where there is only a pretence at listening. She explains “you kind of get the idea, think, that they’re only saying it to...kind of placate us, it’s just like yes ok we are listening to you but that’s not gonna happen”. Heather’s voice is dismissed and the power retained by school.

The recounting of Elizabeth’s second school experience corresponds with that of the first. We hear again her voices of trust and understanding intertwining with her voice of anger, blame and betrayal, Heather understanding the headteacher has “obviously again got certain things to follow... she had to apply for funding... because we didn’t have the EHC”. Her voice here harmonises with school’s, with both appearing to lack knowledge and agency in the system. Heather describes how the headteacher has to “apply for this funding... we don’t know how it is going to work and what the timeframe is... interviews for new TAs and it’s got to be the right person and that was great”. The headteacher is “on such a tight deadline from being accepted for the funding to interviewing and then it only being a temporary position”. We hear Heather accept the complexity of this, even as she advocates for Elizabeth when she says “I can understand why it would have been difficult for her, but part of me didn’t really care because at the end of the day this is my daughter’s future”. And here the tale turns to focus on an unsupportive system in which families battle for resources that are not forthcoming.

It’s absolutely broken. The whole system is just falling apart

Earlier in Heather’s story, we hear of the isolation following Elizabeth’s exclusion. Heather tells us “there’s not really a lot to support you as a family...if there is it’s very hard to access”. Heather’s narrative invokes a sense of loneliness as she tells how the exclusion means it is impossible to access support groups and workshops. These are groups that professionals direct her to and are the only means of support available. These groups are held during school hours which Heather cannot access because Elizabeth is not at school. We hear a voice of disbelief as a paediatrician suggests to Heather that she attend a support group that Heather herself is “actually running” once a month. The multi-vocal style Heather uses here artfully expresses the lack of professional understanding and the sense of betrayal she feels:

“Well there are workshops to go to”

“I can’t go to them because they are during the day”

“I can’t get childcare”

“Oh, right ok then”

“Well right then thanks for that”

“Is that all I get then”

To audience: “Yeah that’s it basically”

Once more Heather returns to this narrative of no support, her voice strong, almost activist as she tells of “all the other families out there that are struggling... and they’re all fighting to get the right support”, how “you end up almost fighting each other to get to the top to say right we need this now”. We hear of teachers too struggling in a system of “who do we deal with first?”. Heather tells us this is “normally the person who is shouting the loudest”. It is an unjust system with those who are “just waiting...shoved back, further and further back”. The language deployed here is violent, all “battles”, “fighting”, “shoving”, “shouting”, “challenging”. It is “angry”, families “getting angry” with schools, schools “angry with the government”. It is also sadness as Heather tells us “it’s absolutely broken. The whole system is just falling apart”. Heather talks in the third person when she describes “families are breaking apart because the parents... don’t know what to do and it’s awful”, too painful perhaps to think of the personal impact on herself and her family. The situation has left her feeling exhausted and sad: “I haven’t even got the energy to feel sorry for them because we’re going through it ourselves and it’s awful”.

The solution for Heather is clear: “scrap the system and start again”. At this point in the narrative we hear multiple voices:

“everything is getting worse” - voice of despair

“feel sorry for anyone working in it” - voice of compassion

“here’s six weeks of some sort of play therapy” - voice of placated and let down

“we’ve been referred to them before and they’ve said no” - voice of unsupported

“did it really have to get to that?” - voice of disbelief and despair

“and they still can’t do half the things that they need to do to help” - voice of betrayal

“they said no” - voice of abandoned

Systems for Heather operate as myriad pathways, all leading her to being passed from one agency to another with “just no clear path to follow”. There is a sense of helplessness, Heather saying “I don’t know how to make that better”. Instead, the system pushes and pulls her:

“Someone will say you need to go here”

“then they’ll say no no no”

“you need to go back to this person”

I go right well we’ll go over there”

“then they’ll send you straight back to where you started”

In this system “no-one communicates. They don’t communicate with each other”; instead they speak in isolation. At the same time, they speak in unison, in “a secret code” that excludes Heather; “it’s like we’re missing a trick somewhere along the line and unless you know the system you don’t know where to go”, the question and answer interplay here in her narrative a perfect illustration of her confusion:

“I need some help here”

“Well, have you had a MAT team?”

“What’s a MAT team?”

“How do you get one of them?”

“You speak to the MAT team”

“Oh no, it sounds a bit too complicated for us”

Or

“Oh no the MAT teams don’t exist anymore”

“Well how come I’ve just spoke to someone from one then?”

To audience: “Nothing makes sense. There’s nothing that’s clear at the minute”.

This section concludes with Heather feeling lost, lacking agency and knowledge: “I don’t know what needs to happen but something does.”

I want her to be able to find happiness again

Heather’s story ends in a way that is difficult to hear. She contemplates photographs of Elizabeth pre-exclusion. We hear how once Elizabeth was happy “laughing, being silly... dancing around”. Now “she’s miserable”, “she’s sad with her hood up, in her room, under a blanket, not wanting to move. It is horrible.” The system has had a devastating effect. Heather speaks with a voice of sadness, loss and desire combined when she says “I want her to be able to find happiness again...I want her to have an education, but ((intake of breath)) I want her to have an education she enjoys”. The exclusion has been unjust, the family unsupported, “it just made things so much worse than they needed to be”, “we didn’t get

the right support and if we would have... it never would've come to this". The narrative nears an end but the fight continues for Heather; "it's all we can do let's keep pushing forward and shouting louder than everybody else and fighting for that support that it's there somewhere you just have to find it".

5:5 Summary

- Within this chapter I have analysed the individual stories told by Carol, Jenny and Heather seeking to maintain and promote their individual voice, views, knowledge and experience.
- In the following chapter I consider their stories together drawing out points of commonality and difference. My intention here is to identify characteristics of their stories to open up avenues of exploration. I move to consider how their stories might be understood to further our insight into the exclusion of young people with autism from school and conclude with the implications for EP practice.

Chapter 6: Discussion

6:1 Overview

In this chapter I reflect on the stories in relation to one another and consider common and distinct features drawing upon existing literature to address my research questions. My intention is to highlight characteristics of the stories, points of similarity and difference, *not* to create general themes across them. Thematic overview is potentially reductionist and may lead to glossing over the detail that has emerged through the methodology used.

I acknowledge that the characteristics I have identified, the commonalities and the differences, are simply one way in which to understand the picture that has emerged. However, examining the stories in this way, I hope to provide another lens through which the experience of school relationships and exclusion might be understood. I draw on the Power Threat Meaning Framework (Johnstone, Boyle, Cromby, Dillon, Harper, Kinderman, & Read, 2018) to develop the mothers' stories, to consider how systems operate and to position them within a broader landscape.

I adopt a trauma perspective. In taking this perspective, I further aim to reposition mothers who have been subject to patriarchal social policies and discourses. I join in a feminist critique of patriarchal understandings of mothers' experience and mothers' distress. I do this with the intention that considering their stories in this way may open possibilities to enhance professional practice and offer alternatives to support social justice and influence future action (Riessman, 2008).

I conclude this chapter by considering implications for practice, strengths and limitations of the study and provide suggestions for further research.

6:2 What characterises the accounts and how might they further our understanding?

My research explored mothers' experiences in relation to having a child with autism excluded from school using unstructured narrative interviews and analysis informed by the

LG (Brown & Gilligan, 1993). In this discussion, I draw upon this analysis to answer my research questions:

- 1 What characterises the stories told by mothers of children with autism who have experienced school exclusion?
- 2 How might these stories further our understanding of the exclusion of children with autism from school?

My understanding of these narratives has been shaped by my continued immersion in – and reflections on – the stories told, my knowledge and experience to this point, plus my reading of research literature. I am aware this is *my* telling of *their* story and, consequently, there are other ways that this could have been told. I acknowledge other researchers may offer alternative understandings and that my representation is but one way of viewing the stories and their potential for contributing to our understanding of the exclusion of children with autism from school.

I aim to *re-story* in an attempt to counter the dominant narratives around exclusion in which the child is blamed because their “behaviour violates the school’s behaviour policy” (DfE, 2017 p.57). Instead, I position these stories to view behaviour as a “response for protection and survival” (Johnstone et.al., 2018, p.19). When considering the stories this way, what is described by each of the mothers in the study is a distressing and possibly traumatic event or traumatic series of events. When *re-storied*, a different possibility for understanding school relationships and exclusion emerges.

Trauma

I acknowledge that the concept of trauma is complex and contested and that tensions exist regarding how the term is understood. The Oxford English Dictionary definition of trauma is something that is distressing or emotionally disturbing. Within psychology, trauma has traditionally been “viewed mostly from a ‘pathologising’ standpoint [leading to] almost always positioning the problem within the person” (Segalo, 2015, p.447). Equally, “medical and psychiatric studies have pathologized trauma through discourses of hysteria and post-traumatic stress disorder and focussed on the abnormality of trauma” (Zembylas, 2007, p.210). Such definitions and labels are, rightly, challenged and resisted as “constructing people, categories and subsuming individuals into a category makes people forget that

human being comprise it” (Zembylas, 2007, p.214). Indeed, such categories and definitions serve to reify the notion of “the ‘normal’, emotionally competent individual” (Brassett, 2010, p.24) thereby serving to “other” and further marginalise individuals that do not meet this norm.

A pathologising medical concept of trauma is equally contested because it both negates and reduces the complexity of the situation and also fails to consider the political, economic and socio-historical contexts in which the individual is located (Wessells, 2008). The DSM criteria on trauma serve to isolate the person from their socio-political context and reduce the phenomenon to an individual experience (Sonpar, 2008). Some academics have instead argued for a socio-political understanding of trauma, one which shifts the focus away from the individualising, pathologizing, othering account of trauma to a construct that exists “relationally within particular historical conditions [and an understanding that] emotions are produced within power relations” (Zembylas, 2007, p.212).

As with the concept of trauma itself, there is equally no single accepted definition of a traumatic event. The Mental Health Foundation (2020) defines such events as experiences that constitute the risk of serious harm or death to a person or someone close to them, whereas The National Institute for Mental Health (2020) defines a traumatic event as “a shocking, scary, or dangerous experience that can affect someone emotionally and physically”. Other researchers have argued that what is important is not the form of the event but whether it is *perceived* as shocking by the person witnessing or experiencing it; in which case, a traumatic event is considered to be one that creates symptoms of traumatic stress (Breslau & Davis, 1987; Solomon & Canino, 1990). Signs of a stress response can be physical, cognitive or emotional and include rapid heartbeat, confusion, difficulty concentrating, fear, anger, feeling numb, sadness, and feeling isolated (Department of Health).

There has, however, been a recent move within trauma studies away from a “Eurocentric trauma paradigm” (Andermahr, 2015, p.1). Craps (2013) argues that trauma as it is largely recognised within Western cultures – as resulting from a single catastrophic event outside normal experience – serves to marginalise broader traumatic experiences of minority cultures. In his work around racial trauma, Craps (2013) argues that racism does not fit the classic idea of trauma in that it is not related to a particular event; nevertheless, the experience is potentially traumatising.

Scholars, then, have begun to conceptualize trauma differently, thereby allowing oppressive experiences that do not meet the diagnostic criteria to be considered as traumatic events (Szymanski & Balsam 2011). “Insidious trauma” (Root, 1992) relates to the consistent negative experiences that come from being part of an oppressed group. When considered in light of this definition, I believe the experiences relayed in the stories in this study could be interpreted as potentially traumatic events.

I reflect on the stories in this way both to highlight the circumstances in which the mothers in my study find themselves *and* to attend to the events that are distressing. I consider these events as traumatic and do so to heighten the importance of them. It is my intention that “by narrating experiences in terms of trauma we can (albeit problematically) open a window upon the inequalities and injustices of conflict” (Brassett, 2010, p.22). I hope that my narration of trauma can allow for “discourses which have productive rather than constraining power over individuals and groups” (Zembylas, 2007, p.212).

In considering all three stories a number of features stood out for me. I was struck by the nature of the school environments that the mothers, children and, possibly, staff were occupying. There is no single resounding definition of school climate with researchers often using a variety of terms (Homana, Barber, & Torney-Purta, 2006). I utilise the definition provided by Cohen, McCabe, Michelli and Pickeral (2009):

school climate refers to the quality and character of school life ... based on patterns of people’s experiences of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices and organizational structures (p.182).

Research indicates that a positive school environment enhances the social, emotional and mental well-being of young people as well as promoting learning and securing physical safety (Zullig, Koopman, Patton & Ubbes, 2010). When school environment is positive, people show regard for one another; relationships are nurtured and partnerships develop in which people feel safe and can contribute to a shared vision (Cohen et al., 2009). In contrast to this, each narrative in my study left me feeling these environments were not secure, nurturing or understanding. Rather, they were sites of power, surveillance and judgement for everyone involved and, so, could conceivably be viewed as sites of trauma.

Power and child-blame

For each of the mothers and their children – and potentially the staff – within this study, school is a place of power. Moreover, the climate is hostile at crucial crisis moments as well as over extended periods. Johnstone et al. (2018) hold that power is “mediated through bodily capacities, relationships, social structures, institutions, organisations and everyday interactions” (p.34). It is the negative operation of power that creates situations which are experienced as threatening to safety, survival or well-being. School is a place of legal power where there is a variety of rules seeking to control behaviour and responses and in which failure to comply appropriately has consequences (Johnstone et al., 2018). Equally, it is a place of ideological power where narratives are created and deployed to make sense of behaviour, of both mother and child, to position others, and to silence them (Johnstone et al., 2018). When individuals are silenced they cannot counter, they cannot express and they cannot influence. Exclusion, then, could perhaps be seen as the ultimate silencer.

The mothers’ accounts offer detail about the minutiae of everyday experiences accumulating around their child and how these microevents are ableist. All three stories are characterised by child-blame. It is the children who are expected to change and conform within an ableist environment. The system positions them as “in need of intervention and cure” (Runswick-Cole and Goodley, 2018, p.5). There are multiple points in the stories in which their children are seemingly “square peg(s) in a round hole”. There are rules to which they must adhere. Rules about what they wear that pay no attention to the difficulties such clothing presents for individuals. Rules of social engagement that create anxiety. Rules and routines that change with minimal notice, where their TA can be sent elsewhere for seemingly no reason and a teacher can insist they move from a chair and then blame them when this creates distress. Here it is possible to see the concept of “misfit” being played out (Garland-Thompson, 2002). Robertson (2014) rightly asserts that the space around us has been created by, and for, those with “majority bodies... non-disabled bodies and minds. This creates a misfit at certain times and places for certain minority bodies and minds” (p.10). In the encounters described by my mothers there is “disjunction” and “misfit”, “the square peg” rejected by others. Garland-Thompson (2002) writes “to misfit into the public sphere is to be denied full citizenship” (p.601). Across all three accounts, this ableism is deployed within the exclusion process; children are blamed, problems projected onto them and they are excluded.

Schools can be viewed, then, as places of power which offer no understanding of the individual child at the heart of the process and which, instead, contribute to an experience that is distressing and potentially traumatic. The mothers recount stories of their children being overwhelmed in these environments and who react, possibly, as a result of these traumatic experiences. In turn, this leads to an event that could be considered as overwhelming for *all* involved, child, mother, school staff. It is an event, seemingly, beyond the capacity of the school to cope. The outcome is exclusion, the aftermath, the consequences of exclusion, also potentially dire.

Power and mother-blame

The mothers in my study are equally subject to this power in which relationships are neither mutual nor transparent. In many ways the experiences of Carol, Jenny and Heather mirror one another, for each reflect experiences of limited power in their interactions with professionals. Each travels a road from seeking support and collaboration with schools and the wider system to a position of despair, betrayal, lack of trust and a place that is a battleground. This is in line with previous research in which relationships with professionals have been identified as stressful for mothers (Hodge, 2006, Ryan & Runswick-Cole, 2008b). Carol, Jenny and Heather initially have limited knowledge of the system which weakens their position. This is then exacerbated further by the lack of transparency within the system itself plus the difficulties of navigating it (Gazeley, 2012). All three mothers comment on this at varying points: Carol unaware that the exclusions were illegal, Jenny still “two years later, ignorant of the system”, Heather stating “I don’t know how the system works”. In such an environment the unequal power dynamic is evident. It appears that even the legal narrative, the legal structures that are designed to protect, are unable to constrain institutional power which engages in illegal practices. Relationships, therefore, cannot be considered separately from institutional power. Arguably, institutional power can be seen to *shape* relationships.

In each of the mothers’ stories there are examples of positive experiences and relationships with *some* professionals. However, such positive experiences are but rare moments in the telling and indicative of a system in which mothers have a reliance upon single individuals with their own situated perspective. These individuals seemingly make a difference until situations change, individuals move jobs, children move classes. They are, therefore, likely to be transient appearing but temporarily. Such provisional support is, possibly, a product of changing budgets and financial considerations, changing policies and practices of central

and local government and, consequently, changing policies and practices within schools themselves. Therefore, any reliance on individuals within the system is ultimately precarious. This instability for both mother and child means it is difficult for them to feel secure because the situation can change without notice and is outside their control.

Generally, all three mothers highlight the problematic nature of relationships with school staff and other professionals, where the knowledge *they* have of their child is not valued (Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2008). Rather than equal partners, they have limited agency or volition. Schools demand they come in; they are told, they are blamed. Carol tells of being “permanently pulled in”, of trying to advocate for her son and of her parenting being questioned. Heather identifies the problematic nature of meetings where school staff pay lip service to listening to her but, in reality, she has no impact on the decisions made. Jenny, equally, is “made to feel like some form of monster, inadequate parent”, called into school and told to take her child to the GP, the school here placing responsibility on Jenny to “search for solutions” (Blum, 2007, p.209).

However, this positioning of Jenny is problematic in a number of ways. The insistence that Jenny should acquiesce to a pathologizing construction of Alex brings further threat into relationships. By not taking Alex to the GP, is she then negligent? if she does concede to this demand, this invites further scrutiny and surveillance of the family, especially the mother, by both school and medical professionals. Whilst it has been argued that seeing behaviour as pathology can reduce mother-blame, shifting it “onto an uncontrollable, biological, condition” (Broomhead, 2013, p.15), pathologizing the child brings with it stigma that is attributed to *both* child and parent. Here “parents are also tainted by virtue of their parenting relationships” (Ryan & Runswick-Cole, 2008b, p200; Blum, 2007). As Malacrinda (2001) writes, where “the measure of a good mother is a perfect child... imperfections are often perceived as outcomes of bad mothering” (p.145).

It seems that all three mothers experience limited power in their interactions with professionals and, yet, experience others as holding *them* responsible (Broomhead, 2013, Runswick-Cole & Goodley, 2018). The relationship with school professionals is full of contradiction: potentially supportive, seemingly offering advice and guidance, and equally experienced as blaming and threatening. This is confusing, leading to anxiety and uncertainty in interactions.

The stories of the mothers in my study provide examples of what Rich (1996) describes as “powerless responsibility”, situations in which mothers *must* raise their child in accordance with the values and rules of the dominant culture – the patriarchy. With the “partnership” of two sites, school and home, the school colonises the home site through the advice it gives and exercises power through this partnership. Mothers are scrutinised, “watched” and judged by other parents and professionals alike. They are under the “gaze of others...relinquish authority to others, [and] lose confidence in their own values” (Ruddick, 1989, p.111). Within a patriarchal society, mothering is controlled, subject to standards of normativity which consequently “results in the pathologizing of those women who do not or cannot perform normative motherhood” (O’Reilly, 2016 p.19). These mothers are constructed and labelled as “bad mothers” who fail to raise children in conformity with the political system of neoliberalism (O’Reilly, 2016). For “bad mothers” the school climate is only ever hostile.

The positioning of mothers in this way may lead to feelings of self-blame and guilt (Blum, 2007; Carpenter & Austin 2007). The psychological impact of this positioning is reflected in Jenny’s narrative. Not only does she experience the blame of others, she also starts to consider whether she herself is responsible and sees *herself* as having “failed in four schools”. Jenny appears to be struggling with her sense of identity when she questions herself in this way. It is possible to view these experiences, described by all three mothers, as potentially traumatising as such positioning may create distress. There is also a recognition that experiencing trauma can disrupt identity (Berman, 2016). This is also possibly reflected in Jenny’s self-doubt.

Mother-blame, and the corresponding internalisation of total responsibility, potentially has devastating consequences. Hanley (2006), in her study concerning mothers’ experiences of postnatal depression, argues that “lifestyles in the Western world may be putting too much pressure on some women, causing a form of stress that may have unremitting consequences...[as] an intolerable burden of care [is placed] upon them” (p.154). Equally, research conducted with carers has indicated “that depressive symptoms are twice as common among caregivers than non-caregivers” and carers “experience more physical and mental distress than non-caregivers” (Shah, Wadoo & Latoo, 2010, p.2). Overwhelming responsibility, therefore, can be viewed as being damaging to one’s mental health. Relationships described in the narratives are potentially traumatising; events too are possibly experienced as traumatic.

Specific traumatic event(s) which are central to the mother's narratives

Each of the stories is characterised by a school environment that contributes to a set of circumstances which ultimately culminate with a major distressing event prior to exclusion. The mothers each experience partnerships with education professionals as confusing, unsafe and negative and this might be understood as “insidious trauma” (Root, 1992). Within this context, all three accounts describe situations where the mothers are called into school and, upon arrival, find their child in an unrecognisable state. This event is distressing for both mother and child. It is possible to speculate that such events are common. Heather explains that Elizabeth was unable to recognise who she was and that she herself was so distressed by what she was facing that she needed to leave the room to calm down. Jenny struggles to understand what Alex is saying as he is “jabbering away” and distraught. Carol talks of it being “the first time I've ever seen that amount of aggression in his expressions. He was physically shaking”. These situations and events can be viewed as a “crisis point” (Parker et al., 2016) and are distressing and potentially traumatic for both mother and child.

Whilst these events are unfolding, the actions and responses by the school in each of the narratives are broadly similar. Staff confine children in rooms whilst they have “meltdowns”. In Carol's story we see staff seemingly standing by watching. Jenny tells of staff peering through windows and photographing evidence – an example perhaps of disciplinary power (Foucault, 1972). All three situations end with the mother called to calm their child and then take them away, followed by exclusion, actions summarised by Carol when she repeats the words of the Executive Head: “you'd best take him home, we'll have exclusion papers for you when you pick the others up”. In each case, their child is seen as the problem while school staff seemingly step back, abdicate responsibility and abandon.

The mothers' accounts clearly demonstrate how *they see* the oppressiveness of the school system and that this oppressiveness is experienced as traumatising. Prilleltensky & Gonick (1996) have described oppressive practice as one that

entails a state of asymmetric power relations characterized by domination, subordination, and resistance, where the dominating persons or groups exercise their power by restricting access to material resources and by implanting in the subordinated persons or groups fear or self-deprecating views about themselves (p.129).

The schools insist on conformity failing to see the impact of *their* oppression and non-intelligible actions on the child. It is possible to view the behaviours of each of the children in these situations as threat responses (Johnson et al., 2018) to oppressive power. When confronted with threats, individuals react with a threat response designed “to ensure emotional, physical, relational and social survival in the face of the negative impact of power” (p.37). When these events are considered in this way, they can be *re-storied* and seen not as a breach of the school behaviour policy and, therefore, a disciplinary event that warrants exclusion. Rather, the event becomes an understandable threat response to negative power. Here, the perspective shifts outwards: from placing the problem within-child, and consequently to blame, and on to consider the circumstances in which the child is positioned. In the case of the narratives in this study, rather than being a place of partnership, of caring for mother and child, school is experienced as a site of trauma. Once the perspective is widened in this way, it offers a different way of viewing the situation and, subsequently, provides alternative actions to disciplinary sanctions.

In considering the events like this, I seek not to shift blame onto school staff. I recognise that school staff are subject to the negative effects of power that potentially trigger their own threat responses when faced with troubling and possibly traumatic events. I acknowledge that threat responses can be disturbing to witness. As a former teacher, I too have stood in a room surrounded by chaos, felt my heart race as books fly across the room and displays are ripped off walls, felt my own inadequacy at seemingly being able to do nothing, wondered at my own ineptitude and considered that I may have contributed to this outpouring of angst and distress. If someone had looked in, would I too have looked like I was merely watching?

Although outside the bounds of this study, my own experience and review of literature would suggest that school professionals equally feel a sense of scrutiny. Certainly, Carol, Heather and Jenny recognise it in their accounts. Each of the mothers in this study outlined an understanding of the systems in which school professionals find themselves. Each, also, described a set of circumstances whereby school staff seemingly stand aside “watching” or who are gathering evidence. At first thought this could be considered uncaring, heartless. On reflection, arguably, what is described could be seen as a threat response to a traumatising environment (Johnstone, et al., 2018) brought about by a hostile atmosphere of scrutiny, fear of blame and an environment of professional accountability.

Despite the desire for classrooms to be inclusive spaces for disabled children (Humphrey, 2003), power operates within the educational structure itself and, instead, privileges testing and attainment (Slee, 2011). Government policy holds teachers to account in a culture of performance targets and testing (Gill et al., 2017). They are subject to regular inspections that increase pressure and feelings of failure (Gibbs, 2018). A dominant culture of this type produces all kinds of victims of trauma brought about by the operations of power.

Reflecting on these events and the resulting exclusions, I wonder how much the response to exclusion, the need for exclusion, comes from experiencing these events as undermining to professional identity, potentially damaging to the public profile of the school, emotionally intolerable, beyond the capacity of the school to cope, indeed, as traumatic so that at this point, escalation to exclusion becomes the only option? In these situations, are children “othered” and excluded because they are positioned as fearful and threatening to the dominant ableist culture?

Instead of attributing blame to child, mother or member of school staff, these events could alternatively be *re-storied* as traumatic events. What seems to be missing is the opportunity for all involved to pause, reflect, learn and resolve. I consider this further when discussing implications for EP practice.

Consequences of exclusion

All three mothers highlight the many consequences of school exclusion on their child, their family and themselves. Many of these consequences are well documented in the research literature including: no real choice of educational placement post-exclusion while the education provided for their child is poor (Gazeley, 2010; Pirrie et al., 2011); difficulties managing practicalities whilst their child is not in school; and the emotional impact of the exclusion for both mother and child (Parker et al., 2016). Each mother describes the circumstances in which they find themselves as “hell” or “soul destroying”. Such statements speak to the loneliness and the distress that I hear in all of their accounts which I will now consider in more depth and detail.

All three mothers identify the exclusions as having an impact on their capacity to work (Parker et al., 2016). The financial implications of this are such that the exclusion possibly exacerbates further an already difficult situation, something identified by other researchers

(Todd & Shearn, 1996), where mothers of disabled children “are confined throughout their working lives to the piecemeal and unsatisfactory employment patterns associated with mothers of very young children” (Ryan & Runswick Cole, 2008b, p.206). Similar narratives are heard when listening to accounts of those who have experienced colonisation, subjugation and marginalisation. In such accounts, the subjugated groups find access to the work place limited, are oppressed within the job market with access only to low status, low reward jobs (MacDonald & Steenbeck, 2015). This economic oppression, in turn, adds to the trauma of the colonised. It could be argued that for the mothers in this study their exclusion from the workplace is similar to those who are colonised and marginalised and that this exclusion equally exacerbates trauma.

Having a job has often been cited as much more than a way of gaining income; with it comes other opportunities, access to social networks and support (Waddell and Burton, 2006). With the loss of work opportunities, there is also a loss of access to these social networks and the possibility of support through this route (McClelland & Macdonald, 1998). Instead, mothers are socially isolated, marginalised and excluded from their peers (Ryan & Runswick-Cole, 2008b).

Lack and loss of support networks

The loss of support networks, as well as a desire for support from others in similar circumstances, emerged in my analysis of each of the narratives. Carol seems to some extent, to have relationships with other parents that are supportive. Her identity and solidarity with these parents appears to help to mitigate the impact of power in her account. It is to these parents that she turns for information when Zane is continually excluded from school, for example. However, her ability to access her support networks is damaged by Zane’s permanent exclusion. It is arguable then that access to support is precarious.

Heather’s experience of support from other parents is possibly more complex than Carol’s. On the one hand, we hear of parents in the playground potentially “judging” and othering her as “the parent of that kid that’s naughty”. Yet, where she is able to access support from parents in similar circumstances, their help is seen as positive, something she misses when she cannot access them because of Elizabeth’s exclusion. Here, exclusions see the mothers displaced and separated from their support networks. Similar displacement and separation

is experienced by refugees, an experience considered traumatising (Miller, Hess, Bybee & Goodkind, 2018). Arguably, the severing and separation from support networks experienced by both Heather and Carol is also traumatising.

Jenny, perhaps most of all, experiences the traumatising effects of loneliness and isolation. Her relationships with other parents, with rare exceptions, leaves her feeling blamed and unsupported. She is told “to see a doctor” – a statement which pathologizes and positions the problem within the brain of the child – or mother-blamed by being accused of “rewarding bad behaviour”. It is Jenny’s responsibility, her bad parenting that is creating the difficulties. Despite the emotional pain that can be caused through relationships, Jenny clearly expresses a desire “to be put in touch with other people who have been through the same thing”. Research does suggest that access to support groups is something valued by mothers, particularly mothers of disabled children as they feel themselves to be under scrutiny and pressured to be a “good mother”. Support from others in similar circumstances brings culture, identity, and solidarity as a marginalised group, something that protects from the impact of power (Ryan & Runswick-Cole, 2008a). It is possible that this search for safe spaces is akin to that of other marginalised groups who have been traumatised by oppression and rejection who then seek solidarity with others who have had similar experiences, perhaps a search for “emotional and psychological safety that comes from being in an area in which one has some sense of belonging or social control” (Myslik, 1996, p.165).

Negotiating systems – advocacy to activism

Despite their difficult experiences, Jenny, Heather and Carol express an understanding of the circumstances in which schools and other services exist. Their narratives are characterised by statements recognising difficulties faced by schools and local authorities including financial and curriculum restrictions, poor alternative provision and the consequent lack of flexibility to accommodate difference. Their negotiation of these systems, as well as with the professionals within them, also marks a point of similarity within each of their narratives.

The mothers’ accounts can perhaps be understood as “conscientization”. Defined by Prilietensky (1994), this is a process whereby individuals gain “insightful awareness of the socioeconomic, political and cultural circumstances that affect their lives” (p.189). In this

sense, then, the story of “inadequate mother” can be re-storied to one of “knowledgeable mother”; aware of the system, expert in the process of exclusion, they are “experts by experience”. This an idea influential in Care Quality Commission inspections that seek to utilise expert knowledge from service users. Though rightly criticised as tokenistic, “somewhat transactional, and largely on the terms of the CQC” (Richardson, Walshe, Boyd, Roberts, Wenzel, Robertson & Smithson, 2019, p.1), the idea of empowering and directly engaging with those people who have expert knowledge by virtue of their experience is one that perhaps warrants exploration in the field of education and Ofsted inspections.

Having parents as part of Ofsted inspections ceased as a practice in 2005. Later years have seen the introduction of “Parent View”, an online questionnaire with a set of closed questions. Not only does this restrict the information received, it also arguably limits the ability of those without online facilities, and those with differing support needs, being able to contribute. As Scourfield (2010) writes “in the spirit of empowerment, direct engagement with service users by inspectors should be a priority, and, arguably those service users with the greatest communication problems should be those whose views are most creatively, diligently and expertly sought” (p.1903). Exclusion marginalises children and their families and can silence their voice despite their experience bringing vast knowledge of school systems from which we could all learn.

All three mothers possess experience and knowledge which they try to utilise when they engage in advocacy roles for their child. Research suggests that mothers of disabled children have, through the course of their child’s education, multiple interactions with a variety of professionals (Todd & Jones, 2003). Research also suggests that negotiating for children in these circumstances is complex (Ryan, 2005). Further, it is proposed that mothers of children with autism “advocate more frequently and at a higher level of complexity than other parents” (Ryan & Runswick-Cole, 2008a, p. 44). Such findings are replicated in the accounts of the mothers in my study and, arguably, this necessity to advocate and negotiate, is exacerbated when a child with a disability is also excluded from school. The stories told by Carol, Heather and Jenny certainly suggest this is the case.

Research has also proposed that mothers in such circumstances move along a spectrum, from advocacy to activism, from “worriers... [they] become warriors” (Ryan & Runswick-Cole, 2008b, p.204). To some extent, it is possible to see this in the accounts of the mothers in my research. There is certainly what Ryan and Runswick-Cole (2008a) describe as an “enhanced advocacy role” (p.43) adopted by all three mothers. Each talk of fighting for

support, chasing appropriate school provision, challenging unhelpful professionals. We hear Jenny call upon a social worker to join her in starting a conversation that “celebrates” rather than “ostracises”. For Carol, Heather and Jenny this shift along the spectrum “worrier to warrior” is not advanced, but there is movement.

In some respects, however, rather than adopting a “worrier” or “warrior” stance, they seemingly occupy these roles concurrently. As well as the “enhanced advocacy” role highlighted above, all continue to occupy a place of worry, Carol anxious that a review of Zane’s EHC will lead to a change in placement, Jenny worried about Alex transitioning to secondary education or, indeed, dropping out of education altogether, and Heather concerned for Elizabeth about to start secondary school after a problematic reintegration in primary school. For each of the mothers, anxiety is seemingly never ending, responsibility relentless, with potentially damaging impact on their own mental health.

6:3 What are the implications for EP practice?

In this section I reflect on the stories told, my interpretations, and my own experiences to answer the question “what are the implications for EP practice?”.

The negative power dynamics, not new, but evident in this study, as well as the potentially traumatising impact this power has, have significant implications for EP practice. When discussing my research with a Principal EP recently, I was surprised to hear the statement “is that still going on?”. An awareness of these power differentials and the impact of power needs to be kept on the agenda. Equally, EPs should continue to seek opportunities to level the playing field, to position mothers and children as experts. Our role should be one of facilitator and advocate. Hodge and Runswick-Cole (2008) point out that “those professionals who engage with parents as guides, experts on their children who can identify the skills as well as the deficits, are trusted and well-received” (p.645). As EPs we should be facilitating home-school consultation, drawing on ideas from systemic practice, in order to support communication between home and school and facilitate better outcomes.

Narrative approaches are arguably more inclusive practice (Smith & Nylund, 2000; White & Epston, 1990) and can be used in schools with individuals and groups of people in general conversations and meetings. It is important for EPs to understand narratives and propose counter narratives to the dominant story of exclusion. There is a need to offer a different

formulation from one of child or mother-blame and, instead, develop an understanding that schools are not benign, but potential sites of harm. My research invokes a more complex narrative about schools as unsafe places and provides a useful new narrative to counter the blaming one.

I, and I assume EPs and others reading these mothers' stories may, have seen events similar to the ones described in which the outcome has been different, the child was not excluded. Reflecting on this, I wonder how much the outcome is about a school's capacity to cope when troubling things happen. Here is where the EP has a significant role in supporting schools. As EPs we occupy roles that bring us into almost daily contact with school staff; we should use these opportunities for conversations that support school staff in their difficult job of caring for and teaching young people in potentially traumatic environments. Some EPs complete support and planning meetings with SENCOs. At these meetings, we should be specifically asking about young people with autism and, in particular, those who are at risk of or have been subject to fixed term exclusions. Such incidents are indicative of problematic situations that warrant support. The EP role here is to ensure the school feels able to cope and, therefore, does not escalate to exclusion.

What I hope to have achieved in my discussion is to have provided some ideas from which EPs can draw to help formulate with schools an understanding of the experience of school and the experience of exclusion in order to enhance capacity within schools. This capacity building could be via providing training to schools. I acknowledge that training is a problematic area particularly as there is much contention concerning autism therapies and interventions (National Autistic Society, 2020). However, Carol, Heather and Jenny all tell us that school professionals lack understanding of, and training in, working with young people with autism and, therefore, it is important that this concern is addressed. A framework of core content for initial teacher training came into force in 2016. Within this was a requirement on providers to ensure all teacher trainees were "equipped to identify the needs of all pupils, avoiding labelling by group, and make provision for them" (DfE, 2016b p.17). SEND training, therefore, became part of core content for teachers. Whilst this is an improvement, one which The National Autistic Society (2016) received as "fantastic news...(and) will make a huge difference to the lives and prospects of generations of children on the autism spectrum", it will take time for that training to work its way through the system; given conversations I have had with newly qualified teachers, there is reason to believe that the training will not go far enough.

My experience of autism training is one that often details a narrow understanding of what autism is and, whilst not explicitly supporting any particular intervention, a number of ideas which draw on features of Applied Behaviour Analysis are suggested. Robinson, Bond and Oldfield (2018), in their survey of UK and Ireland EPs, found that “EPs most commonly used visual support, social narratives/stories, reinforcement, antecedent-based intervention prompting, modelling and social skills training” (p. 63). In so doing, the focus is then implicitly on adaptation and normalisation. Such ideas position the problem within the individual. It is the child who needs to be taught to adapt and to conform with the school “norm”, the school standard, rather than adjustments and environmental adaptations being made.

Arguably, interventions and training should include *how* schools can be *experienced* with a focus on the embodied, relational aspects of that school experience. Approaches such as Social Communication, Emotional Regulation and Transactional Support (SCERTS; Prizant, Wetherby, Rubin, Laurent & Rydell, 2005) and Attention Autism (Davies, 2013), for example, place an emphasis on the embodied aspects of experience and relationships. Approaches such as SCERTS (Prizant et al., 2005) and Attention Autism (Davies, 2013) are known and recommended by EPs (Robinson et al., 2018). However, I wonder how well such approaches are known and adopted in mainstream schools. These approaches need to be more widely understood and applied in order both to meet need and prevent the potentially traumatic experiences my research highlights. Training also needs to counter the narrative of “difficult mothers”. It is important for EPs to bring to the forefront the experience of mothers in particular, how school-parent partnership is problematic because the relationship is experienced as one of unequal power and is potentially colonising.

I am also struck by what appears to be a knee-jerk response to the traumatic events described in the stories and wonder how as EPs we can support here. What appears to be happening within all of the accounts in my study – where children repeatedly have “meltdowns” – maps onto Breakwell’s (1997) “assault cycle” (see figure 3). This model, designed to demonstrate emotional and behavioural regulation of an individual prior to and after assault, can equally be used to understand both a young person’s “threat response” and also that of the school staff involved. Arguably, the adult(s) in that situation is likely to experience similar emotions (Gamman, 2003). Decisions appear to be made at a point when thinking clearly is especially challenging. In such conditions, good decisions are harder to

reach. Within the stories told, there appears to be little opportunity to reflect, learn and rebuild.

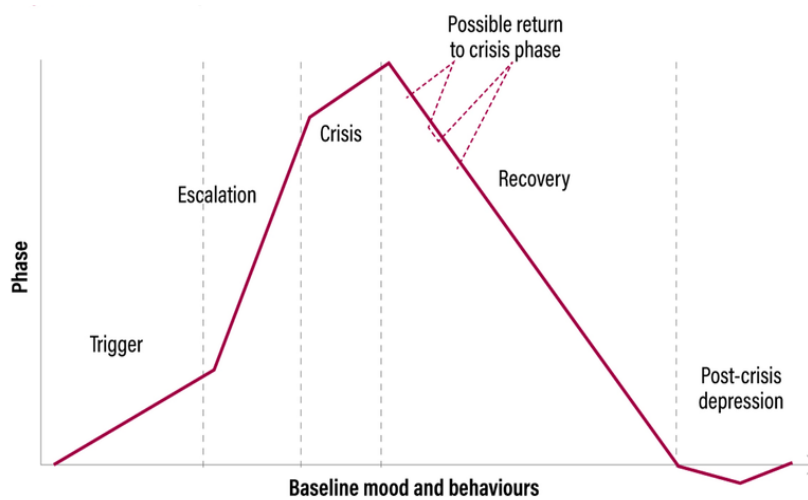


Figure 3: Breakwell's (1997) Assault Cycle

All EP services offer support following a critical incident and I wonder whether the events described in the stories told can be considered in this way. The generally accepted definition of a critical incident is a single incident or sequence of incidents which:

- are sudden and unexpected
- contain real or imagined threats to a person
- overwhelm usual coping mechanisms
- cause severe disruption
- are traumatic to anyone

In these circumstances, schools can receive support from the EPS and, in a time of traded services, it comes at no cost to the school. When events are classed as critical incidents, their importance is generally elevated; this, in turn, might demand an alternative or more considered response. Whether they are viewed as critical incidents or not, when schools are contemplating exclusion, the support offered through the critical incident model may be an invaluable way that EPs can seek to help the school. This could be through consultation with the senior leadership team, providing advice and guidance in ways of understanding and reflecting on the situation for staff concerned, short term individual supervision or group support for staff, reflecting, rebuilding and creating an action plan for moving forward.

Chapter 7: Concluding Comments

7:1 Reflecting on “meltdown”

The National Autistic Society definition of a meltdown is “an intense response to overwhelming situations...when someone becomes completely overwhelmed by their current situation and temporarily loses behavioural control. This loss of control can be expressed verbally (eg shouting, screaming, crying), physically (eg kicking, lashing out, biting) or in both ways” (NAS, 2020). However, phrases such as tantrums and meltdowns can become confused (Bennie, 2016). “Tantrums are behaviorally based and often serve a purpose – to attain something. Meltdowns occur due to sensory overload or too many demands for example” (Bennie, 2016). Confusing the two is potentially problematic as such an understanding can shape one’s response to the situation. Seen as a tantrum, “meltdowns” can become viewed as controlled and controlling behaviour, something not to be tolerated. In reality, what is happening is a loss of control due to overwhelming circumstance.

I have sought throughout this study to be mindful of language and to use language that is respectful to people with autism and their supporters. In autistic adult forums, on the National Autistic Society website, debates exist around the use of the term “meltdown” with some describing the phrase as “invalidating” and “too frivolous a term for what is such a distressing experience for many people” whilst others are happy with the term.

One aim of my study was to privilege the silenced voices of mothers of children with autism who have experienced exclusion. To this end I have, where possible, sought to use the words and phrases as spoken by each of the participants. As a result, at varying points in my thesis, I have used the phrase “meltdown”. This occurs both within Chapter 5 where I present my analysis and interpretation of the stories shared by Carol, Jenny and Heather, as a direct quoting of their words and also in Chapter 6, for continuity, where I discuss characteristics of their stories. It is, however, important to acknowledge that the use of the phrase “meltdown” can perhaps be viewed as problematic for some and to apologise to those who I genuinely hoped not to offend.

7:2 Limitations of my study

I make no apology for privileging the voice of mothers in this study, voices that are comparatively absent and undervalued in the literature (Ryan & Runswick-Cole, 2008b). However, I did not hear the child's story or the stories of school staff. This would have further extended my thinking and reflections and could have provided useful insights.

I continue to be mindful of power differentials and how such differentials can impact on the research process (James and Platzer, 1999). I recognise that mothers of children with disabilities have many professionals coming in and out of their lives and I am yet another. I tried to create an opportunity prior to the interview stage where some of these barriers or influences to how and what story was told were diminished. Further time getting to know the mothers pre-interview may have helped this process further.

As Ferguson, Ferguson and Taylor (1992) identify, when we tell the stories of other people we ultimately end up telling our stories of their stories. I recognise that I am the curator of the stories and I have provided the sense-making around these stories in order to make them accessible to others. Other stories, therefore, have possibly gone unnoticed. This is a limitation as the conclusions drawn will reflect my interpretation of the stories.

My study is subjective in the sense that it is qualitative and interpretive. I have attempted to mitigate this by providing a level of transparency in my positionality and understanding. In addition, the appendix contains the transcripts and the LG analysis to assist in the reader understanding the decisions and processes I followed.

The narratives that I have heard, and the content that I have considered meaningful, have been shaped by my experiences, knowledge and understanding. Someone else reading the transcripts may identify other things that are of interest or notice something that I have missed. In my interpretations I have attempted to use and focus on the spoken words of the mothers, including using phrases from their transcripts. I did not focus on what was not said and I did not question the responses of the mothers. I did this deliberately to value their voice. The readers of my research are free to, and are likely to, create their own interpretations of both the stories and the analysis.

7:3 Future research

My research intentionally focuses specifically on the voices and experiences of mothers as I perceive they are a marginalised group. However, future research could consider the voices of fathers as *their* experiences may be shaped by different social and cultural narratives.

I was struck by the central roles that teachers and TAs occupy within the lives of the children and families in my study. Further research could seek to hear the narratives of this important group.

Whilst my study has focused on exclusion, I wonder whether there would be benefit to research that explores circumstance where children with autism are experiencing a successful education within mainstream settings and mothers' perceptions in those circumstances. Such an insight may proffer ideas that others can use in order to make schools more accommodating places where children and their families feel they can belong.

7:4 Final reflections

Throughout this process, I have been mindful of the position of power and privilege I occupy as a researcher and TEP. I have been motivated to try to keep the voices of the mothers who gave so much of their time, energy and emotion at the centre of this study. Whilst analysing their stories, I felt keenly the responsibility I had to them. It was important to me to tell their stories well and, in so doing, in some way give back to them what they had so generously given me. Each of the mothers was keen that others could learn from their experiences. I hope very much that this will be the case.

For now, I can only talk about my own journey with them and my learning from them. I have spent so much time immersed in each of their stories that I feel I have come to know these women and to care about them. Their stories have touched me deeply. I have cried at times at the pain within their accounts; their child's experience of school is heart-breaking and shameful. At other times, I have wondered how on earth they get up and keep going each day. Their stories demonstrate such strength in the face of huge adversity. I feel a sense of pride about these women, that I have no right to feel, but I hope they feel it within themselves.

Their stories have already begun to shape my practice. They are in my mind whenever I meet with parents in schools; they motivate me to do a good job, to listen, to ask, to value. Reed and Hill (2012) write “personal stories can inspire, educate and move people deeply...the connections forged through storytelling can help bridge the vast differences that often divide them and instead act with wisdom, compassion and conscience” (p.269). I hope these mothers’ stories will likewise move, educate and inspire others to tell a different tale.

8. References

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9. Appendices

Appendix 1: Ethical approval letter 1



Downloaded: 24/02/2020 Approved: 16/05/2019

Michelle Potts
Registration number: 170109910
School of Education
Programme: Doctorate of Educational and Child Psychology

Dear Michelle

PROJECT TITLE: Listening to stories of school exclusion told by mothers of children with autism

APPLICATION: Reference Number 025260

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 16/05/2019 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 025260 (form submission date: 03/05/2019); (expected project end date: 01/07/2020).

Participant information sheet 1058045 version 2 (03/05/2019).

Participant consent form 1058047 version 2 (03/05/2019).

Participant consent form 1058046 version 2 (03/05/2019).

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.

Your responsibilities in delivering this research project are set out at the end of this letter. Yours sincerely

David Hyatt
Ethics Administrator School of Education

Please note the following responsibilities of the researcher in delivering the research project:

The project must abide by the University's Research Ethics Policy:

<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/rs/ethicsandintegrity/ethicspolicy/approval-procedure>

The project must abide by the University's Good Research & Innovation Practices Policy:

https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.671066!/file/GRIPPolicy.pdf

The researcher must inform their supervisor (in the case of a student) or Ethics Administrator (in the case of a member of staff) of any significant changes to the project or the approved documentation.

The researcher must comply with the requirements of the law and relevant guidelines relating to security and confidentiality of personal data.

The researcher is responsible for effectively managing the data collected both during and after the end of the project in line with best practice, and any relevant legislative, regulatory or contractual requirements.

Appendix 2: Invitation and information sheet for participants 1



Research Project:

Listening to stories of school exclusion told by mothers of children with autism

Invitation and Information sheet for participants

Thank you very much for considering taking part in this research. You will have received this information sheet because Educational Psychologists have been asked to pass on the information to parents they knew whose child has autism and has experienced school exclusion that has led to a change in a school place. This information sheet aims to explain what the research is about and how you can consent to become involved if you choose to do so.

My name is Michelle Potts and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP) with the University of Sheffield. As part of my training to become a qualified Educational Psychologist, I am hoping to complete a piece of research which listens to the stories of mothers of children with autism who have experienced exclusion from school. This research aims to support a better understanding of the circumstances and experiences of school exclusion in order to highlight the varying forces at work around children and young people with autism and their families

The research further aims to consider how these stories may be interpreted and used to inform those that work in education settings with mothers and their children. As a TEP working in schools and previous career experience working with young people who had been excluded from school, I believe that much can be learned by others from the experiences of mothers who have children with autism who have been excluded from school being shared.

I am hoping to find mothers who are willing to talk with me about their stories/experiences of being a mother of a child with autism who has experienced exclusion(s) from school since 2015. This exclusion(s) will have resulted in a change in school place.

Initially, I am hoping to find a volunteer to be part of a pilot study. In addition to talking about your experience, the pilot aims to gather your thoughts regarding the approach used and will help me decide whether I need to make any changes to the rest of the study.

Once the pilot has been completed I hope to find an additional two or three mothers who are willing to take part in the research.

If you choose to participate you will have the opportunity to meet with me informally prior to the start of the research so that you can ask any questions and gain further understanding of the process. Following this, you will be included in two interviews which will take place, if possible, at a venue of your choosing (subject to the venue being free from distractions and disturbances) or at a room in one of the Educational Psychology Offices. The first interview will be an invitation for you to talk in depth about your story and experiences. This interview will last for approximately one hour; however, the exact length of time will depend on the level of detail you feel comfortable sharing regarding your experiences. A second interview will take place after the first interviews have been transcribed and interpreted. This would be to discuss the ways your story could be understood and how it might be used to support a better understanding of the circumstances and experiences of school exclusion and the forces at work around children with autism and their families.

Although you are being asked to share your story you will not be identified in any reporting of the research. All names and personal details will be anonymised. According to data protection legislation, I am required to inform you that the legal basis I am applying in order to process your personal data is that 'processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest' (Article 6(1)(e)). The University of Sheffield will act as the data controller for this study. This means that the university is responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. Further information can be found in the University's Privacy Notice <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general>

The research will be reported as part of the thesis I am completing for my course. There may be the possibility of publication in a peer reviewed journal. Interviews will be digitally recorded. The recording will allow me to respect the ways you describe your story and also mean that I do not have to paraphrase from my notes or my memory what has been said. This recording will be stored on an encrypted laptop and encrypted USB stick. The recording will only be accessible to myself or my research supervisor. Once the research is completed and passed I will destroy the recording; your anonymity will be maintained at all times.

Should you choose to take part in the research you will be able to withdraw without reason at any time prior to the first interview. After the interview has taken place, you will have four weeks to withdraw from the research should you choose to do so. This timeframe allows anyone who is participating both time to consider whether they would like their stories to be included in the research once the interview has been completed, and also allows me to work with a new parent in order to complete the research by my university set deadline. If you choose to withdraw after the interview has occurred, all recordings and any notes from the interviews with you will be destroyed and your stories and experiences will not appear in the research.

Despite wanting to speak with as many mothers as possible, I am unfortunately restricted by the time limit imposed by my university to complete this research by a set date. This invitation is being offered to a large number of mothers and it may not

be possible to interview everyone who is interested in being involved. This necessitates the decision to interview mothers on a first come basis.

If you are interested in becoming involved in this research and sharing your stories, or would like to ask further questions, I would love to hear from you and can be contacted on the email address below:

Email: mpotts1@sheffield.ac.uk

Telephone: 01629 533535

On the day of the interview it will be necessary to complete a consent form. If at any point you are uncomfortable with the research, research process or would like to find out more from the University of Sheffield it is possible to contact my research supervisor Dr Penny Fogg on the details below:

Dr Penny Fogg: 388 Glossop Rd, Sheffield, S10 2JA
p.fogg@sheffield.ac.uk

Email:

Thank you for taking the time to read this invitation.

Best wishes

Michelle Potts

Appendix 3: Ethical approval letter 2



Downloaded: 08/10/2019 Approved: 03/10/2019

Michelle Potts
Registration number: 170109910
School of Education
Programme: Doctorate of Educational and Child Psychology

Dear Michelle

PROJECT TITLE: Listening to stories of school exclusion told by mothers of children with autism

APPLICATION: Reference Number 030948

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 03/10/2019 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 030948 (form submission date: 02/10/2019); (expected project end date: 01/07/2020).
Participant information sheet 1070750 version 3 (02/10/2019).
Participant consent form 1070751 version 1 (16/09/2019).

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.

Your responsibilities in delivering this research project are set out at the end of this letter. Yours sincerely

David Hyatt
Ethics Administrator School of Education

Please note the following responsibilities of the researcher in delivering the research project:

The project must abide by the University's Research Ethics Policy:

<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/rs/ethicsandintegrity/ethicspolicy/approval-procedure>

The project must abide by the University's Good Research & Innovation Practices Policy:

https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.671066!/file/GRIPPolicy.pdf

The researcher must inform their supervisor (in the case of a student) or Ethics Administrator (in the case of a member of staff) of any significant changes to the project or the approved documentation.
The researcher must comply with the requirements of the law and relevant guidelines relating to security and confidentiality of personal data.

The researcher is responsible for effectively managing the data collected both during and after the end of the project in line with best practice, and any relevant legislative, regulatory or contractual requirements.

Appendix 4: Invitation and information sheet for participants 2



Research Project:

Listening to stories of school exclusion told by mothers of children with autism

Invitation and Information sheet for participants

Thank you very much for considering taking part in this research. You will have received this information sheet because Educational Psychologists have been asked to pass on the information to parents they knew whose child has autism and has experienced school exclusion that has led to a change in a school place. This information sheet aims to explain what the research is about and how you can consent to become involved if you choose to do so.

My name is Michelle Potts and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP) with the University of Sheffield. As part of my training to become a qualified Educational Psychologist, I am hoping to complete a piece of research which listens to the stories of mothers of children with autism who have experienced exclusion from school. This research aims to support a better understanding of the circumstances and experiences of school exclusion in order to highlight the varying forces at work around children and young people with autism and their families

The research further aims to consider how these stories may be interpreted and used to inform those that work in education settings with mothers and their children. As a TEP working in schools and previous career experience working with young people who had been excluded from school, I believe that much can be learned by others from the experiences of mothers who have children with autism who have been excluded from school being shared.

I am hoping to find mothers who are willing to talk with me about their stories/experiences of being a mother of a child with autism who has experienced exclusion(s) from school since 2015. This exclusion(s) will have resulted in a change in school place.

If you choose to participate you will have the opportunity to meet with me informally prior to the start of the research so that you can ask any questions and gain further understanding of the process. Following this, you will be included in two interviews which will take place, if possible, at a venue of your choosing (subject to the venue being free from distractions and disturbances) or at a room in one of the Educational Psychology Offices. The first interview will be an invitation for you to talk in depth about your story and experiences. This interview will last for

approximately one hour; however, the exact length of time will depend on the level of detail you feel comfortable sharing regarding your experiences. A second interview will take place after the first interviews have been transcribed and interpreted. This would be to discuss the ways your story could be understood and how it might be used to support a better understanding of the circumstances and experiences of school exclusion and the forces at work around children with autism and their families.

Although you are being asked to share your story you will not be identified in any reporting of the research. All names and personal details will be anonymised. According to data protection legislation, I am required to inform you that the legal basis I am applying in order to process your personal data is that 'processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest' (Article 6(1)(e)). The University of Sheffield will act as the data controller for this study. This means that the university is responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. Further information can be found in the University's Privacy Notice <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general>

The research will be reported as part of the thesis I am completing for my course. There may be the possibility of publication in a peer reviewed journal. Interviews will be digitally recorded. The recording will allow me to respect the ways you describe your story and also mean that I do not have to paraphrase from my notes or my memory what has been said. This recording will be stored on an encrypted laptop and encrypted USB stick. The recording will only be accessible to myself or my research supervisor. Once the research is completed and passed I will destroy the recording; your anonymity will be maintained at all times.

Should you choose to take part in the research you will be able to withdraw without reason at any time prior to the first interview. After the interview has taken place, you will have four weeks to withdraw from the research should you choose to do so. This timeframe allows anyone who is participating both time to consider whether they would like their stories to be included in the research once the interview has been completed, and also allows me to work with a new parent in order to complete the research by my university set deadline. If you choose to withdraw after the interview has occurred, all recordings and any notes from the interviews with you will be destroyed and your stories and experiences will not appear in the research.

Despite wanting to speak with as many mothers as possible, I am unfortunately restricted by the time limit imposed by my university to complete this research by a set date. This invitation is being offered to a large number of mothers and it may not be possible to interview everyone who is interested in being involved. This necessitates the decision to interview mothers on a first come basis.

If you are interested in becoming involved in this research and sharing your stories, or would like to ask further questions, I would love to hear from you and can be contacted on the email address below:

Email: mpotts1@sheffield.ac.uk

Telephone: 01629 533535

On the day of the interview it will be necessary to complete a consent form. If at any point you are uncomfortable with the research, research process or would like to find out more from the University of Sheffield it is possible to contact my research supervisor Dr Penny Fogg on the details below:

Dr Penny Fogg: 388 Glossop Rd, Sheffield, S10 2JA
p.fogg@sheffield.ac.uk

Email:

Thank you for taking the time to read this invitation.

Best wishes

Michelle Potts

Appendix 5: Example consent form



Consent Form

Title of Research Project: **Listening to stories of school exclusion told by mothers of children with autism**

Name of Researcher: Michelle Potts

1. I confirm I have read and understood the invitation and information sheet for participants that explains the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.
2. I understand that taking part in the research will include being interviewed and audio recorded.
3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw at any time without reason and without there being any negative consequences.
4. Should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.
5. Please email mpotts1@sheffield.ac.uk or phone on **01629 533535** to leave a message for Michelle Potts if you wish to withdraw from the research after the interview has been completed (withdrawing from the research after the interview is restricted to within a 4 week period due to the necessity of finding another participant)
6. I understand that my responses will be confidential and that my personal details will not be revealed to anyone outside the project.
7. I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research.
8. I understand and agree that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages and other research outputs. I understand that I will not be named in these outputs.
9. I agree that the data collected can be anonymously published.
10. I agree to assign the copyright I hold in any materials generated as part of this project to the University of Sheffield.
11. I agree for the data collected from me to be used in future research.
12. I have been given adequate time to consider my decision and I agree to take part in the above research project.

Name of Participant:

Signature: _____ Date

Researcher Signature: _____ Date:

Once this has been signed by all parties the participant will receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form, the information sheet and any other written information provided to the participants. A copy of the signed and dated consent form will be kept in a secure location.

If at any point you feel/felt uncomfortable with the research, research process or wished to find out more from the University of Sheffield it is possible to contact my supervisor Dr Penny Fogg on the contact details below:

Dr Penny Fogg

388 Glossop Rd, Sheffield,
S10 2JA

Email: p.fogg@sheffield.ac.uk

Appendix 6: Questions and responses following pilot interview

1. Was it helpful to meet me beforehand?

Contact pre-interview really useful to get an understanding of the research, to be able to meet and have opportunity to ask questions.

2. Was it helpful to have the process explained and the reasoning behind it?

Yes, it helped me to be clear about everything that was entailed.

3. Was it useful to have sight of the two questions that would be asked?

The questions beforehand were good. Helped thinking and reduced feelings of anxiety knowing what to expect.

4. Do you think the procedure allowed you to tell your story?

The open questions were better than set questions because it meant I could give background where necessary, rather than being asked a question and then thinking well if you'd let me tell you this bit it would make more sense. I liked the prompt questions as we went through and the conversational style. It helped me to think about things and useful prompts to jog my memory, think about what I want to say and then to carry on talking.

5. Is there anything you think could be improved?

Biscuits!

Appendix 7: Carol's transcript

- 1 M: Er ok so I (.) understand that Zane's experienced exclusion from school (1) can
2 you tell me about that?
- 3 C: Yeah ((Intake of breath)) when Zane was three and went to nursery, I informed
4 the school (.)
- 5 M: {Mhm
- 6 C: {as a whole that I felt Zane had (1) mm differences he was different to other
7 children erm and we had taken him to the doctors he had been referred (.) to the
8 hospital
- 9 M: Right
- 10 C: I asked the school to look out for (.) anything unusual at the side of his peers and
11 to let me know so I could let the hospital know that they 'd noted differences
- 12 M: {Mm
- 13 C: because I needed it from (.) everybody's point of view and not just my own
- 14 M: {Mm
- 15 C: I also informed them that Zane could read (.) to which they told me he couldn't
- 16 M: Right
- 17 C: and I said mm he can and they wouldn't listen. Erm (2) in nursery it tended to go
18 okay to begin with coz they're only in a couple of hours (1) and then I asked several
19 times if they'd noticed anything and they said no and there was no difference to the
20 other kids (.) and then I happened to stay behind one day while Zane was in to
21 discuss something to do with school ((intake of breath)) and noted (.) that Zane was
22 visibly different to the other kids in his manner of play (.) in his (.) eye contact in (.)
23 every aspect
- 24 M: {Mm
- 25 C: that I'd looked at so when I questioned the member of staff her response was
26 he's always like that
- 27 M: Okay
- 28 C: I went right okay (.) so when I asked you if he was different you said he wasn't (1)
29 but he very clearly is coz I can see it just being here five minutes
- 30 M: {Mm
- 31 C: Oh well we didn't realise that's the kind of differences you wanted (3) So I sort of
32 went oh okay (1) Then the teacher came and said she felt he had a (.) speech

33 impediment
34 M: Right
35 C: and (.) Zane's always had (2) not really, I don't class it as a speech impediment
36 Zane's brain works quicker than his mouth
37 M: {Mm
38 C: {so he stumbles along his words and repeats sentences (.) because he can't get
39 the words out fast enough
40 M: {Mm
41 C: {so it appears as a stammer
42 M: Mm
43 C: She wanted to refer him I allowed it to go ahead (.) Erm he had a couple of
44 meltdowns in class they classed it as nothing major (1) He went to Speech and
45 Language (.) who agreed with me (.) that there wasn't a speech impediment
46 M: {Ok
47 C: {it was his brain working faster than his mouth ((laughs)) (1) Erm and there wasn't
48 a really anything they could do with him in that sense and they disregarded
49 anything from the school (1) Erm I spoke as at the end of the year (.) when he were
50 gonna go into reception an full time (.) I spoke with the teacher (1)she was actually
51 teaching his brother
52 M: {Mm
53 C: {and said look there's vast differences ((swallows)) I've noted things that you do
54 (.) in reception that are not gonna work for Zane
55 M: {Mm
56 C: {in respect of if a child comes in on a morning and they go "I don't wanna do PE
57 today" you go "Yeah it's fine you can miss one PE it's not a problem" (2) Can't do
58 that with Zane because if he misses it once he'll never do (.)
59 M: {Mm
60 C: {it because that's how his brain works(.)
61 M: {Mm
62 C: {And he can read no he can't (1) He can read no he can't (.) So I asked them
63 repeatedly to test him (.) for reading
64 M: {Mm
65 C: {Eventually when I went in at the end of (1) nursery they said "Oh actually he can

66 read”

67 M: {{{(exhalation of breath)}}

68 C: {Yes I know he can read (.). Have you given him a reading book? No I can't do that

69 (2) Well why can't you give him a reading book? (.). Well we can't have him doing

70 words because if he does words and he (.). exceeds the reception children (.). it's not

71 fair on them (2) Right oh okay (1) So they held him back (1) For me that's mistake

72 number one

73 M: Mm

74 C: because then he started getting bored (.). because they wouldn't allow him (1) to

75 continue at the level he needed to (2) When we got in reception (1) things started

76 to (2) take a turn (.). Zane didn't want to go to school (.). He didn't like being there all

77 day (.). He would create (.). he would wander off (1) I was permanently pulled in

78 because one thing or another had happened (1) Erm (1) but then when something

79 had happened to Zane (1) that was also dismissed (.). I had to go in once Zane came

80 out (.). at the end of the day

81 (.). with red marks around his neck (1) where another child had had him by the

82 throat (1) and they'd not noticed (2)

83 M: Right

84 C: Even though you could see the marks on his neck (.). They'd never questioned him

85 they'd never asked him (.). Then you get the apology but it's sort of (1) an empty

86 apology

87 M: Mm

88 C: ((clears throat)) From my point of view it's an empty apology they didn't seem to

89 care ((intake of breath)) An I I think (1) is it because he's a problem child I don't

90 know (.). I I can't comment I just know she was very dismissive

91 M: Okay

92 C: ((Intake of breath)) Erm (1) in the mornings he started to have a meltdown at

93 having to go in (.). I would have (.). three members of staff watching while he's

94 screaming hysterical (.). I had two other children with me his twin sister

95 M: {Mm

96 C: and his (.). brother that's a year above (.). Couldn't get them into class coz I was

97 too busy sorting him (1) It took other mums in the playground to help because the

98 staff wouldn't they just stood (.). never helped never attempted to intervene. Erm

99 (1) then he started to (2) get angry a lot (.) at school he was frustrated he would
100 come home with words from school and because his pronunciation (.) wasn't
101 brilliant (.) even though he was saying the word
102 M: {Mm
103 C: coz he couldn't pronounce it how they wanted him to (.) they said he couldn't
104 read
105 M: {Okay
106 C: {but when you said yeah but he is reading it's just that it's his pronunciation
107 well he has to pronounce it right or he's not reading it (2) But it were silly things like
108 chair instead of care coz he couldn't say (.) the ch properly (1) Erm and it it were just
109 silly things you knew what he were saying they just (1) they just didn't want to (.)
110 listen
111 M: Mm
112 C: Erm (.) he wasn't read to very often in reception (1) he (.) was ignored from other
113 children in reception (1) because he would play up (1) Erm (2) they (.) dismissed a
114 lot with Zane (.) If I went in with concerns (.) it was always he's just a boy (.) he's just
115 a boy (2) Erm (.) towards the end of reception he'd start to get (.) quite violent (3) I
116 asked about (.) having an Educational Psychologist in (.)
117 M: {Mm
118 C: {to assess him because he was being assessed at the hospital (2) to which the
119 teacher went he's on the list to be assessed by (1) a Educational Psychologist
120 M: {Mm
121 C: {that was actually a lie (1)
122 M: {Right
123 C: {{{Intake of breath I didn't know that at the time I just thought well let's see what
124 happens
125 M: {Mm
126 C: Reception finished he went into year one (.) and then the problems really started
127 (2) And that's when he started to melt down in class (.) They would take thirty
128 children out of the classroom and leave him locked in the classroom while he (.) had
129 a meltdown
130 M: {{{sigh}} Ok
131 C: {including his sister

132 M: {Mm
133 C: {(.) They would (1) ring me and ask me to fetch him early (1) because he was
134 misbehaving (2) When I asked with regards to well (.) when is the Educational
135 Psychologist coming (.) she looked at me like I'd got two heads (.) so I asked to speak
136 to the SENCO (.) coz I didn't even know that's what you did
137 M: {Ok
138 C: {then I discovered it from another parent (1) I met with the SENCO who had no
139 idea about Zane or any of his difficulties (2) who had never been referred from his
140 class teacher regarding Zane had never been asked to get an Educational
141 Psychologist in for him even though I'd been told that she had (1) and said he's now
142 on my radar let's see how things go (1)
143 M: Ok
144 C: ((Intake of breath)) A couple of months later (.) he (.) was having a meltdown they
145 manoeuvred him out of classroom he had his book bag an he swung his book bag
146 and it actually hit (.) the deputy head believe she was deputy head at that point
147 ((intake of breath)) and they excluded him
148 M: Right
149 C: Even though it was an accident
150 M: {Mm
151 C: {because they couldn't have that (1) So they excluded him for the rest of that day
152 and I believe the following day (1) And Zane got what he wanted he got to be at
153 home (1) So when he went back (1) he did it (.) where he was still aggressive and the
154 following week he upped his game and actually (1) attempted to hurt (.) a member
155 of staff
156 M: {Mm
157 C: {knowing he'd be sent home
158 M: {Mm
159 C: ((Swallows)) and that kind of pattern (.) continued during year one ((intake of
160 breath)) On his sixth birthday (.) I got a call to collect him from school because he
161 was having a meltdown in the office (1) When I got there he'd actually trashed the
162 office (.) completely pulled all the blinds down (1) and he there was four members
of staff that had (2) had not locked him in (1) but they'd closed the door and held it
so

163 he couldn't get out (1) and it's got glass panels and he was smashing his head off of
164 a glass panel with four members of staff watching him (1) and never ever
165 intervened for his safety
166 M: {Ok
167 C: {until they saw me (1) and then they opened the door (.) and he collapsed in my
168 arms in absolute (1) he was distraught in tears ((intake of breath)) and they all just
169 stood and looked and went I think you'd best take him home (2) There was no
170 sympathy no empathy (2) they just I think you'd best take him home we'll have
171 exclusion papers
172 M: {{{(Hh))
173 C: {for you when you pick the others up (1) and sent him home (2) When he was (.)
174 year two (2) he (.) his timetable was reduced to one hour a day (3) He would make
175 twenty minutes (2) and they'd ring me (2) And the pattern of excluding or sending
176 home early without exclusion papers continued and continued ((Intake of breath))
177 And then I spoke to (.) Parent Partnership which is now XXXXX I believe
178 M: {Mm
179 C: {(1) and had a wonderful lady who came and saw me (1) I cried a lot ((laugh))
180 M: {Mm
181 C: {I (.) got angry (2) And then she came to school with me (.) and had a meeting (.)
182 and asked why things weren't being done (.) And asked why they were doing illegal
183 exclusions (.) because I wasn't aware (.) that they were (2) ((Intake of breath)) And
184 school promised that they would (1) try (2) and (1) for about a week (.) things
185 started to improve (2) and then Zane had a meltdown (1) and he was sent home
186 again (3) And then we had a new head an executive head (2) and that's where
187 things (.) really went wrong
188 M: Ok
189 C: Him they assigned him a TA (1) wonderful woman (1) worked brilliant with Zane (.
190 1) She understood Zane (.) She understood when to leave him to just have a minute
191 M: {Mm
192 C: {and when to intervene (1) She understood that (.) if you told him (.) he was going
193 to do computers for twenty minutes he had to have twenty minutes
194 M: {Mm
195 C: {because anything else then was a break of that promise and that's not what you

196 said (2) She got that (2) Erm they had the Educational psychologist in (.) they had
197 Behaviour Support in (.) He'd got his diagnosis at this point so they had others in (2)
198 and (1) then the executive head would start doing things like erm he would go in the
199 classroom ten minutes into the day and take his TA away from him (2) which would
200 trigger a meltdown (1) Or he would go in and say (.) he can't do computers he's got
201 to do that (1) Well he's been given twenty minutes on computers yes well he's not
202 now he's got to do that instead and would change what he was doing which would
203 again (.) trigger a meltdown (2) And I feel it was a (.) a battle of wills (.) if you like (.)
204 Erm it had academised the school (.) he didn't want (.) troublesome kids in his
205 school (.) and he was (.) making it difficult for troublesome kids
206 M: Okay
207 C: He was excluded (1) again (2) Erm (1) for (.) three days (2) ((Intake of breath)) He
208 went back in the May (2) and I was at my mum's (2) and I'd told school I'm a I'm not
209 around today (2) Erm so can we please have things (.) sort of on an even keel let him
210 just (.) let him just chill with his day don't um try not to upset too much I'm not in
211 the area I'm actually away from the area (1) so I won't be able to come to school
212 M: {Mm
213 C: {and fetch him (2) That's not a problem (2) Erm (2) that was the night before for
214 that day (1) I went to me mum's the night before (1) on that morning my husband
215 took the kids to school (1) he'd not even got home from school with his ten minute
216 walk ((intake of breath)) he'd not even got in from school when he got a phone call
217 when I got the phone call telling me to come and fetch him (2) When I asked why (.)
218 he said he was kicking off inside the classroom (.) and smashing the classroom and
219 threatening the children (3) So my husband very angrily went and fetched him (2)
220 and but fetched the other two
221 M: Mm
222 C: {because he was annoyed so all three came home
223 M: {Mm
224 C: {this is a we're done we we can't have this (1)
225 M: {Mm
226 C: {fetched all three home (2) ((Swallows)) He then rang me the head the executive
227 head to try (.) and have a go at me (3) because we'd took the other two children out
228 of the school ((Intake of breath)) An I says but you've taken Zane out and when my

229 husband got there Zane was sat calmly reading a book (.) Now he'd not even got
230 home which means when he's ringing me telling me he's in an extreme meltdown
231 M: {Mm
232 C: {it took my husband five minutes to get back (2)
233 M: {Mm
234 C: {Yet he was sat reading a book (2) A child like Zane doesn't come out of an
235 extreme meltdown (.) and sit reading a book calmly within five minutes that's just
236 not how they work
237 M: {Mm
238 C: {certainly not how Zane works (2) So (1) I did argue with him and say that I
239 thought it would be in (2) too much with Zane I thought he was being too hard (2)
240 And then (.) I because I'd been part of that school for seventeen years (1) I asked the
241 parents in that class to ask if anything had happened in that sc morning with Zane
242 (1) because I wanted to know from the kids point of view
243 M: {Mm
244 C: {because this didn't seem to add up to me (1) He'd been excluded yet again (1)
245 and I don't I feel that it wasn't correct (.)
246 M: {Mm
247 C: {I had five parents telling me that their kids said all he did was shove his paper
248 and tell em he sort a he weren't doing the work (.) An when he was told he had to
249 do the work he walked out and slammed the door (.) That's all he did (.) He
250 slammed a door an he we was excluded for it (2) So when I (2) spoke to school and
251 told them that I knew this is what had happened
252 M: {Mm
253 C: {they went don't worry we'll not put it down as an exclusion (2) Exactly (.) that
254 was the response I got it's not gonna go down as an exclusion (2) His timetable was
255 still reduced it always had been (1) and then (.) he went one day an I was he was
256 doing the afternoon (.) an I was walking up to school and had parents saying you
257 better get up there quick (1) When I got up there (.) Zane had scaled a six foot fence
258 with spikes on it (2) With four members of staff watching including the executive
259 head (1) Nobody intervened (1) Nobody tried to stop him (2) When I got up there(.)
260 Zane (.) had come straight to me and I said go and get your things we're going home
261 ((Intake of breath)) The executive head said " don't think you should bring him in

262 tomorrow we can't have this" (.) I went "right ok (.) why did you let him (.) jump the
263 fence?" "Well what were we supposed to do?" "Stop him it's a six foot fence with
264 spikes on if he had slipped he would have impaled himself in front of all them
265 parents then what would you have done cos this situation could've been a lot
266 worse" (2) "Well (.) we stuck to his IEP" (1) "Did ya?" (1) "We did what the IEP said
267 an that said (.) to give him space" I went "Yeah but there's giving him space and
268 there's allowing himself allowing him to put himself in danger and you've allowed
269 him to be in danger" (.) "We can't intervene we can't touch him (.) we can't touch
270 him" (.) Not strictly true (.) Yes you can (.) if he's a danger to himself or others
271 M: {Mm
272 C: {He clearly was jumping a six-foot fence (1) Well we didn't think he'd be able to
273 jump it (1) Well kinda proved you wrong on that point (2) The following morning I
274 took the other two to school and was handed exclusion papers and told it was
275 gonna be permanent
276 M: {Ok
277 C: (1) Because he'd run out of days basically (2) At that point (.) in all honesty I
278 sighed with relief
279 M: Okay
280 C: because I thought thank God he's out (.) Thank God he's out (2) because it was
281 just going from bad to worse (.) He didn't see he'd done anything wrong (.) he didn't
282 feel he'd tret Zane badly (.)
283 M: {Mm
284 C: {he didn't feel he'd tret him unfairly (.) ((Intake of breath)) Then they wanted the
285 governor's meeting (.) which (.) I was told not many parents really attend (.)
286 Apparently when it comes to exclusions they don't really (.) they're not bothered or
287 (.) they just know that the end of the line's come
288 M: {Mm
289 C: I didn't feel like that (1) I felt I needed to go there (.) I felt I needed to say my
290 piece (1) an (1) not fight Zane's corner cos I didn't want him to go back in to the
291 school (2) but I wanted to fight his corner in the sense of how he'd been treated by
292 the school (1). ((Intake of breath)) But then I was conflicted because the TA that had
293 been working with him (1) had been excellent
294 M: {Mm

295 C: {an a lot of the things that had happened had happened when she wasn't there
296 M: {ok
297 C: {when she'd been removed from (1) looking after Zane (.) So then I felt it weren't
298 fair on her either (2) ((Swallows)) So I went to the governor's meeting (2) Erm
299 several governors (1) One was a parent governor (1) which (.) she was so far up the
300 teacher's arse she may as well have been a teacher governor to be honest ((quiet
301 laughter)) Cos that's how she were (.) Erm one was (.) erm I believe she was married
302 to (.) the deputy head of another school (1) so she had a teacher head on her (1)
303 There was the executive head (.) the head (1) and then Zane's TA
304 M: Ok
305 C: So they outlined Zane's difficulties I agreed with them all
306 M: {Mm
307 C: {they are his difficulties I can't deny them (.) and then asked me what I thought
308 (1) An I said I feel you've tret him unfairly (.) You've given erm illegal exclusions (1)
309 The exclusion that you had said you weren't gonna put on his permanent record is
310 on his permanent record and yet I've never received even to this day the paperwork
311 for that (1) ever (2) You have (1) misspelt his name (.) You have put wrong dates in
312 (.) You have actually (.) put another child in here (2) And in the in his class there was
313 a child called Cane as well as Zane (.) Cane was very aggressive (1) Didn't last long in
314 the school (.) He'd come from a special needs school to our school to try and inte
315 integrate
316 M: {Mm
317 C: {It hadn't worked and he'd gone back (2) And (.) a lot of the incidents in the
318 report were Cane's (.) incidents not Zane's (1) and when I pulled that up (1) they
319 assured me it was just a spelling error.
320 M: {Right
321 C: {They'd put a C instead of a Z (.) I went no these are not Zane's incidents because
322 Zane weren't in school some of these times
323 M: {Mm
324 C: {he wasn't here (.) He was excluded so you can't have him excluded ((intake of
325 breath)) and then say it's it's a spelling error (1) An a spelling error is one there's
326 about six in here where you have mixed up the children and I still believe they've
327 mixed up the children

328 M: Mm

329 C: The reports had got mum jumbled because the names were so similar because

330 they had similar backgrounds in the sense of their behaviour (1) I believe the

331 incidents had got jumbled

332 M: {ok

333 C: I also believe he probably put some of Cane's incidents in (1) to make Zane's

334 behaviour seem worse (2) Because (.) Zane can be aggressive

335 M: {Mm

336 C: {but (.) some of the incidents (.) I knew were not (.) Zane's

337 M: {Right

338 C: {but it made him look worse (3) So then he came home (2) The exclusion stood

339 that were fine

340 M: {Mm

341 C: {that were perfectly fine I still had two children in the school I still had to be

342 polite (1) That was in first week of June (2) Erm I wasn't contacted until (2) nearly

343 the end of July from Integration Team (2) Who were then gonna take over with Zane

344 (1) but obviously then we're going in to summer holidays

345 M: {Yep

346 C: {So they promised er they'd teach him Makaton (.) they'd have a centre for him to

347 go to (.) They do days out they do this they do that (.) And we'll be in touch in

348 September (1) And they were in touch in September and (.) they came and took him

349 out (2) two hours a day roughly

350 M: {Mm

351 C: {and he went through (3) in the first month I think he went through three

352 different (.) members of staff that looked after him (2) Which was not good

353 M: {No

354 C: He thought he was having one worker an then all of a sudden one morning

355 somebody new would turn up (1) with no warning for Zane (1) who has autism

356 M: {Mm

357 C: so not very good (3) Erm (2) by (.) November we were on I think number four

358 (3) and they was taking him to erm a centre in XXXXarea (2) with another child who

359 was also aggressive (2) An we believe Zane has PDA although it's not unrecognised

in

360 XXXXShire (1) So Zane can be (.) quite volatile (2) And this is an individual
361 programme which my belief is an individual programme (.) is individual to Zane (.)
362 and his condition (3) That's what I was led to believe
363 M: Mm
364 C: Erm I didn't drive at the time (2) and more than once I got a phone call asking me
365 to go all the way to XXXXarea to fetch Zane (1) because he was upset (2) And I had
366 to get lifts and things (.) all the way up to XXXXarea cos I couldn't (.) drive to fetch
367 him (1) An he was upset
368 M: {Mm
369 C: {an it were (1) either he'd just got upset over something silly or he'd got upset cos
370 one of the other children were (.) misbehaving it was along them lines
371 M: Mm
372 C: In (1) at the end of November (.) the person that had him (2) rang me and said
373 after an hour I'm bringing him home he's not doing great (2) So she brought him
374 home (.) and stood in front of Zane and went (1) "I could've probably kept him but
375 (.) I don't feel very well to be honest I couldn't be arsed" (2) An that were from a
376 professional or so called professional (2) That was the attitude I got (.) An when I
377 said "you do understand (2) Zane's behaviour" She went "No" (2) "So you do know
378 Zane's got autism" (1) "No, nobody's told me" (2) "Sorry what" (.) "No I don't know
379 anything (1) they've just told me to come and look after him" (.) ((Intake of breath))
380 That got me angry (.) really angry because what's individual about that then (.) She
381 didn't even know what his condition is (1) So I rang the Integration Team and (1)
382 rollicked em (.) Said this is not an individual programme this is not what you told me
383 this is definitely not what it says on the tin
384 M: {Mm
385 C: {What on earth is going on (.)
386 M: {Mm
387 C: {An they were honest (.) They were honest and said we're under staffed (1) Our
388 staff work on a zero-hour contract (.) If your kid don't come they don't work they
389 don't get paid (2) So we struggle with staff (.) we can't keep hold of staff (1) They
390 come and go
391 M: Ok
392 C: So unfortunately (.) what you see on paper is what we want (1) but in reality it's

393 not what we can provide (1) Right we need to get him in a school now because this
394 can't continue this is (.) we've already damaged him in the two years he's been at
395 school
396 M: {Mm
397 C: {we're now damaging him further (.) and he's been out of school since June (.)
398 we're now going into December
399 M: {Mm
400 C: {Ok choose a school (4) So (.) I chose U Junior school which is (.) a very small
401 school (.) has two classes he would he was child number 43 I believe in the whole
402 school
403 M: {Ok
404 C: {which is a vast amount smaller than his previous (2) We went and visited the
405 school (.) They was fully aware of all Zane's problems all his background with his
406 previous school (.) and they agreed to take him
407 M: Ok
408 C: In January (.) after being excluded in June (1) he finally saw the inside of a
409 classroom it was the first time (2) And they did a integration (.) so Integration Team
410 stayed with him (1) while he was there (.) for the first couple of months
411 M: Ok
412 C: Erm So he had their TA sort of thing
413 M: Yeah
414 C: An he was only doing a couple of hours a day (2) I mean to be fair it's a good job I
415 didn't work (.) cos he was home ninety percent of the time ((quiet laughter)) Erm an
416 it went smooth (.) He fitted in well (.) It was a smaller classroom they did things like
417 made a safe space he had his own work station he had a visual timetable (.) he got
418 on with his peers he liked the staff (1) And the staff worked really well with me
419 M: {Fantastic
420 C: {We had six er meetings every six week
421 M: {Mm
422 C: {to discuss what we should do next (.) Behaviour Support Autism Outreach and er
423 the erm (.) Educational Psychologist when available (.) all attended (1) And things
424 went well (2) So Integration Team (.) pulled out (1) an (.) I were left on my own (1)
425 Which was (.) like ahh I hadn't done this before

426 M: {Mm
427 C: {But the school were fantastic they agreed to stick to the meetings every six
428 weeks for updates on Zane (.) We increased his time (.) Quite a lot of the time (.) in
429 them meetings (.) and we got him to (.) half a day Monday (1) Tuesday Wednesday
430 Thursday all day (.) and half a day Friday (1) It was fantastic (2) He wouldn't do
431 Swimming
432 M: {Mm
433 C: {cos he's frightened of water which (.) it was fine
434 M: {Mm
435 C: {that was Friday afternoon so I just picked him up an he didn't do Friday
436 afternoons (1) He got on well with the teacher (.) He did have episodes (1) they
437 were (1) still regular (.) Erm we took him back to the hospital he was diagnosed with
438 ADHD and he was medicated
439 M: Ok
440 C: And that helped (.) in school (2) So it brought him down a couple of pegs (.) They
441 did everything to stop to make Zane safe (1) with regards to locking gates (.) and
442 things like that (2) So things went really well (3) And then we went into year 5 (2)
443 and he had a different teacher
444 M: Right
445 C: And but the teacher knew him (.) all the staff knew him it's a small school there's
446 only about (.) ten staff if that
447 M: {Mm
448 C: {so they all know each other (.) They all knew Zane they'd all come across Zane's
449 Behaviour
450 M: {Mm
451 C: {and we were still having the meetings every six weeks
452 M: Okay
453 C: ((Swallows)) When he started in the September of Year 5 so las this time last year
454 he (1) seemed okay (2) erm unsure (.) didn't know the teacher (.) She was strict (.)
455 which I thought would be really good for Zane
456 M: Mm
457 C: because then he'd know where he stood (3) and then things started to break (.)
458 very quickly (2) He would go into class (1) Tuesday morning and she would say

459 "You're not sitting there today Zane you're moving over there on to that table" and
460 this but for Zane that was his that was his chair
461 M: {Mm
462 C: {so he wouldn't move (1) and she'd shout at him (.) an he still wouldn't move (1)
463 and then he'd shout (.) because she kept shouting at him (2) I would go and collect
464 him (1) to her saying (1) "I've had to move thirty children around him cos he's
465 refused to move" (2) Right "But did you tell him the day before you were going to
466 move him" "No why do I need to" (2) "Because he has autism
467 M: {Mm
468 C: {and you can't just spring something like that on him he's gonna panic this that is
469 his seat in his eyes
470 M: {Mm
471 C: {you have to pre-warn him" "That's just ridiculous (.) I've taug taught children
472 with autism before that's not how it works" (3) And that was the kind of (.) attitude I
473 got from her (2) ((Intake of breath)) I thought Okay I can see how this year's gonna
474 go (2) So I beared with it (1) and there were incidents increased and his violence
475 increased (2) and then I went in one day (.) and (1) I can't even remember what he'd
476 done (.) He'd done something really silly (.) he he'd got aggressive but it were over
477 something really silly
478 M: {Mm
479 C: and I went "well are you sure it's not because there was something else that had
480 happened that had triggered him" (1) To which she went (.) "Do you always make
481 excuses for his behaviour" (2) and she wen I wen I said "I'm sorry I don't understand
482 what you mean" (1) "Well do you always make excuses (.) because are you gonna
483 make an excuse tomorrow when he's naughty" (1) I went "Hold on a minute It's not
484 an excuse I'm asking (.) if there's something in that has triggered him" (.) "But you
485 know you're just looking for excuses" (2) I went "Right okay Just get Zane" because
486 at this point I was upset I thought
487 M: {Mm
488 C: {hang on a minute she's questioning my parenting
489 M: {Mm
490 C: {So I went away (.) Got really upset which I'd not done for quite a while (2) and
491 then the following morning I thought (.) I can't have this I can't keep doing this (1) so

492 I asked to see the head
493 M: {Mm
494 C: {and cried on her and said "I've got five children Zane's the youngest of five (.)
495 Yes, he's the only one you've come across so he's the only one you know (1) but I'm
496 not here to have my parenting questioned and that's what she did
497 M: Mm
498 C: Would she like it if I questioned her teaching" (.). And the Head was sympathetic
499 (1) and said "I'll have a word"
500 M: {Mm
501 C: On leaving (1) another parent pulled me to one side and I didn't know many cos
502 (.). I er (.). Zane started later than them (.). finished earlier than the rest of the kids
503 M: {Yeah
504 C: {so I never interacted with the parents
505 M: Okay
506 C: And she pulled me to one side (1) to say that (.). she'd had to complain about the
507 teacher (.). and her aggressiveness towards the children (1) her attitude (2) and the
508 fact that everything's the kids' fault and not the staffs'
509 M: Mm
510 C: And I'm not saying the kids are blameless or that or that the staff are not none
511 are ever blameless
512 M: {Mm
513 C: {but that er was interesting for me (.). And then a week later we found out she
514 were leaving because she were taking a headteacher's position and it were like oh
515 okay this is now this is now starting to make sense
516 M: {Mm
517 C: {and then her behaviour towards the kids and her (.). I can't be bothered attitude
518 came in (.). If she was in class (.). she was constantly shouting and she was she was
519 losing her (.). respect with the kids (.). in a way
520 M: {Mm
521 C: The kids were starting to (1) not do everything she said the instant she said it (.).
522 She were never there so they tended not to listen as much
523 M: {Right
524 C: {But then she just got angrier with the kids (1) and she left (.). in the October half-

525 term

526 M: {Right

527 C: {An he got a new member of staff an she'd been a SENCO at previous school (.)

528 Lovely woman (.) great teacher (2) but the damage had already been done

529 M: Right

530 C: So (.) he went back and (.) he just escalated an escalated (1) and they changed

531 things (2) They he they would (1) Zane would be in class (.) and as soon as he went

532 "That's it I've had enough" and he'd storm out they would quickly shut and lock the

533 door (2) and lock him out (1) so to speak (.) because they was frightened I get it they

534 were frightened that (.) he would walk back in and be aggressive to the kids (.) Now

535 he'd never ever (.) touched a child

536 M: {Mm

537 C: {he'd never been (.) aggressive in that way to other kids (1) but there's always the

538 element of danger there that he may do one day

539 M: {Okay

540 C: {so I get that (2) but the room they locked him in was very small (.) and

541 he was with a member of staff, he wasn't on is own (2) so as soon as he that door

542 closed behind him he panicked

543 M: {Mm

544 C: {and that escalated the situation (3) So at the six-week meeting (.) I aired my

545 concerns that (.) "I understand why you're doing it (.) however (1) I don't agree with

546 you doing it"

547 M: {Mm

548 C: {purely because (1) I feel that (.) that's becoming a trigger point for him

549 M: Mm

550 C: And they took that on board (.) I was approached again by another parent (2) that

551 also had concerns cos their child was in that class and their child was being frigh

552 frightened by the fact that the door was being closed behind them so and sort of

553 they were locked in

554 M: {Right

555 C: {and I don't think they were locked in locked in there was another exit

556 M: {Mm

557 C: {but to the kids (1) that door closes they can't get out

558 M: {Mm
559 C: {so they would then panic that if there's a fire (.) or if anything else happens and
560 they can hear Zane on the other side
561 M: {Mm
562 C: {and they can hear him shouting and crying and throwing things (.) and not
563 knowing what was happening on the other side was
564 M: {Mm
565 C: also frightening for them kids (2) An I raised this point again "Look I, I" an and
566 they agreed they'd had complaints that this was happening
567 M: {Mm
568 C: {"so find an alternative because you need to
569 M: {Mm
570 C: because this is not working" (3) So they were trying to manoeuvre him in to the
571 hall where the kids eat their dinner
572 M: {Mm
573 C: ((intake of breath)) but that's where all the benches are
574 M: {Ok right
575 C: (((coughs)) and that's where all the books are (2) and (.) so then he'd throw books
576 he'd climb he'd chuck benches (.) And he took a teddy with him to school (1)
577 Something else that they agreed to that
578 M: {Mm
579 C: {I allowed but it wasn't (1)It concerned me that he was getting older and he was
580 having a teddy bear in class and that would make him stand out (2) and the
581 incidents become (.) more regular erm an then I was called (.) several times to come
582 in and calm him down because they couldn't (1) He'd just gone beyond the point of
583 (.) being able to turn them to be able to turn him round
584 M: {Mm
585 C: {We (.) reduced his time (2) but it didn't (1) not a lot just (.) half an hour
586 M: {Mm
587 C: {so that he thought he wasn't doing the full day (.) but he was more or less doing
588 a full day (.) We didn't want him to think he was winning and getting his own way
589 (1) Erm (3) and then (2) the incidents became more he got excluded (.) He had
590 internal I mean they did they did everything right

591 M: {Mm
592 C: {He had internal exclusions first (.) and his internal exclusions had to be in
593 another school in the infant's school
594 M: {Okay
595 C: {because the juniors wasn't big enough to do an internal exclusion (.) His
596 behaviour in there (.) was excellent (.) He would always be great (.) He actually
597 enjoyed the punishment ((laughs)) and it were like I had to explain to him "You do
598 realise it's a punishment" (1) An that didn't work (1) Erm he never ever went on a
599 school trip ever in the two years he was there they didn't want him to go on
600 because they didn't feel they could cope with him
601 M: {Ok
602 C: {Erm they didn't think he'd be able to manage (.) that amount of time (1) So he
603 missed out (2) Erm (1) on everything (2) He did Sports Day (1) but that's cos I was
604 there
605 M: Mm
606 C: Er they do Church the last day of term every half-term (.) I think he did it twice
607 M: Right
608 C: Because he said he didn't want to do it so they didn't make him do it (3) An and
609 that's been a thing for me Zane didn't want to do it so let's not do it (.) because he
610 might kick off if we say he has to so it's easier to just not make him do it
611 M: {Mm
612 C: So he never did any work (.) It's very rare unless (.) he was in a good frame of
613 mind
614 M: {Mm
615 C: {There were (.) weeks where he'd be there the full three days and the two half
616 days ((intake of breath)) and he'd wrote four words (1) in that entire week (1)
617 because he didn't want to
618 M: {Mm
619 C: {so he could sit and do dot to dot (.) he could sit and colour something in (.) he
620 could sit and do nothing (2) if that's what he wanted to do (1) but he were in school
621 M: Okay
622 C: I'm a big believer in education (1) so that again didn't sit well with me
623 M: {Mm

624 C: {I want him to do SATs I want him to have an education (2) but they felt that they
625 couldn't apply the pressure cause they couldn't couldn't even get him to stay in
626 school (3) Erm (.) and then (2) he'd had a couple of exclusions in there (1) things
627 were getting desperate (1) We'd applied for an EHCP (2) well we were awaiting for
628 one (1) and then he went (.) one day (2) errrrm round about probably May time (.)
629 and he had his teddy with him it's a Mickey Mouse teddy

630 M: {MmC: {He's obsessed with Mickey (1) and (2) he'd got up and walked out of
631 class which was fine (.) He'd got up and walked in the Hall cause he knew that's
632 where they were going to steer him anyway (.) which was fine (.) He'd put his
633 Mickey on the bench (2) erm that's where (1) it went wrong (2) In the sense that
634 erm (.) the staff did what would they had been taught to do (.) They had been told if
635 Zane starts to create (.) move all furniture out of his way (1) so that he can't pick it
636 up he can't throw it at you

637 M: {Mm

638 C: {there's nothing there and I get that

639 M: Mm

640 C: But in their haste to move the furniture (.) they moved the bench with Mickey
641 Mouse on it

642 M: Okay

643 C: And Mickey Mouse fell off (.) and the member of staff kicked it across the room
644 (.) and Zane lost it completely lost it (1) and attempted to attack the member of
645 staff

646 M: Right

647 C: They'd already rang me before that I actually walked in (.) as he had attempted to
648 hurt the member of staff and I stopped him

649 M: {Mm

650 C: {I only spoke (.) but my voice stopped him in his tracks he turned ((intake of
651 breath)) it's the first time I've ever seen that amount of aggression in his expressions
652 M: {Mm

653 C: {He was physically shaking (.) I could see it in his face and I had to pull him away
654 from the member of staff

655 M: {Mm

656 C: ((Sigh)) and then he was heartbroken (1) ((coughs)) And obviously I knew (.) he

657 was gonna be excluded

658 M: Mm

659 C: What the Head is said is she asked me to wait (.) with him (.) for ten minutes

660 because what she'd had work out is if it would be a fixed term or if it was gonna be

661 permanent at this point (2) And rightfully so it should have been permanent I don't

662 disagree (1) he had attacked a member of staff he'd (.) punishment is punishment it

663 doesn't matter (2) Erm (1) but we waited for quite a while and she asked if she

664 could (.) ring me later

665 M: {Mm

666 C: {so we went away (1) He came home and within twenty minutes he was back to

667 being Zane (2) because he wasn't in the school environment

668 M: Mm

669 C: School rang (.) We discussed it (.) Erm she did say it'll be fixed term (2) erm

670 because of the EHCP (2) to which I answered "if we If we had not been having the

671 EHCP this would be permanent" and she went "Yeah (1) We just want the EHC (.)

672 Let's get you that (.) and get him another school"

673 M: Okay

674 C: ((Intake of breath)) Erm he went back in I think we reduced his timetable again he

675 couldn't go in full time (1) He hadn't done full-time since the first half of Year One

676 M: {Mm

677 C: {and he's now end of Year 5 (2) Erm (1) he tried (2) We managed to muddle him

678 through till the end of Year 5 (2) and then (.) the first week of the summer holidays

679 (.) I was informed he'd got a place at a Specialist Provision School and he wasn't

680 allowed to go back to U Juniors anyway

681 M: Ok

682 C: And then that's where we are now he's now at the Specialist Provision (3) and

683 doing well (3) and full time ((breath))

684 M: So (.) it sounds like (.) there's been (.) periods of (1) loneliness periods of despair

685 (.) glittered with amazing people at times

686 C: {Oh definitely

687 M: {and (2) and now he's(.) in the special school so (3) if you could summarise (1)

688 kind of (.) how would you summarise how it's like (3) what's made the difference

689 because he's now and he's in full time can you what sense do you make of that?

690 C: ((Breathes in)) It's it's a more relaxed atmosphere erm in a specialist provision
691 they're in the in the one he's in their classes are small
692 M: {Mm
693 C: I think there's only six or eight in there and the amount of time they do on say
694 maths (.) is shorter (1) so when you go to a norm when you go to a mainstream
695 school and they do spellings they may do thirty minutes
696 M: {Mm
697 C: In the school he's in it's ten.
698 M: Ok
699 C: When they do maths (.) it may be an hour and a half at the Specialist Provision it's
700 twenty minutes (.) and its each lesson it's a twenty-minute short (.) but serious
701 burst
702 M: {Mm
703 C: and then there's a lot of (.) down time (1) So he goes to school on a Monday (1)
704 for nine o for ten to nine
705 M: {Mm
706 C: and at eleven o'clock they go swimming
707 M: Mm
708 C: and their day finishes at half past two (1) In an afternoon they do more of the (1)
709 creative side so it's art technology ((coughs)(.) music erm (.) more that type of thing
710 M: {Mm
711 C: {so that the kids are more relaxed
712 M: Mm
713 C: There's a lot of staff (1) erm (1) but they're a lot calmer (.) so they're a lot better
714 trained (1) they're fully aware they know how to deal with the situation they have
715 more space so if a child is creating that child can be removed and put into a safe
716 space that's not affecting the rest of the class cause they can't hear it (1) They're
717 more (2) accepting (1) They (2) start each day as a new there's no grudge
718 M: {Mm
719 C: {there's no (.) "Oh God here comes naughty kid" They're all on that level peggin
720 (1) In mainstream (2) even with even with a label (1) they're labelled naughty and
721 whether that's because (2) staff (1) don't (.) agree with their diagnosis (.) I mean a
722 lot of people don't agree with ADHD they don't think it's a real thing (2) Erm they

723 are taught in mainstream that this is what autism is this is how the kids will behave
724 and then they're not taught that actually autism is a giant umbrella and you can
725 have a child that's introverted (.) and that will do as he's told and barely speak a
726 word to you to a child that is majorly aggressive and will have complete meltdowns
727 in front of you
728 M: {Mm Mm
729 C: {without a care in the world (.) They've not been taught that there's massive
730 opposite scales (.) and that (.) a child can come in at any side of that scale they don't
731 realise that (.) They are taught that (.) autism is no eye contact no social interaction
732 (.) all these things (.) and that is it
733 M: {Mm
734 C: So when a child acts in a way like Zane with the violence it's because he's naughty
735 it's not cos he's got autism it's cos he's being a little shit (2) and that is their
736 M: {Mm
737 C: {in mainstream that is what they're taught in that sense when they do all this
738 teacher training (1) So (.) they do all the they try not to hold a grudge but they do
739 M: {Mm
740 C: {and they do have it where I I know that Zane's gone into school and you can see
741 the look of dread on that member of staff's face because he's there
742 M: {Mm
743 C: {it's that "Uhh What's he gonna do today" (1) I know ((intake of breath)) that
744 when he's triggered they've tret him like they did at the height (.) of his meltdown
745 the time before instead of treating it as a new meltdown as a new situation they
746 haven't (.) They've gone straight (.) to the extreme instead of trying to talk him
747 round
748 M: Yeah Okay
749 C: And that for me is where it goes wrong (.) They don't (1) they talk at them instead
750 of with them (2) And it's all about getting down to their level being calm showing
751 you're calm showing that he's not you're not upset (1) that you're not anxious (.)
752 That you're not aggressive (1) It's being dismissive when you need to be dismissive
753 with him
754 M: {Mm
755 C: {When he's going "Yeah but they've done such and such" "Yeh you'll be alright

756 just gnore em (.) don't worry about it" (1) They don't they'd make a big deal (1)
757 ((coughs)) That's the difference (.) in special needs schools they know (1) that just
758 because (.) Monday (.) he was kicking ten bells of crap out of a wall (1) and swearing
759 Zane's never sworn but I do know some do (.) Swearing and shouting and punching
760 (.) that doesn't mean that on Tuesday (.) when he starts going " For God's sake" (.)
761 he's gonna do the same thing
762 M: {Mm
763 C: {that's when you go "Why what's the matter mate come on what's up with yer"
764 (2) An in mainstream they don't (.) They tend to instantly go for the kill (.) sort of
765 thing
766 M: {Mm
767 C: {And that's the difference (1) That he can start each day
768 M: {Mm
769 C: {as a new no matter what he's done the day before
770 M: Mm
771 C: No matter how bad things have got
772 M: Mm
773 C: And he knows that
774 M: Mm
775 C: He knows that he can walk in and everybody's "Hi Zane," and happy to see him
776 (2) An I think that makes a difference so it makes him happy to go in to school (.)
777 because he knows he's wanted in school he knows he's welcome in school (1) He
778 knows they won't get upset with him (.) or judge him an I suppose that creates a
779 massive differenceM: Mm Mm (.) And how about for you how's it (.)different for
780 you?
781 C: It's a relief (2) Currently
782 M: {Mm
783 C: It's a I've spent the last (2) four five year (1) in hell (.) It's been a living hell I've had
784 I've got five children
785 M: Mm
786 C: I've got his twin sister and (.) his cha his brother that's a year older and I've had to
787 deal with all of em
788 M: {Mm

789 C: {All schools in all aspects (.) I've had to deal with his twin sister being judged on
790 Him
791 M: {Mm
792 C: {I've had to deal with his (1) twin sister being pulled out of class to deal with him
793 when he was at the first school (2) because they didn't know what to do (1) I've had
794 to deal with them doing that to his brother who's a year older (2) pulling him out of
795 class expecting him to deal with it and then they're upset (1) I've had to deal with
796 having Zane at home and not being able to work
797 M: {Mm
798 C: I've had to deal with (.) judgemental (.) professionals who (.) believe they know
799 what's best for my son (.) when they don't even know him (2) And then (1) finally
800 there's a tiny little light at the end of the tunnel (1) However (.) I know I'm also
801 gearing up for another fight (3) ((coughs)) Because with an EHCP (2) you have (.) a
802 review every year (1) and I know that in the past people with an EHCP and a place in
803 a specialist provision or school (.) has had that taken away because the child is
804 doing well
805 M: Okay
806 C: Without the realisation that the only reason that child is doing well is because
807 they are in a specialist provision (3) So my only concern now (.) is that when it
808 comes to that review they'll take the prov they'll take the place at the school away
809 from him (2) So it's (1) you're never off your guard when it comes to education (2)
810 because that concern that (.) I'm gonna have to appeal I'm gonna have to fight for
811 his place I'm gonna have to do everything to keep him his specialist provision is
812 always at the back of your mind (2) So even though I know he's doing great (2) it's
813 keeping hold of that place
814 M: {Mm
815 C: {that's then gonna be the difficulty (1) Fingers crossed I don't have that
816 M: No.
817 C: But I know it's happened in the past I know specialist provision schools are (.)
818 especially Local Authority
819 M: {Mm
820 C: {are rare (.) I'm very lucky to have one in the village I live
821 M: {Mm

822 C: {and I know there's waiting lists for em (2) And I know that's probably why people
823 in offices that've never met these kids made those decisions (3) but that don't help
824 me (4)

825 M: ((Sighs)) So (3) You've been through all of that and (3) and yunno I find that hard
826 to hear as a professional I find that some of the things you say hard to hear but I
827 think it's important that we hear them and obviously (.) one of the things I'm hoping
828 to come from this is that er we can inform policy and practice somehow so (.) what
829 is it that you think needs to change?

830 C: I think (.) mainstream (1) is in dire need of change (3) I think that (1) it needs to
831 be told to staff all staff that while you are professional when it comes to special
832 needs you're not

833 M: Mm

834 C: Absolutely not (.) Not in Mainstream you're not (1) First of all there's too many
835 needs for them to be professional at them all and secondly (2) they they are taught
836 minimal what once a term maybe (.) Even if they do it in their career for twenty year
837 and they're taught once a term it's one day

838 M: {Mm

839 C: {I live it every day (2) and I have done for the last ten year (2) Every day (1) And
840 they treat me like I don't know my own son (1) and they know better than me
841 because they are professional (.) and they don't know better than me (.) If they'd
842 listened to me from day one

843 M: {Mm

844 C: {he'd still be at his original school (.) We could've got him through

845 M: {Mm

846 C: {that (.) But they chose to ignore me because they were professional and they
847 knew better than I did so when I told them ((swallows)) that certain things wouldn't
848 work with Zane (.) I was ignored and over-ridden and they did 'em and then it failed
849 and that failed Zane

850 M: Mm

851 C: I think that Mainstream need to accept when they fail these kids and
852 acknowledge that they've failed these kids because as a parent it's important to me
853 to know that they realise they went wrong

854 M: {Mm

855 C: {Because (1) they don't (.) they continue the pattern (.) My other two children
856 were still in the school I knew they continued the pattern I watched them continue
857 the pattern with another parent
858 M: Right
859 C: ((Coughs)) I think they need to (3) be a bit more transparent when it comes to the
860 SENCO side of things (.) I didn't know I could speak to a SENCO I didn't know what a
861 SENCO was (.) When Zane first started there (2) I was lied to (2) I was ignored (3)
862 and (2) I was only listened to when (1) this situation got extreme (1) and that was
863 too little too late (.) from from a parent point of view
864 M: {Mm
865 C: I think (1) Integration Team is an absolute nightmare (2) And that's not their fault
866 (2) That is (.) I suppose it's the Government's fault for funding
867 M: {Mm
868 C: {It needs more funding it needs more permanent staff (1) Staff are loyal because
869 they love what they do (2) But they can't pay bills on fresh air
870 M: {No
871 C: So then they are going to move on (1) and that makes that side of things
872 completely broken
873 M: Mm
874 C: They've got nowhere to house (2) their kids (2) because they're having to go to
875 Community Centres and beg (.) for space to teach these kids
876 M: Right
877 C: An as a parent I don't want my child in a PRU
878 M: {Mm.
879 C: {That's I don't want that (.) Integration Team is a sort of a step in between
880 M: {Mm.
881 C: {And that was fine (.) And they've got some great staff that do work there (3) But
882 they need more permanent (.) buildings (1) They had one here they had one in town
883 they called it XXXXX I don't know what it's called
884 M: Mm.
885 C: and they've taken it away
886 M: Right.
887 C: The they they're having to move out because it can't be paid for

888 M: Right.

889 C: So (.) there's so many things like Lottery funding and things like that that can be
890 app applied and (.) attempted at least attempted for (1) but it's not done (2) The (2)
891 the Mainstream side (2) you can't ((sigh)) (.) You could train em till the cows come
892 home (1) but they're not professional in special needs they never will be and that
893 needs to be (.) ingrained in them and if you want to do the special needs side then
894 you go to the special needs schools not Mainstream and pretend that you know
895 what you're doing cos you don't (2) An it it's very they need to know (1) that we
896 know better than they do when it comes to our children and their needs (2)That
897 absolutely has to be instilled in them from the day they start their training (.) parent
898 knows better (.) You may know how to teach them (.) in a class classroom (1) I know
899 how to get him to sit in that classroom and be taught that's what they need to
900 understand (2) They need to work with parents not against them (1) just because
901 they're an Academy and they can pick and choose the kids (1) doesn't give them the
902 right to exclude the special needs side of things (1) And I'm not saying it should get
903 more

904 M: {Mm.

905 C: {Cos it shouldn't (1) All kids deserve the same (1) but they all deserve the same
906 (3) They don't need to be dismissed (2) In the special needs side (1) you kind of I
907 haven't got a problem with the special needs they've been great

908 M: {Mm.

909 C: They have been fantastic (.) Special Needs Schools can always do with more (1)
910 They always need more funding (.) They do so many great things Zane went to Alton
911 Towers Wednesday (1) as a treat because he'd done so well this term (2) and didn't
912 pay for anything the school paid for all that (2) And they've got their own buses and
913 now they they do it all

914 M: {Mm

915 C: {And they do it all (2) with (2) I'm the only parent that goes I think I think maybe
916 two or three

917 M: {Mm

918 C: {because they all come from out of town (2) so they get no gratification from
919 parents (3) Mainstream have ((coughs)) parents' evening (2) every term or every
920 other term (1) and have parents thanking em and they get the end of year (.) erm

921 thank you gifts
922 M: {Mm
923 C: {Special Needs don't (1) they get nothing (.) because none of the parents go to
924 the school it's all taxis
925 M: {Right
926 C: {They get zero recognition (1) in that sense of the word and that needs
927 recognising they need recognising for the work they do (2) They're the ones that
928 actually (1) are fighting a battle way worse than any mainstream because they're
929 the ones being (.) physically attacked emotionally attacked (1) verbally abused
930 constantly on a daily basis (1) from an it's not always one child but it
931 M: {Mm
932 C: because they're so there may be forty kids in that school (.) and at each point of
933 one one day there'll be one of each kid (.) will at some point have that meltdown
934 M: {Mm
935 C: ((intake of breath)) and yet they still come to school the following day with a
936 smile on their face and treat that child like he's an angel (2) And get zero recognition
937 (1) And then they do XXXXShire do like teacher awards
938 M: {Mm
939 C: {Where's the Special Needs ones (2) Where's their recognition
940 M: {Mm
941 C: They have (1) no real (.) Educational Psychologist go in coz they can't afford one (
942 1) So unless it's (.) a major deal (.) they don't afford one (.) Mainstream do (1)
943 Mainstream can afford to pull one in (1) And I think (.) Local Authority schools
944 should have one (.) as standard (3) that's spent not all their time there but one day a
945 week in that school
946 M: An EP
947 C: Yeah
948 M: {Mm
949 C: {I think (.) because that would be invaluable
950 M: {Mm
951 C: {to a school (1) They can't buy in Behaviour Support (.) They can't buy in Autism
952 Outreach they can't afford it (2) because all their money goes on them kids it goes
953 on them kids on making sure them kids feel welcome feel relaxed feel that (.) it's

954 not that regimental (2) in there
955 M: {Mm
956 C: {So they can have that freedom
957 M: {Mm
958 C: {That's where all their money goes (3) But they need to buy in s (.) they may need
959 to buy in some services and they can't.M: OkayC: Private Special Needs schools they
960 have their own (1) Educational Psychologists
961 M: {Mm
962 C: {But Local Authority don't and I think they need em
963 M: Okay
964 C: That's my personal view
965 M: and it's very welcome Is there anything else that you haven't said about any of
966 any of it that you think (.) you want to say that's important that
967 C: It's important to remember the kids are not naughty (1) They have needs (2) and
968 that's (.) the most important thing is that these kids are not naughty (2) They are
969 just (1) in a different world
970 M: {Mm
971 C: {And at times can't express that (1) so they do it with aggression (2) Which okay is
972 not the greatest way to do things but it's the only way they know how
973 M: {Mm
974 C: {And it's important to know that (2) today may be a bad day but tomorrow might
975 not (3) An I think that's it
976 M: Ok (.) thank you so much
977 C: You're welcome

Appendix 8: Jenny's transcript

1 M: Ok so I understand that Alex has experienced exclusion from school (.) can you
2 tell me about that?

3 J: I can tell you everything you want to know about it (.) but first (.) I want to say
4 that I (.) as an educated person who is keen to get involved in academia and
5 support schools and everything like that I (.) still feel (1) two years later (.) ignorant
6 of the system, the potential diagnoses, what that means, what that means for the
7 future, the potential things ways Alex could be taught, not taught an I'm reading a
8 lot of things I read a boo I pick up a book so I've got Neurotribes erm the blue book
9 and the green book to do with autism, raising gifted children and I read the first few
10 chapters and then I sort of I might get another book and start reading that so I'm
11 not (.) fully reading them but I'm not grasping a body of work that is (1) leading me
12 in an informed way and what I think definitely should happen one definite thing that
13 should happen is that sch teachers (.) at a very early age when they're (.)
14 introducing you to school saying we will be doing swimming lessons this is how we
15 do maths erm our expectation of homework is this or we don't do homework or
16 anything like that well is we are al looking for looking out for when children have
17 problems with x y z ((swallows)) we help them through issues with family
18 bereavement and whatever (.) and one of those things that is mentioned at an early
19 age is just get it into the brains of the parents neuro di neurodiversity might be
20 something that comes up (.) sometime in the next ten years (.) and if that comes up
21 (.) like with anything like there's bullying cos there's bullying policies and all that
22 sort of stuff, it's just you're just not prepared for it in any way so I want (.) it to be
23 mentioned er a good change for the future is to be mentioned as a general thing
24 because it's not just me as an individual Jenny X whose son has had issues (1) but (.)
25 the parents who I'm mixing with they have no idea either and they don't know how
26 to speak to me and you (.) because this builds up where I'm going to next which is
27 you feel so lonely

28 M: {Ok

29 J: {Feel really lonely and that loneliness is and t the teachers can't help you or aren't
30 helping you and I think they should be able to help you because even to tell you
31 where to go to tell you (.) what's th and even the MAT workers they haven't helped

32 either (.) so you feel (.) what helps is meeting another parent whose gone through
33 the same thing

34 M: {Mm

35 J: {so to that end (1) another thing that could help is having a body of parents like
36 me who've been through a situation even though somebody else who goes through
37 a situation like me will be unique so it's not like me (.) but just (2) I ended up ringing
38 up erm Gifted Futures (.) which is an organi an organisation which used to be called
39 the gifted and talent the gifted and talented children or something like

40 M: {Mm

41 J: {that and it's there I don't know if I's there more for the parents or more for the
42 children I think it's there more for the parents and just having somebody on the
43 phone who says yes that's normal yes that is typical erm (2) that word that means
44 er (3) shape of a child an and the pattern of what's going through their daily life or
45 their monthly life or their year at school erm typical (.)pattern

46 M: {ok

47 J: {typical pattern (.) erm it's just nice to hear and an obviously now I've got forums
48 on the web

49 M: {Mm

50 J: {and stuff like that which you can find anything you want to find on the web so it's
51 not that helpful but it's helpful finding people who have gone through the same
52 thing because they're not on my doorstep

53 M: {Ok

54 J: {And I'm made to feel like (2) some form of a monster, inadequate parent, have
55 you seen the doctor, pitying looks (.) that sort of stuff and that adds to stress at
56 home (.) stress at work (1) Ultimately I've given up my job so you've got stress of
57 money as well and all of that is not good (1) situation to be parenting a child
58 especially two years on when then the social workers start saying to you yeah sorry
59 yeah there is no case to answer you are absolutely right you're a great parent and
60 then yeah he's so lucky he's got a parent like you who's pushed and pushed and
61 pushed and pushed so what about people who aren't like me (.) who don't have
62 that confidence and also I'm errrm maybe I've got traits myself I'm not that
63 bothered about (1) what people think about me and yet clearly I am a bit bothered
64 so if me who's not that bothered (.) is a bit bothered (.) what about people who

65 really are bothered

66 M: {Mm

67 J: {It's absolute soul destroying and (.) you feel like there's nobody who can help you

68 so when he got his diagnosis they did send some leaflets through with the diagnosis

69 which I didn't read and I've read I keep look keep going back to them thinking oh (.)

70 they probably wrote something in there and they it still hasn't gelled with me what

71 (.) could help an erm I've gone to parenting additional needs meetings and an

72 they're telling me yunno other mums are saying oh yes so and so has trashed the

73 house (.) erm they're hurting their own sibling yunno I haven't experienced any of

74 this so we've got (3) almost a better a good situation (1) but so there's nothing

75 that's fitting (.) fitting the mould to help us and that is so (1) missing (.) So that is

76 ((talking into dictaphone)) my number one (.) advice for the future (.)

77 M: {{{(laughter)}}

78 J: {Ok so now going back to the original question

79 M: {Ok

80 J: {what has life been like what was it like

81 M: {What have you obviously Alex has experienced exclusion

82 J: {Mm

83 M: {so tell me about

84 J: {tell you

85 M: {that

86 J: {Tell you about it ok

87 M: {tell me about your story

88 J: ((Intake of breath)) So er Alex's first exclusion was in year 3 (.) and it was because

89 he (.) in one day he trod on one boys toes kicked another boy's hand and wrestled

90 another child to the ground (.) and erm (1) at the time the teachers the headteacher

91 said can you come in please can you take him to the GP for a second opinion we're

92 not sure has anything changed at home (.) Er we're not sure things (.) he might be

93 his brain growing wrong (.) or it might be a phase (2) Went to the GP GP said (.) I

94 think he's entirely normal erm I'd expect him to be lying at this age Is he being

95 bullied, I knew something had gone on. So this was May in Year 3 December Year 3

96 there were issues in the village tiny village tiny village school erm so I knew that

97 some bullying had happened (.) but I didn't realise until (2) this time last year that it

98 had gone on for a year or something and I don't know whether bullying's the right
99 word, I still can't (.) quite work out (.) what was going on certainly Alex and two
100 other boys were not encouraged were not allowed to (.) join in with the other boys
101 playing in the playground this is a school where there's only about eighty children
102 and (.) erm I at one point I thought I wanted to train to be a teacher and I did some
103 only a couple of weeks experience in a much bigger school and I did think O my
104 goodness two thirty (.) strong classrooms with one year oh they can do Hamlet they
105 can do all whereas a class of (.) twenty-five to thirty across three year groups (.)
106 they're not going to be able to do that but people said yes but these small schools
107 are great for family (.) atmosphere they work like a family all the kids know each
108 other and with we only having one son only child and my family my family is in
109 XAREA or XAREA
110 M: {Mm
111 J: {this oh well okay that's going to work it's going to be like siblings but in actual
112 fact it's it's it's backfired completely it's been the absolute opposite and I (.) at one
113 stage when I said to the teacher I think something's going on between Alex and the
114 Year 4 boys (.) she said er I think I know what it is and I think she was referring to
115 the fact that Alex because she told me this once before that Alex was trying to take
116 on the mantle of Alpha male in the classroom from a boy who is a year older this
117 was Alex was in a mixed age class two year groups and he was (.) I think this is partly
118 (.) Alex's problem the fact that (1) when he was in reception he was in a class of
119 reception Year 1 then he went to Year 1 in the same class so he was (.) the
120 underdog and then the (.) older year and then when he was in Year 2 he went in to
121 a class of Year 2 Year 3 but then when he was Year 3 (.) the whole class and the
122 teacher moved into a different classroom so he was the (.) underdog if I can phrase
123 it like that you know what I mean
124 M: {{Yeah yeah
125 J: for a second year running (.) without that opportunity to oh well I can put up for
126 with it for a year now now I'm the kingpin or whatever erm an it was I think that's
127 part of his problem (.) or the problem that he experienced (.) anyway these erm
128 older boys so this is this is when he's in Year 3 so the underdog for a second year (.)
129 the Year 4 boys and older were saying he couldn't join in with the playground games
130 and they did the same for two other boys in Alex's year

131 M: {Mm
132 J: {but two other boys in Alex's year (.) were allowed because outside the school
133 there was a (.) erm (.) clique I will say some parents were friendly with each other to
134 up the point that they all go caravanning together and (.) one of the boys that was
135 allowed to join in that was in Alex's year (.) was the son of one of these families that
136 mixed together and the other boy is a very close friend of that boy
137 M: {Ok
138 J: {erm they're born close so he sort of assimilated into that group so Alex and two
139 others weren't and they were constantly not allowed to join in and the other two
140 boys left when and so after this bad Year 3 (.) Alex moved school our choice to C
141 school but the other two boys also left P School anonymising
142 {(Laughter))
143 J: {and went to a different school they went to S School which when Alex failed at C
144 School then we moved to S chose C school because of football team because at the
145 time Alex was very active at this football team which also could've been part of the
146 problem of why he was being bullied an and not being not allowed to join bullied by
147 exclusion I hasten to add there's no (.) I don't think there was any name calling or
148 hitting (.) or anything like that this is bullying by exclusion ((intake of breath)) and
149 erm (.) I think Alex was bullied by exclusion partly (.) because he was erm (.) ((tuts))
150 one of the bullies was concern I believe was concerned that he was going to lose his
151 alpha male friend to Alex because (.) the alpha male was in the same football team
152 as Alex (.) partly because Alex was erm well ahead of them so in the when they
153 started Year 3 Alex when Alex started Year 3 they were in Year 4 but Alex was
154 already book number 40 of a book series called Beast Quest
155 M: {Mm
156 J: {that goes up to at least 120 (.) erm and the teacher was encouraging the Year 4
157 boys to start reading it so Alex was 40 books ahead
158 M: {Ok
159 J: {so that could have been an (2) insult (1) rubs some people and why else well
160 when he (2) so the boy whose toes he trod on that day was a Year 6 boy (1) They
161 were playing football or something like that Alex said can I join in the answer was no
162 so Alex trod on his toes I don't think that would particularly help I did say to Alex do
163 you think that's going to make him say yes next time (.) But then he (.) er he kicked

164 a boy's hand so the Years (.) the Year 4 boys that Alex had difficulty with there was
165 one alpha male boy that Alex liked another one (1) who was ostensibly an older
166 child cause his sister's aged sixteen or something like that everybody liked him (.) so
167 they're all right that's Henry and Charlie anyomise and then there's erm the other
168 two are both called Casper one of which lives in the village very friendly with Henry
169 but Henry's busy cyc erm swimming and football Casper doesn't do anything and
170 the other Casper his mum had died so the mums took turns in looking after Casper
171 erm an erm (.) but Casper and Casper were quite unpleasant to me on one occasion
172 so I believe that they were quite unpleasant to Alex an it was Casper R

173 M: {Mm

174 J: {the one whose mother died erm whose hand Alex kicked but I believe that Alex
175 was going to kick this ball and Casper went for the ball went to pick it up with his
176 hands and the two co-coincided I don't think that was an intentional kick of Casper
177 R's hand Alex maintains he was playing with the ball (.) before so (.) but Alex doesn't
178 seem to be too erm (2) annoyed with Casper R about that so I think it was a genuine

179 M: {Ok

180 J: {mistake erm (1) The other child who got wrestled to the ground Alex kicked a ball
181 (.) you'd think from all this kicking he would be really good at kicking balls

182 M: {(laughs)}

183 J: {He's not brilliant at kicking balls he kicked a ball it hit a girl (.) in Alex's year on the
184 thigh and everybody who saw it agreed it would hurt including Alex (.) She (.) has
185 had issues with Alex in the past. She's a very clever girl and one thing that happened
186 in the past er they have monitor jobs that change every week and one of Alex's
187 monitor jobs one nice job is to be at the front of the line at the end of playtime (.)
188 And she would stand very close to the line where they would line up just before the
189 less less the bell was rung and Alex sort of (.) said can you move please because I'm
190 meant to be standing there and she wouldn't and he (1) pushed her to some degree

191 M: {Mm

192 J: {Now I don't know if it was a light push or a massive sh I don't think it was a
193 massive shove I would've been told about that

194 M: {Mm

195 J: {but she wouldn't move and (.) the same er that happened on Wednesday or
196 something and the same thing happened on the Friday And I was a little bit annoyed

197 with school why school didn't (2) stop these things happening it's only a week
198 M: {Mm
199 J: {and then teacher is looking to me and she looks on the monitor list an she says
200 well that girl is the monitor (.) next week and I said to Alex and the teachers so we
201 both looked to Alex and said don't do to her what she's done to you (1) and (.)
202 interesting we were saying that to him but nobody had said it to her on the Friday
203 so anyway he had background issues with that girl
204 M: {Mm
205 J: {{{(swallows)}} so you'd think if he had really hurt her on the thigh and there was
206 issues that she would be tell tailing and tittle tattling and all yunno causing problem
207 for Alex but no nothing at all at all from her family y nothin
208 M: {Mm
209 J: {erm but (.) another girl who was further away said to Alex (.) erm you have to
210 apologise for that cos that hurt or something (.) that means that
211 M: {Mm
212 J: {and erm (.) he wrestled her to the ground because he maintains he had
213 apologised and it wasn't to her he had to be answerable to it was to the person who
214 he'd hurt and unfortunately the girl who said that to him was the headteacher's
215 daughter and from that moment on the headtea and the headteacher saw this erm
216 the head tea the headteacher allegedly according to other people (.) and us was er
217 looking for Alex's behaviour and looking to catch it (1) and so to in one respect he
218 was being tau treated differently to others added to which her own husband was
219 running partner of the Casper in the village not the Casper who mum died but er the
220 Casper's dad
221 M: {Mm
222 J: {So there's (1) it was a welded mesh of (2) social (3) cliquey cohesiveness an we
223 were outside it an we were happily outside it it was irrelevant to us until (1) he can't
224 join in the playground games (.) erm and when I said to the teacher I think
225 something's going on between Alex and the year 4 boys she said yes I think you're
226 right and I think i know what it is erm and I think she was referring to this (.) taking
227 on this alpha male or trying to
228 M: {Mm
229 J: {take on the alpha male role and a few weeks later she said no a week later she

230 said you're right there is something going on but it's self-policing I don't have to get
231 involved he's learnt to stay away from them. Which at the time I thought ok this is
232 alright then
233 M: {Mm
234 J: {but now with reference to small fam small schools meant to be like a family
235 nobody should be staying away from anybody (1) in a small school
236 M: {Mm
237 J: {that's why I say it backfired. So erm (.) I think Alex (2) didn't have any other
238 experience I think he was (2) more aware perhaps than other children and trying to
239 make sense of this world where that's allowed. He said to me much later that erm
240 because I said "oh be careful Alex" even this Christmas erm he went to a Christmas
241 party organised by an employer where the (.) two Casper's were there at the party
242 and (.) amongst other people and we said "oh how was the party?" and cos he
243 parents aren't allowed to go (.) Erm "I'm definitely going next year" and we thought
244 Oh Phew it wasn't a disaster bearing in mind he hadn't been mixing in kids
245 company for a year (.) and er he said "I'm definately going next year" and we
246 thought oh good and he said (.) "because Harry and Harry won't be there" "Ohh (.)
247 Well what happened then" and on the night he got picked up for the party he told
248 my husband Casper R and erm erm popped my tried to pop my balloon but when I
249 spoke to him the next day he said Casper R was trying pop everybody's balloon and I
250 said "well at least it wasn't just yours then
251 M: {Mm
252 J: {and he said "no but he I was the only one who he tried to take the balloon out of
253 my hand (.) and pop it (.) So this is like at least a year on (.) from any involvement
254 with these children but he sees it as oh right next Christmas which will be the
255 Christmas after I'm speaking to into this thing erm he wants to go to the party
256 because er those boys won't be at the party and we're actively avoiding the school
257 they go to because those boys are not academics erm (.) so it doesn't mat (3) it does
258 matter their schooling but school is not going to be an absolute (2) er erm
259 ((struggling for word)) force that dictates what their future will be
260 M: {Mm
261 J: {whereas Alex (.) school could well be because he is an academic sto I believe
262 unless he totally drops out because of this whole experience which it is still likely

263 ((intake of breath)) Erm so we are avoiding that school and even now we're going
264 to erm H Secondary which is a smaller school (1) and (.) has a reputation of (1) being
265 more person focused than (1) erm traditional exam route university focussed if I can
266 put it in that (.) very brief descriptive way because I'm (.) not actively looking at all
267 the different schools because I feel like we've had to knock one out because of not
268 wanting to be on the bus with the bullies

269 M: {ok

270 J: {and then we've gone for the next nearest and the good thing about it is that they
271 don't have school unif don't have blazer and tie (.)Which I think might actually be (.)
272 a positive thing for Alex not having a blazer and tie although I am concerned very
273 concerned that Alex might not have a erm ((swallows)) academic (1) equal or
274 whatever the word is like equal bu bu to sort of (2) push each other (.) along and
275 encourage each other's further (1) challenge

276 M: {Mm

277 J: {You know what I mean when I say that I can't think of the words. Erm where I
278 think that might be available in M Secondary but equally there'll be a lot more
279 bullying an an all I hear from M Secondary (1) and have done for the last five years,
280 nothing to do with Alex, is bullying stories

281 M: {Ok

282 J: {so I'm really heightened to that (.) and really(.) added to which for me personally
283 (.) I was bullied when I was (2) er (2) five or six so same sort of age and all this time I
284 have (.) yeah I remember their names Anna X and Sarah X (1) an erm the fact they
285 would come up to me and ask me a question which had two answers and if I said
286 one they'd go "NO it's the other one" and if I said the other one "NO yunno you're
287 stupid you don't know anything" And I remember being very lonely in the
288 playground and having nobody to talk to play with or anything like that (.) That is
289 what I knew I didn't know there was anything different my mum taught another
290 school she took my sister my younger sister with her (.) too early for my younger
291 sister really to go to school but they were desperate for teachers and it all worked
292 very well so I my mum's talking to about it now a bit more because so I presumably
293 felt very (2) left out those sort of things so (1) and so she what she did was she
294 moved me out of that school for the last year of Infants I was at the school that she
295 was taught so and my birthday's July so for my July birthday party (1)before that

296 September of the last year

297 M: {Mm

298 J: {of Infants school all the girls who came to my party (.) were people I didn't know

299 M: Right

300 J: So to me that tells something that tells a very very sad (1) thing and yet I don't

301 have any erm I'm sort of sad an I might cry when I'm saying all of this because it's

302 coming up again but all those years between now and then (2) that is that (.)

303 doesn't really matter went to the next school and everything was fine everything's

304 fine everything's fine everything's fine and everything's fine but it has made me (2)

305 independent (.) not ready to trust people erm I have I do have some friends and one

306 of my best friends ((laughs)) in a moment of drunkenness with other people there

307 was two or three other people there she'd say "It's not true anyway what they say

308 about you Jenny you are a nice person" She's done that twice to me so

309 M: {laughs

310 J: {she definitely thinks it erm but I think an I find it quite amusing but now with in

311 the light of all of this (.) it sort of there's a bit of a pattern and my husband says

312 "yeah I was bullied as well at school" and he only has a few friends but they're really

313 close friends so (.) yunno we're thinking poor Alex he's got (.) parents who are (.)

314 independently minded, we don't have that thick body of friends to mix with, he

315 doesn't have brother or sister like my husband's got a brother and sister and I've got

316 a sister we (.) don't feel like we're inviting people round all the time so he's got a

317 loner lifestyle before he even starts going wrong and then you've got that at school

318 so having known my own experience (1) that's what the world is, that's what he

319 would have thought this is what the world is and (.) even one of these bullies went

320 to (.) Alex the headteacher to say "Alex won't invite me to his birthday party" as if

321 she could change that so he found that she could change that yunno to Alex so erm

322 and Alex was quite surprised that this teacher said well Alex is entitled to have who

323 he wants

324 M: {Mm

325 J: {at the party (.) And the reason he wanted that particular party was a swimming

326 pool party that we invited all of Alex's year so not all of his class, all of his year, and

327 all of his football squad (2) so that's fifteen people plus fifteen people something

328 like that at a swimming pool party

329 M: {Mm
330 J: {so we could have the numbers and the alpha male (.) was in Year 4 and in the
331 football squad and so the alpha male's friend who thought Alex was going to steal
332 him from him wasn't in the football thing, wasn't in the year so he didn't get invited
333 and er he felt some sort of right (2) that he could be invited an so he was a bit
334 disturbed by that and I think that also might yunno that was all in the same year
335 maybe I think, yes it was. So (2) could we did we do something wrong then (2) Even
336 now I don't think so, how could we possibly think that that was gonna cause (.)
337 bullying something like that. Anyway and ultimately Alex seemed to have kicked off
338 more (1) when we (.) so he didn't mind about being bullied in December and people
339 climbing on his back and he had to shake em off, he didn't mind erm (2) the issue oh
340 that er that party that we erm I've told you before but I'll say it I didn't fully
341 M: {Mm
342 J: {between so er I told you about the Christmas the Christmas lights the Christmas
343 lights going on in the village the light levels going down this is the first incidence we
344 actually know (.) practical bullying but we sensed that things were happening before
345 and I can't tell you any examples but we know this happened and another parent
346 was looking across at the children saying "don't they look nice" I said "don't they
347 look nice" they said "they do now" "Why" " Oh well mm there was something going
348 on before but it's all stopped now" And I said "Oheroh my son involved in that"
349 being naughty is what I'm worrying and he said "well he was involved but not (1) he
350 was more like he was the victim of it but it's all sorted out now". Then that man's
351 wife said to me a couple of days later "is Alex alright? I mean I know boys can be
352 rough but that seemed a bit unfair to me". Again we didn't talk about it to Alex
353 about it at all. That was sort of around the 19th of December in the village
354 ((swallows)) Then between Christmas and new year (.) one of the football team
355 mums said "Oh is Alex coming to play football tomorrow in your village on your
356 village green with the others?" (.) Er "No we haven't been invited" I said "anyway
357 I'm busy now I've committed now, I've I've booked a van and I'm I'm taking some
358 stuff to the skip and stuff like that so I can't do it" and she said "Well I'll look after
359 Alex that's ok" and I said "Well alright then well I've still gotta go and do something
360 to do with this van, I'll come back, I'll drop Alex off and then I'll go off with the van"
361 "Yeah, yeah, that's fine". So I did that and when I came back at the and I said to the

362 mum "is this al" the mum who was organising it "is this alright him staying for so
363 many hours?" and she said "Yeah, yeah I've got several coming for lunch anyway".
364 So (1) I it was Alpha male's mum
365 M: {Mm
366 J: {who said that and after several hours I returned no people playing football on the
367 green, there was a posse of mum's chatting and they said "he's at" cos they knew I
368 was looking for Alex "he's at Daniel's house" who was our next-door neighbour
369 Daniel's one of the other ones who left who wasn't included in things and wasn't in
370 the football team either (.) So I went to Daniel's house and the mum, his mum was
371 there says "well yeah there he is playing" I looked out for them I went over to Alpha
372 male's house Valerie's house and erm they were sitting Alex and Daniel were sitting
373 eating party food and I thought well if you're sitting here eating party food well they
374 said "we're tired and hungry or cold and hungry" (.) something like that (1) eating
375 and "well you can do that in your own house yunno you're meant to be playing with
376 the others, you're not playing with the others so come home
377 M: {Mm
378 J: {So I was working in the shop that night and several of the (.) mums came through
379 my till well (.) the mum who said "well I'll look after him" the mum whose house it
380 was at said she'd erm she came through my till (2) ((background noises M checks
381 dictaphone)) Just checking tape there and erm the sister of Casper H, not Casper R
382 mother, the sister came through my till (.) So I had an opportunity to say to them
383 "so how was it, what happened what happened" and I gathered that there'd been a
384 bit of a fisticuffs between Alex and Casper H and (.) the general mood was that they
385 were both equally to blame erm both equally involved and maybe Casper goaded
386 Alex and Alex took the bait and it became physical blah blah. So I said to Alex "what
387 happened?" and he said "oh well, we kept changing teams they wanted to change
388 teams all the time, change teams and then Casper and I were on the same team and
389 we both went for the ball I got it and he kicked me" Now I know both those boys are
390 not good at football so I suspect that he didn't kick Alex on purpose and I said this to
391 Alex "Yunno ((inaudible))" "No, no, no definitely did" and I said "well what
392 happened then?" "Why I kicked him back" "and then what happened?" "He kicked
393 me" and then what happened "I kicked him" "and then what happened" (.) "Casper's
394 mum got involved and stopped it" (.) "Right" (1) "What happened on the night of

395 the Christmas tree lights going up?" ((Swallows)) "Well they all jumped on me" (.)
396 Which I still don't understand what that means, I presume it means (.) like piggy
397 backey and more
398 M: {Mm
399 J: {"And what happened?" "I shook em off" "and then what happened" "they
400 jumped on me again" "and what happened" "I jump I shook em off" "then what
401 happened?" "I sat on a rock" (.) These are big rocks that're round the outside of the
402 green to stop people parking an "Then what happened?" "Casper H went for me"
403 "What happened?" "I jumped off the rock" "what happened?" Casper H hurt his
404 head and Claire got involved and stopped it (.) So in that context I can understand
405 why Alex thought that Casper H did kick him on purpose and maybe he did (.) I
406 suspect not not in front of people (1) But I can see (1) a situation had built up over
407 (.) I believe over months
408 M: {yeah
409 J: {of whatever whether it started with the book reading and also there's BREXIT
410 going on and my husband's surname is Polish and Casper H's dad (1) my husband
411 thinks has said things like oh er Polish people coming over here getting our jobs at
412 XXXXXXXX before so mmmmmmm (1) maybe it wasn't personal to do with Alex Seb
413 I don't know. Added to which I'm chair of (.) er I don't think I was chair I was chair of
414 the PTA then and chair of the parish meeting and chair of the village fair so (1)
415 people do so I mean I know what I'm like about my boss
416 M: {{{(laughs))
417 J: {people don't like bosses so yunno an if Casper H heard his parents talking that
418 way (2) doesn't take much to spill over (1) these sorta things but the thing is it
419 wasn't seen (.) by the teachers
420 M: {ok
421 J: {and that's what I think needs to change as well I don't know what an that girl who
422 got kic the ball hit her thigh (1) she was regularly told off for causing the problems in
423 the in the playground and it wasn't always her but she was always and her mum
424 said can you get more supervision in the playground please (1) and it didn't happen
425 and in the end she was taken out of the school as well
426 M: Ok
427 J: So there's a pattern there (.) An erm the other two boys who left P school wer

428 weren't allowed to join in with the playground games one of them, Daniel, who I've
429 mentioned before he comes from Romanian descent but actually born in Portugal
430 and erm lived and never lived in Romania. But English was his second language and
431 now English is his first language he picked it up very quickly but when he joined the
432 school in Year (3) 1 or 2 1 1 1 (.) Erm he wouldn't have known much English so he
433 had so and the other kids would know that and that sort of stuff and in fact his
434 parents speak with very accented (.) accents

435 M: {Mm

436 J: {so (.) if there is and with the whole BREXIT thing going on (.) an we live in a (.) er
437 vote leave area so (1) yunno that could've had er influence over it or maybe not but
438 anyway that's just setting the scene. Erm so Daniel is in his own (.) bubble a little bit
439 doesn't pay too much so when Alex actually left school (2) and moved to another
440 school er and when we left when we moved house he still wasn't fully aware that
441 we had left an was really surprised when we were no longer their next-door
442 neighbours so he sort of switches off a bit. The other boy Ollie school thought he
443 was autistic as well because he was nn falling behind with work erm but his mum's a
444 teacher and was a teacher in that school and his dad's a train training to be a
445 teacher and so they

446 brought him on and now he's not behind anymore and they dispute (.) the fact that
447 the schoo they don't think he's autistic, I don't know, he wouldn't 've got a diagnosis
448 cos I'm sure they would have told me by now but he's moved away anyway. He (.)
449 was erm (.) his mum was unhappy teaching there could see these three boys not at
450 a loss to do with each other if (1) the other ones weren't in the playground (.) So
451 and she said (1) erm she advised me definitely (.) "in a heartbeat" she said "get him
452 out of that school (.) in a heartbeat". And she was looking at moving her own son
453 and had some trial days and she told me that the Year 4 boys had been unpleasant
454 to her boy so I didn't know any of this because it wasn't common knowledge it
455 wasn't talked about stuff like that

456 M: {Mm

457 J: {it was only because we had a (1) year 3 Alex's year 3 boys day where we're meant
458 to bring ,there's only five of them including Alex, come to our house, play in the
459 field, take the dog for a walk in the woods, whatever and this one, that particular
460 year for year 3 we were gonna go into the woods, build dens and they were talking

461 about it excited about it an for Alex it was absolute excitement because Hector and
462 Bill, who were allowed to play with the other boys (.) he didn't get to play with them
463 in the playground and this was his chance to play with them and he was really
464 looking forward to it but on the actual day of the event the Year 3 boys day erm it
465 was the last PE lesson of the year and it was rounders and they're four teams and
466 Alex is in team 4 and the other two boys in team four were Daniel and Ollie, the
467 ones who don't get to play (.) join in with the boys in the playground ((swallows))
468 and every team had thirty bowls to (2) hit and they ran out of time and Team 4
469 didn't get chance to bat and Alex was really distressed about this I was asked to go
470 into class to
471 sort it out and er the headteacher came knocking on the door cos she couldn't ring
472 me cos I was on the phone (.) Been an incident er Alex's in the classroom on his own
473 throwing things the others are practising songs for the show. I went in and Alex was
474 actively trying to rip up his reading record which he managed. There were some
475 tables that had been top knocked over some chairs were in the wrong place and on
476 their sides. He then tried to rip up (.) and some pots of pens that had obviously been
477 thrown because the pens were all over the place. Erm he (.) was trying to rip the
478 real books that he was meant to be reading then which belonged to the school and I
479 said "don't do that, don't do that" and he tried to sort off pull th the (3) blinds (2)
480 the furniture called blinds off the window so I said "don't do that" so we need to
481 tidy up if you want the year 3 boys day thing to still to happen today and he was
482 jabbering away I couldn't understand what he was saying, cos he was crying and er
483 he said saying the same thing over and over again and I realised it was "we didn't
484 even get a chance to bat you would've thought it would be fair in class "
485 M: Ok
486 J: He's picked up a shoe to throw it cos there's lots of (.) PE kit around because it's
487 the last PE lesson so every got PE kit to take home and er the headteacher looked
488 through the glass slot in the window and sort of beckoned for me to come out
489 because (.) of Alex throwing things. So I went out and the teacher says the
490 headteacher, classteacher and the SENCO (3) the teacher who takes on the role of
491 SENCO person
492 M: {Mm
493 J: {were all there and "what's he saying what's he saying?" and I said he said "We

494 didn't even get a chance to bat" "Ohhhh" that made sense to them cos I didn't know
495 what the situation was or anything like that ((swallows)) I went back in and said
496 "come on Alex we've got to make everything right again we've got for the year 3
497 boys thing to happen" So we've corrected the tables , we've put the chairs, started
498 to collect the pens and the headteacher came in with camera "oh no I've got to take
499 a picture of what he's done to the room for records." ((Intake of breath)) so she
500 took a picture then we continued and then (.) it was all sorted out, she came and
501 erm I said to Alex he had to apologise to her and he did he said "I'm sorry" and she
502 said "well what for?" and he said "for worrying you" and she said "well that's right
503 we are worried, we are worried , we're really worried but " and the class teacher
504 came in and she took his hand and she whispered to him, because she always seems
505 to whisper (.) I don't know if it's some class management strategy they all have to be
506 quiet to listen to it, but she said "but you're not angry with me are you Alex?" I'll say
507 that loud so you can hear ((speaks into dictaphone))"But you're not angry with me
508 are you Alex?" but it's literally just mouthed and she took his hand and they went to
509 the library and I was left on my own and then I think what are you doing here and
510 the SENCO teacher came and said "oh when erm" No she didn't come then (1) The
511 headteacher came back and said er "Oh I've just had a telephone call from (1) Bill's
512 mum" he's one of the two that do play
513 M: {Mm
514 J: {with the year older year boys "erm to say oh just remind you that her son will be
515 going home with you, Jenny" Erm and I said to her this is the headteacher said to
516 me that she said to her so "I said to her erm you might want to review that because
517 there's been an incident at school Alex is alright, not hurt anybody, Jenny's come in,
518 he's calmed down but you might want to review it" and she said "will my son be
519 safe with Jenny?" and the headteacher reported that she said "I don't know" and (.)
520 so the mum said "oh can you let Jenny know I'm really sorry er we won't come this
521 time erm (.) but we will try and support with play dates and things like that but not
522 this time (1) So this is what the headteacher reported to me
523 M:{ Mm
524 J:{ and then she said "oh well since I've told one I think I need to tell the others (.)
525 d'ya mind?" "Yes I do mind (.) but I can't stop you doing what you're doing" and
526 anyway that mum would represent two mums because the the pick up one would

527 pick up both
528 M: {Ok
529 J: {An erm so she rang the others I was again left in the classroom on my own. I
530 understand from the other mums, our next door neighbour, she rang the next door
531 neighbour spoke to the dad, the dad was helping somebody move home, she spoke
532 to and he said "ring my wife" and then the other one was a teacher was (1) out
533 somewhere like at a sports day out visiting something out with another teacher with
534 her a teaching assistant or teacher I think teacher and they were both very surprised
535 that the headteacher made that call don't think should have made that call but she
536 was told (.) erm Bill and Hector aren't going (2) so you probably don't want to go
537 yunno that sort of it's already failing cancelling
538 M: {Mm
539 J: {of its own accord ((intake of breath)) And er when we and then the SENCO
540 worker the whatever that's called
541 M: {Mm
542 J: {the teacher the class teacher who is taking on the SENCO role came and she said
543 "oh well when you tell him it's cancelled tell him you'll try and arrange for another
544 one" an I said "I don't know whether I can go through all of that because we've only
545 got a few days left and some of them were slow to reply anyway (.) Hector and Bill
546 were slow to reply. Anyway we went (.) so all the kids left school at the right time I
547 was still in the classroom Alex was brought to me (.) after they'd all gone we walked
548 back and Alex said "where are the boys?" Cos I usually had a wheelchair a wheel
549 barrow that they put all their bags in and everything because we only live opposite
550 the school
551 M: {Mm
552 J: {which is another thing you can't escape it erm "where are the boys?" and I said
553 "well they're not coming" He was crying then and I was virtually crying and I said "I
554 can't make them come, you can't make people come" but when we sat down by the
555 f our back door that we use to go in and out and unlock and go in us I'm not
556 unlocking because we'd got logs there and Alex was throwing them up and not
557 caring if they landed on him and I said "I'm not unlocking the door and going in until
558 you calm down". We end up sitting in the garden for a bit and erm he's very upset
559 about it and I said "Look d'ya wanna go (.) swimming I think, I might have even

560 offered him the river cos you like doing that or do you want a game of chess
561 something like that and I can't remember what he said (1) Might have done some
562 chess actually (1) Can't remember but then I got phone calls from the next door
563 neighbour saying is it happening still? I said "No its not now" and the teacher one
564 saying Ollie was also upset that there was no they didn't bat in the rounders and he
565 would like to come if you're postponing it yunno he'd like to come and I said "right
566 ok you two if you can make Tuesday then I'll ask the others" "Yes we can make
567 Tuesday" cos this was on a Thursday

568 M: {Mm

569 J: {So I asked the others (.) and the (.) mum (.) one of the mums the one who rung
570 up and said it will my son be safe she rang me on the phone to speak to me about it
571 rather than text she said "Have you been to see a doctor" erm blah blah
572 ((swallows)). Erm she's the SENCO Co-ordinator in another primary school

573 M: {Mm

574 J: {"Have you been to see a doctor? dedederdiderder er we feel that because you're
575 repeating a treat (.) you're basically erm (2) rewarding bad behaviour (.) with a treat
576 so we can't we feel we can't support this" speaking on behalf of the other mum as
577 well

578 M: {Mm

579 J: {"erm but we will review it in September" as if I'm (3) open to their reviews and I
580 thought there's no future for us at this school so I made from that moment on I
581 made (1) erm looked into what can I do to change schools

582 M: {Mm

583 J: {but (.) because there was two boys coming on the Tuesday and Alex I went to the
584 Scouts and asked them if they some of the scouts cubs they beavers or whatever
585 they were then

586 M: {Mm

587 J: {And some came and erm to the point that Ollie's mum, the teacher, texted me a
588 few days afterwards and said "Oh they're nice boys and erm y y is my son old
589 enough to go to cubs?" "Definitely old enough and they're nice it's really inclusive,
590 really good group erm and none of the year 4 boys goes" This is all through text and
591 she said "yes the year 4 boys aren't very nice they've erm shouted unpleasantly to
592 Ollie erm but I'm taking him to some trial days at some other schools" (2) An that's

593 the first I knew of A that there were such things as trial days
594 M: {Mm
595 J: {and B that somebody else was thinking of leaving the school for similar reason
596 and because when I was waiting in that classroom waiting for (.) whatever was
597 going to happen to me I did say to the headteacher at the time (.) because this
598 would be several (.) maybe two exclusions have happened before then
599 M: {Ok
600 J: {so this was going to be another one (1) erm and so I think he was excluded two
601 days for that even though he didn't hurt anybody and he also said "the exclusions
602 are more even though I'm actually not hurting anybody" (2) So that's ((talking into
603 dictaphone)) something else to be aware of
604 M: {{{(laughs))
605 J: {I don't know yunno anyway erm she er (1) and in fact the first exclusion when he
606 was first excluded (3) whatever happened that that kicking and standing and all that
607 sort of stuff
608 M: {Mm
609 J: {when he came home (7) or maybe the first day was something else I can't
610 remember exactly but because Seb brought him home. Seb was asked to collect him
611 and take him home (1) and he was sick (1) on the (1) patio just before getting to the
612 and we only live across the door so and there had been a bout of something going
613 round so his behaviour (.) on that first time (.) could've been (.) certainly (.) affected
614 M: {Mm
615 J: {by not feeling very well (.) erm (2) but damage was done then he was excluded
616 and then that started and we're the first ones ever to be excluded for me a very
617 public humiliation being chair of the PTA and all that sort of stuff
618 M: {Mm
619 J: { Erm anyway getting back to this one so (.) what was I what was I saying about (2)
620 M: The trial days, you were
621 J: {The trial days yes
622 M: {saying
623 J: {yes and yes so she said that about the (.) erm that she was going to do this trial
624 day thing. So that's when I found out cos oh yeah cos (1) in the classroom when I
was

625 waiting for Alex to be brought to me (.) cos he was in the library with the
626 classteacher I did say "wh wh wh what can we do shall we move schools?" (1) and
627 the headteacher "no no there's no point in moving it's in him it will always (2) be
628 wherever he goes" (1) I said "what about Flexi learning" She said "That might work
629 that might work"(2) So then but then with the tea the other mums saying oh well
630 we'll review it September
631 M: {Mhm
632 J: {I thought that is not supporting with play dates and stuff like that so I thought No
633 (1) and the fact that the (.) erm (1) this other child was having trial days that
634 ((inaudible)) out get out of there and my sister who's a psychiatrist, who's she's got
635 issues at the moment but she s got two daughters one of which is ADHD and was
636 being bulie had been bullied in from year 4 an was self-harming she had taken the
637 view (.) not to move schools and it was her biggest regret
638 M: Ok
639 J: So her advice to me was get him out of that school (.) cos she thought her
640 daughter would rise above it and look back on it and say well I I yunno
641 M: {Mm
642 J: Er and her view (2) together with my view is that primary school is not a place for
643 (1) academically talented children because they the school is trying to make
644 everybody feel confident about things and if they're not good at maths (1) it's
645 alright yunno you've got beautiful handwriting or you sing really well or oh that's a
646 lovely picture your picture's going on the wall all that sort of stuff but if you are
647 good at maths (3) maths work doesn't go on the wall
648 M: {ok
649 J: {its not you don't get the same (.) yunno whatever and at the time when her
650 daughter was going through this year 4 5 6 I said (1) no so her daughter is now 15 so
651 5 years ahead of Alex so Alex would have been a baby maybe erm I said yes but
652 academically bright children will have that confidence that they'll be doing alright in
653 the end
654 M: {Mm
655 J: {an erm she's mmm not necessarily (.) her daughter is incredibly academically
656 bright and having a rotten time or did have a rotten time and it's clouded (.) the
657 later times so she's a bit bet having a better time now but then she got ADHD she's

658 er so I'm watching that (1) and thinking (.) what's coming to me
659 M: {Mm
660 J: {And someone one person said yeah well ADHD and ASD different families of er
661 (1) they're not related (1) I don't know I haven't read those sort of books yet but it
662 doesn't matter whether they're related or not you've got two very academically
663 gifted children who are struggling in the in very environment they should be thriving
664 so what (2) is goin on
665 M: {Mm
666 J: {And (.) erm somebody else I met erm who (.) lived round the corner from my
667 mum I met her when she was aged ((puh)) sixty to sixty five (.) she had been a
668 headteacher of an autism school (1) Alex was reading (.) one of the Harry Potter
669 books one of the thick ones, later ones in the same room I ha I ha I've met not met
670 that woman any more times than Alex has
671 M: {Mm
672 J: {Alex was in the same room we were round at mum's there was cups of tea and
673 biscuits Alex was sitting one end of the room reading (.) I was talking to this lady (.)
674 Alex would come forward for a biscuit go back and read and she said (1) "he's not
675 autistic but he's clearly bright" and (1) erm "if it comes to home schooling (.) don't
676 be frightened (.) it might come to it but" she said "you are an intense person and" (.)
677 erm (4) I can't remember my husband being there but I get the strong message that
678 she was saying to my husband (2) if its home schooling with between these two it
679 will be (2) hell basically
680 ((laughter))
681 J: {so brace yourself it's not gonna be nice so even though she said don't be
682 frightened of home schooling and she said I I used to say home schooling's awful
683 you need the socialisa sh but she did say but make sure you keep the socialisation
684 with the football team scouts do that as much as you can out of school so (.) that's
685 one reason why we're still doing all these things
686 M: {Mm
687 J: {another reason is to keep him busy, keep him active, keep him otherwise he
688 won't tire
689 M {Mm
690 J: {so we have to do those things even though (3) and like if there was a kick boxing

691 thing I would send him to that because clearly (.) he's got that (.) motion but I (.)
692 part of me thinks will he become disciplined with it to know only to use it in the kick
693 boxing thing or will it make him absolute brilliant (.) fighting on the streets and
694 joining yunno I how can I be sure (2) I can't be sure but there isn't a kick boxing
695 thing but I if there was one I would go to it but if there was a chess club (.) I would
696 send him there but there isn't a chess club round here an I'm even thinking of
697 setting one up myself but I need to jump through a few hoops first an one of them is
698 attending a chess club somewhere else which means I've got to go somewhere else
699 and I can't because as yunno the ser the yunno (.) When he was at E school we were
700 gonna set one up (.) and that was gonna be it (1) Can't do that now because he's not
701 part (.) of E school the same way (1) Sounds like they might be coming home
702 ((recording stopped while we moved rooms))
703 J: Ok so we then took the view that we were definitely gonna move him er from P
704 School and we (.) chose to go to C school because A it's an outstanding school but
705 more because erm he knew the boys there through the football team and cubs. So I
706 found out about how to do it online and fill out the forms and stuff like that and I
707 contacted the school out of courtesy (1) erm beforehand and I asked to have a
708 meeting with him and Mr Smith the headteacher his first response was (.) look your
709 taking a child out of a small school (.) and bringing him to a small school (.) an it
710 was a budgetary response really I mean he was he was more concerned about the
711 small school I was taking him from knowing what it feels like to lose that
712 M: {Ok
713 J: {budget thing (.) An er I said yes but (1) er its yunno its (.) about the experience for
714 the child an an that sort of thing "Right ok if it's the right thing to do it's the right
715 thing to do" (.) and he had some a trial day I think only one trial day (1) and then
716 erm I had been ringing up so when Alex was in Year 1 so yeah I what I hadn't
717 mentioned on this tape is that when Alex was in reception the Year 6 boys really
718 liked him year 5 and 6 boys really liked him and he had a sort of er I don't know if er
719 he felt elevated above his peers (.) but he had a really nice (1) thing going with them
720 and to the point he invited these boys to his birthday party and I asked th th (.) she's
721 a foster carer actually but the person who looked after Alex when I was at work "is
722 this normal" and she said "weeell it'sss a" this is the thing about the small family
723 school

724 M: {Mm
725 J: {so it worked well for him then (2) but then they left and the ones that replaced
726 him were the ones that were saying no you can't no you can't join in and play in the
727 playground games.
728 M: {Ok
729 J: {So that big difference from being (3) protected, chosen (1) loved
730 M: {Mhm
731 J: {to being ostracised (1) bullied by exclusion that it must be a massive
732 M: {Mm
733 J: {change for anybody and if he's becoming more aware of his surroundings and
734 potentially and I do believe this more aware than others (.) around him were aware
735 (1) he'd think well this is what the world is
736 M: {Yep
737 J: {and er I don't like it much but this is what it is (.) and then the various other
738 things yunno got worse or yunno an he saw for example I told you last time about
739 the headteacher whose eldest child is erm the one that Alex wrestled to the ground
740 er in Alex's year and she would whisper the answer to her and then ask the question
741 of the class and ask her daughter who put her hand up "oh what's the answer oh
742 very good du du du" and Alex was annoyed by this to the point that only (.) this
743 summer I had the opportunity to erm ask my niece who's very (.) the ADH one
744 who's really dramatic and so can make tears in her eyes but she says I can't quite
745 get it roll down my cheek but I can do that she can do that if she thinks hard about
746 something (.) And er I said "you haven't used it to erm get something at school or
747 something like that have you" and she said "no no I haven't" and I said to Alex "ha
748 have you pretended to cry" an he said "no (.) oh once once" And I said "oh o what
749 was that" and he said "well (.) erm the headteacher was taking the lesson and she
750 said "right er whoever puts their hand up first I'll will answer the question" And he
751 shot up yunno when the question comes he shot his hand up and she didn't ask him
752 and there were two or three others put their hands up and then the daughter put
753 her hand up and she started saying H the first letter the daughter's name Helen (.)
754 and Alex ((J mimics crying)) started crying and she said "Oh what's what's up Alex?"
755 an she oh no it wasn't like oh what's up it was "Oh Alex" and he immediately gave
756 the answer

757 M: {{{(laughter)}}

758 J: { sort of stopped crying and immediately gave the answer and he (2) no matter
759 what that illustrates wh wh what was really going on I think that describes
760 everything that he thought (.) was definitely going on the sort of nepotism (1) erm
761 yeah in a big way in his feeling and all that sorta an an he said this (1) wha (.) a full
762 year (1) after it happened

763 M: {Ok

764 J: {having never mentioned it before and I think there's lots of little stories like that.
765 Another one after the (.) erm balloon popping thing at the party (.) I said Alex well er
766 the thing is (2) if it's going on now still going on now you might find yourself in a
767 situation (.) where you might you might get involved in a fight (.) with this boy (1)
768 but brace yourself because (1) erm (1) he may well be supported by the other
769 Casper and you might find yourself fighting against two (2) And he said "I've already
770 done it" And I said "Ooh when di you" ne ne ne (.) Again a year after he was at
771 school I said "Wh what d'ya mean" and he said "well I managed to get myself
772 playing football with them and I had the ball and they tackled me for it but then
773 they continued tackling me even after I didn't have the ball anymore an I did this"
774 And he crossed his hands over his chest and (1) made out his legs kicked out in both
775 directions and he got both of them in the balls he says (1) Now if he did manage to
776 do that (1) oh my goodness what athleticism (.) so I can't really believe he did it but
777 anyway that's what he's telling me he did that but he an he got an then they wen
778 rrrunning rou ran to the teacher (.) or the who on duty and he got into trouble for it
779 and he lost a whole week of playtime for it (.) this is what he says

780 M: {Mm

781 J: {and (.) had to sharpen pencils instead of going out to play and at the end (.) when
782 he went back to play they said to him right don't kick anybody in the balls anymore
783 or some private parts or whatever the situation was now ((swallows)) I don't know if
784 he's made up that story because I can't believe the flying kick getting two at once (1)
785 but (.) it does make me think that if y y you get letters home if they've banged their
786 heads on something or they've fallen over erm (1) or (.) have been slapped in the
787 stomach that might make them later on sick but I think if a child is missing playtimes
788 (1) for an extended period (1) like missing two playtimes I think the parents need to
789 know erm

790 M: and you weren't aware of
791 J: {I wasn't aware
792 M: {any of these
793 J: {No No not of that (1) But I find tha that very hard punishment but this business
794 about sharpening pencils makes me think there is some truth in it because erm I've
795 read somewhere (1) that he likes sharpening pencils (2) and I think C wrote it he
796 liked sharpening pencils (3) And I I find that hard yunno I think I questioned him and
797 he said oh they made me sharpen pencils at P (2) So there's something about
798 sharpening pencils as well. Now if he liked sharpening pencils he'd be doing it at
799 home
800 M: {Mm
801 J: {if he ((inaudible)) yunno he's not sharpening pen whether they've got one of
802 those things ((mimes desk sharpener))
803 M: {Mm Ok
804 J: {I don't know but there's something (.) there (.) Anyway so going back to so year 1
805 we had problems at home (2) in terms of Alex and I were locked horns a bit and I
806 was crying and going to the school and we had change of headteacher change of
807 staff all that sort of stuff but I don't think that was the problem I don't I don't know
808 if the change of the year 6 boys who were lookin up looking out for him might've
809 been a bit of a problem or may I dunno. But certainly I wasn't working an we had
810 less money I was a bit stressed about that an Alex wasn't on the computer wasn't
811 allowed to go on the computer and I thought oer should I let him go on is that what
812 the problem is and headteacher when I went in crying about it she said "well I'm
813 sure you'll be pleased to know we don't see anything like this at school" Went to the
814 G my sister said "go to an ask the GP for a parent go on a parenting course" so I
815 went on a parenting course I didn't like that that much (.) but they did teach us
816 special time (.) so we've done that
817 M: {Mm
818 J: {and I said to Seb you should go on this parenting course as well because we've
819 got to learn the same sort of thing an erm [REDACTED]
820 [REDACTED] (.) yunno then cos they had this pyramid of do you
821 know what I'm talking about the pyram there's a pyramid
822 M: {yeh

823 J: {the bottom bit must be like special time and then (.) erm rewards and so we had
824 like hazelnut jar when good things happen put the hazelnuts (.) they say marble jar
825 we had a hazelnut jar and when it's full then you do something like go swimming
826 together whatever the child wants to do erm so we picked up a few little things like
827 this but then this pyramid (.) the la the top (.) bit (.) is punishment so (.) in other
828 words you've gorra lay the foundations of (.) feeling good

829 M: {Mm

830 J: {and working together and that sort of stuff. So Seb you should go on this course
831 as well an er (.) his was all about eating doughnuts apparently an yunn they had fine
832 dining well not fine dining but that sort of stuff and had a good time whereas ours
833 was quite stressful (.)

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840 ((interview disturbed recording stopped))

841 J: Right so the parenting course (.) erm yeah (.) it was alright an that's why I told Seb
842 he should do it because there's no point in me coming home an me telling him he
843 should do something he'd hear better from (.) somebody else telling him yunno
844 whatever although it seems like they had different (.) methodology of teaching (.)

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856 but anyway then
857 when it all kicked off in year 3 (2) I went back to MAT I wanted to speak to them (.)
858 an they wouldn't speak to me because I hadn't been referred to by school now that
859 cannot be right (1) because they did say yunno Je anytime you need to speak to us
860 Je Je but no th th they were polite
861 M: {Mm
862 J: { but they wouldn't let me (.) I couldn't go furth there's something blocked. So
863 when school said they'd got MAT team involved great I thought marvellous even
864 though I'd made the arrangements to move him to another school I won't tell
865 school that because we'll yunno. So this lady Brenda D she came on one day and she
866 went to the school at 9.00 O Clock an I was invited to join them at 9.30 an the first
867 thing she said to me was "what d'ya wanna gain out this Jenny" An I said "to meet
868 you because I've been trying to contact the MAT team aner actually I've arranged
869 for Alex to go to another school and have some trial days before then but the only
870 trial days they're offering are the day when you're going on a school trip an a day
871 when you're doing a school performance
872 M: {Mm
873 J: {so I'm not sure how I can do this" and so we talked about an then the phone call
874 for the headteacher came through an then she left and she didn't come back and
875 then the erm MAT worker said oh I need to speak to you separately Jenny an I said
876 well I live just across the road we can do it now so we did it now an I showed her
877 things that Alex had written (1) and she said well I'm no expert but I think your (2)
878 cos before this I'd looked at all the bits about (.) autism, ADHD, erm (.) anything I
879 could find my hands on th reading on the net and stuff like that why children were
880 excluded and issues an all the sort of pattern of behaviour and sort of like under
881 autism it would be yes yes yes yes no no not really not really not at all no no no
882 maybe so an th ju cos th that sort of thing was giving all the lists and blurbs
883 M: {Mm
884 J: {but then when I stumbled across gifted (2) it was yes yes yes yes yes yes yes
885 for all the things including the bad things like the tantrums and whatever so I
886 thought ooohh and it said every school will have a gifted policy so ask them for it so
887 I asked school an an the headteacher sent it she said "well it's gonna be edited in a
888 couple of months anyway but (.) this is how it stands" An I looked at C's which was

889 much more specific an erm I thought yeah C's on this an but I thought now we we're
890 moving him schools an I did say to both schools right (2) there's so many reasons to
891 stay at P to do with convenience (1) that it would be could if he could stay (.) but
892 what I'm gonna do is I'm gonna ask both I'm gonna interview interview sort of thing
893 both schools and (.) with the same questions so some of the questions were (2)
894 more reasons to stay at P and some of the questions were more reasons to go

895 M: {Mm

896 J: {I just asked them both the same questions an about the gifted thing ((swallows))P
897 teacher who taught him for two years she said well we can't tell whether he's gifted
898 or not he doesn't write enough down (2) Erm and (.) I'd looked at the Gifted Futures
899 website about gifted and talented children and it describes six different sorts of (.)
900 gifted children but the teacher there said (.) erm (.) sort of (.) she didn't say how
901 dare you but it was a bit like that she said "I've taught gifted children before an I've
902 never seen behaviour like this" An what I told you on the previous time you have to
903 sort of insert this in the right thing about the football (.) game and stuff like that and
904 the Christmas whatever so there was the Christmas lights then the football game
905 between Christmas and new year I went into school an I said "there's something
906 going on between Alex and the year 4 boys" erm (1) an she said then she said "yeah
907 I think I know what it is" Then a week later she said "yeah you're right there is
908 something it's self-policing" An then in February we had a parent evening and she
909 said he's model pupil (.) erm so much better than last year (.) ((Gasp God)) "How
910 bad bad was he last year" "No No last year he was good (1) normal (.) so much
911 better than last year he's listening to adults properly, he's engaging with the
912 conversation he knows what things mean if he gets told off for something an
913 somebody else gets told off next week he's able to tell them what it's for" (.) that
914 also could be (.) like bossy goody two shoes I realise now but anyway that's what
915 they said then. And then in May it was can you ta can you take him to the GP for a
916 second opinion so we did have a period of (1) good

917 M: {Mm

918 J: {except his bit his presentation of his work wasn't good and he was (.) starting to
919 scribble on scribbling on his hands and scribbling on a ruler (2) And the teacher
920 didn't like him scribbling on the ruler so I was (.) an she showed me an there's was
921 just a little an I thought (.) really is that that bad

922 M: {Mm
923 J: {anyway that's (2) different coming at things from a different point of view. So
924 when she said "I've taught gifted children before I've never had this kind of
925 behaviour" (2) Erm an I'd read about the six different sorts of gifted
926 M: {Mm
927 J: {children an er er it was all (.) starting to unravel a bit. Anyway so we decided
928 definitely going to C school and the MAT worker said "well (.) I'm not an expert but
929 looking what he's written" an he's written a story that includes elections and (1)
930 erm about BREXIT she said "this isn't what most 9 year olds are writing" or would he
931 be 8 then anyway whatever age he was
932 M: {Mm
933 J: [Year 3 (2) She said "I think (.) he might be gifted and the money that coul erm
934 that P is trying to access for teaching autistic child they should get for accessing to
935 tea gifted child ((Intake of breath)) An I said well what I really want is for him to
936 meet other children like him because I think which is what I started off with (.) that
937 loneliness
938 M: {Mm
939 J: {and avoiding that loneliness and just knowing that your not the only one like this
940 (1) there are others (.) somewhere. So erm (2) an she said oh there is a group er I
941 think there's a group in North East Shire there used to be I'll look it into it ((Intake of
942 breath)) then we moved to C we were meant to have an appointment with her and
943 the headteacher before half term which we didn't (.) We I stalked her basically I
944 rang her, I texted her and then I went and parked outside her office and walked
945 towards it and she came out for lunch and so I said we're meant to be having a
946 meeting at some point an she said "Oh yeh yeh yeh"
947 M: {Was this the MAT worker
948 J: {Yeh
949 M: {Ok
950 J: {so we made an appointment for the week after half term (1) an at that point he
951 had kicked (.) somebody in the last week when the PE teacher so I told you this
952 before but I'll tell you again so PE obviously was a trigger point in P
953 M: {Mm
954 J: {because e everything and she's an experienced teacher she should've known

955 about sixty but she should have worked it out (.) but anyway unfortunate (.)
956 combination of things. An even at P there's a chess set which I didn't agree to be
957 there, outdoor one an I thought it wouldn't get used it was hardly ever used. I said
958 to the teacher "well could you put the chess set out does that ever go out"? an it
959 was "oh no no y we could put that out" Two weeks later I said to Alex "has the chess
960 set been out" And he said "N oh yeah (.) I only noticed when they were putting it
961 away" I said "oh who's playing with it" An he said "oh year 4 boys" Which meant of
962 course he wouldn't play with it ((swallows)) He said "but they weren't using the
963 Knight pro correctly" (.) So an he didn't feel he could be part of well this is how you
964 use it or anything like that. So even though they were putting the chess set out
965 almost that they were pressed by me they didn't check that it was there for Alex to
966 use if he wanted to (.) Yunno he was it was just falling between stalls so many places
967 I believe
968 M: {Mm
969 J: {{{Intake of breath}} Erm anyway (.) so C (.) he liked the PE teacher and everything
970 was fine (.) but the PE teacher was a stand in PE teacher and the last week of th that
971 first half term the real one came in took the lesson it was football (2) Alex was
972 Goalie which he is in the football team and he was cold because he wasn't doing
973 anything because the other team weren't really scoring so he said to somebody on
974 his outdoor outside school football team who likes being in the goal as well "D'ya
975 wanna swap cos I'm gettin cold"
976 M: {Mm
977 J: {when it was a goal had just been scored so they were waiting so he's waiting for
978 the whistle to blow to say yes kick off again an er while they're having this
979 conversation the boy didn't even answer I don't think (.) a ball came over and Alex
980 conceded it and he was annoyed by this cos he thought the only two people who
981 could do that one was the chap in goal at the other end (2) and the other one was
982 the teacher and he thought the teacher did it. Who obviously said something that
983 the teacher didn't appreciate so he was banished in some way
984 M: {Mm
985 J: {An erm an then the ball rolled towards him an he held onto it and wouldn't let it
986 go an then he was sort of sent to face the wall (2) So real humiliation and on the
987 way out when they're doin that he kicked somebody who's on his team out of

988 school so it's not a personal thing (.) cos one of the things he did at P one of the
989 things was (.) he was told off for not (.) responding when his name was called and
990 three times he didn't respond (2) And he had to go and put his name on a
991 humiliating thing on the yunno sort of sun cloud white cloud that thing. His name
992 wasn't there so he had to they told him to write his name on the board, he wrote it
993 thre threw the pen, not at anyone, threw it, could've hit anybody, didn't

994 [REDACTED]

995 [REDACTED]

996 [REDACTED]

997 [REDACTED]

998 [REDACTED]

999 [REDACTED]

1000 [REDACTED]

1001 M: {Mm

1002 J: {so there's but he yunno (.) to be told off because he hadn't listened when his
1003 name was called (3) it it spiralled

1004 M: {Yeh

1005 J: {it's escalated from nothing

1006 M: {Yeh

1007 J: {and to an element of humiliation involved as well and I think there's a pattern
1008 there and having all that unfairness with the nepotism and not being allowed to join
1009 in the playground it all sort of a big melting pot of WHAT I think

1010 M: {Mm

1011 J: {An then when we put an offer on a broken down house there (.) and he thought
1012 oh my goodness I can put up with the nepotism I can put up with the bullying by
1013 exclusion but please don't take away the only home I've got and move to
1014 somewhere where the door doesn't even shut

1015 M: {{{(laughs)}}

1016 J: {What you doing you crazy parents so that was the final

1017 M: {Mm

1018 J: {straw apparently (.) So we found out later(.) Anyway we moved school to C (1)
1019 liked the PE teacher but then the old PE teacher came back he didn't like him. And
1020 then PE was a bit of a trigger and erm (1) the MAT worker did say when he'd kicked

1021 somebody at from th that first time she said well if it was anybody else we wouldn't
1022 even be talking about it because this sort of quite normal occasional things like this
1023 It's just that we're watching it yunno (.) intensely
1024 M: {right
1025 J: {so not worry and at that point I said yunno (.) Oh no not then cos then the class
1026 teacher made reference to the fact that a lot of people were leaving (1) the class an
1027 I was surprised cos at the time I thought she was good teacher an she was "N yeh I
1028 don't know why either" An erm but it meant there was an odd number in the class
1029 (.) and whereas there had been four boys (2) including Alex who could pair up (1)
1030 together (.) because one girl had left (.) the tomboy girl who partnered that girl (.)
1031 then wanted to partner one of the boys and then Alex was the odd number and I
1032 mentioned that at one of the meetings we had in February and or January February
1033 and she made a note of oh sensitive to not being er to being the left one out and
1034 then she had this er erm (.) random (1) way of (.) identifying somebody who could
1035 be the left the one who didn't pair up but it wasn't like (.) pick your name out of a
1036 straw out yunno and then that's you you've had your go at being on your own
1037 M: {Mm
1038 J: {an then when everybody's had a we'll start again. It was computer generated
1039 which meant it Alex was, Alex noticed that he was picked more often and others
1040 hadn't been picked at all. So that didn't help and then they went on a school trip
1041 and Alex (.) wasn't sitting next to somebody on the way. Which I think was unsensi
1042 insensitive of her because she could've (.) managed who how many people sat on
1043 the back seat to make it be partners everywhere else. An he worked out who's an
1044 he'd arranged to sit next to somebody on the way back but because there was a bee
1045 in the bus she just herded them all on just sit down sit down sit down and Alex was
1046 sitting on his own again. And she said "well he er erm he didn't like the fact that
1047 when we got off the bus (.) I told them to walk in single file and some people were
1048 still walking in pairs an he he got a bit narked about that but then ((inaudible)) I
1049 gave him an iPad and he seemed quite happy with that" And on the way back I said
1050 how what did you do an he said "oh it was just me, the bee and the iPad an yunno
1051 and when the bus stopped (.) bee flew out at C I think" So he was quite sort of
1052 resigned to this is his lot in life I think
1053 M: {Mm

1054 J: {which is not really nice.
1055 M: {No
1056 J: {Anyway but the worst thing in C was that Mrs Pear who was the who is the erm
1057 teacher for Key Stage 1 so all the other children (.) have been gone through her
1058 lessons and stuff like that
1059 M: {Mm
1060 J: {and know her what she's like so if somebody thought that a teacher was a dragon
1061 or something like that then they might have learnt other oh just yunno
1062 M: {Mm
1063 J: {that's what she's like just put up with it but Alex hadn't gone through all of that
1064 with her and he was allowed to play football in the playground and so he did play
1065 football in the playground an they had preference of balls and stuff like that and
1066 there was a girl called Molly B in Alex's year who's very clever, very competitive and
1067 they'd had issues with competitive nature before we'd even arrived at the school so
1068 there's something going on there and she was flexi schooled and did some
1069 gymnastics out of school don't know what the full story was since we've I've been
1070 told that her parents gave a lot of gifts to Mrs Pear I don't know if that makes any
1071 difference or if indeed it's true I think it probably is true but (.) Whatever anyway
1072 erm (1) Molly was playing with a ball (.) in the playground a yellow ball the boys
1073 were playing with a yellow ball playing football and a yellow ball rolled towards Mrs
1074 Pear who was on duty at the time she kicked it back to the boys cos that's where
1075 she thought it came from an she maintains "I know what I saw at the playground"
1076 Anyway Molly decided she didn't want to play with the ball anymore (.) Maybe
1077 that's the one that rolled towards Mrs Pear and she kicked it back to the boys I don't
1078 know but anyway she st so the boys end up with both balls and then after a bit
1079 Molly decided she did want the ball back. So she went and Alex had the good ball in
1080 his hand and she said "oh I'd like my ball back" an he said "that's yours over there
1081 you can have that one" and she said "no I want that one" Cos there's a little mark
1082 on one of them that identifies which one's the good one. And "no no n this was out
1083 here I'm gonna go and tell Mrs Pear you won't give me my ball back" (.) So she did
1084 and Mrs Pear came and she asked Alex to give that ball to Molly and Alex threw it
1085 out the playground and Mrs Pear sent another boy to go and get it which he did and
1086 she brought Molly and Alex into inside (.) and the boy brought the ball and he sort

1087 of gently (1) tossed it to Mrs Pear close distance for her to take it and she gently
1088 tossed it to Alex and asked him to give it to Molly and sai so was expecting that
1089 gently tossed an Molly's arms were already waiting for it and at the last Alex
1090 maintains that at the last minute she crossed her hands and it bounced off her
1091 elbow and it hit her face and he was excluded for throwing a ball in her face (.)
1092 When I went to collect him Mrs Pear was all ((mimes gasping)) agitated and like this
1093 an er I said "well (2) erm there was some dispute about whether the boys had had
1094 the ball which ball the boys had had an an she said "I know what I saw I know what I
1095 saw". And I said "well it's easy just ask the other boys which ball they had" and she
1096 said "oh well (.) they were backing up Alex but that's what they do"(1) So I think
1097 you've going from Mrs James the headteacher at P and her nepotism with her
1098 daughter (1) and then you've got Mrs Pear and Alex had been told to stay away
1099 from Molly B and (.) but Molly B hadn't been told to stay away from Alex and then
1100 Mrs Pear bringing them together and making Alex give Molly something that he
1101 maintains wasn't

1102 M: {Mm

1103 J: {right anyway it's furthering that message that (.) adults in charge are (.) wrong
1104 ((Intake of breath)) So he's lost respect for them and anyway (.) ultimately I can't it
1105 was all a bit of a mish mash [REDACTED]
1106 [REDACTED]
1107 [REDACTED]
1108 [REDACTED]
1109 [REDACTED]

1110 Anyway so erm he got
1111 expelled they tried to expel him from C but then changed it to and we'd already
1112 range we'd already thought Mrs after that incident with the ball, if Mrs Pear isn't
1113 going to listen to the other boys as well as Alex whe what is the future here so we
1114 moved to S School where those two other boys had gone from P

1115 M: {Mm

1116 J: {and the headteacher there could see that "oh Alex Alex yeah" so there was no
1117 issue. She was a bit concerned if we still lived next door to Daniel that Daniel and
1118 Alex couldn't escape each other from being at school

1119 M: {Mm

1120 J: {and there (.) But I said "well we've moved that's not a" "oh right ok that's fine
1121 then" ((Swallows)) Anyway ((Intake of breath)) so they started erm he started no
1122 school then we had some trial days we did one trial day and my idea was to have
1123 lots of trial days so that come September they'd all know each other and that sort of
1124 stuff

1125 M: {Mhm

1126 J: {and even the raft race I'd got tickets so that we could pair em up they could pair
1127 themselves up how the kids wanted to pair up an an we had three rafts but in the
1128 end no we couldn't do that we couldn't match people we couldn't yunno because I
1129 wasn't given access to them diderdiderdiderdider an erm the other parents weren't
1130 interested and even I said to the headteacher can I know GDPR can you give them
1131 my details for them to contact me and we'll try and do something but it didn't work
1132 (.) so none of that so when Alex was going to the pupil referral unit because they did
1133 a managed move to S which involved going through pupil referral unit and Mr Oscar
1134 there said he shouldn't even be here (.) He's mainstream appropriate an he
1135 maintained that an n n it all started in October (.) cos he did a term in (1) so that July
1136 ter half term he was at pupil referral unit half the time i.e. morning or afternoon (3)
1137 erm morning morning and then afternoon being taught by Individual Programmes in
1138 the afternoon at er XXXX library but when we looked at the work later it was very
1139 very easy stuff like copying over a handwritten poem several times very very simple.
1140 Anyway we lost the folder from that so then when we in the October when we had
1141 to start doing it again he had to do the work again (1) Which yunno bit of an
1142 anathema but at the same time I did say to Individual Programmes "have you got
1143 any reports for us any school report stuff" "Oh yeah we've had some tests done an y
1144 you'd be amazed" Now we wouldn't be amazed because what I haven't told on this
1145 tape the way I'm (.) telling this story out of order in February because of the gifted
1146 thing (.) and I got in touch with Gifted Futures who said "oh yes this is typical
1147 pattern this is typical yeh yeh an the bullying as well yeh all of that yeh yeh this is
1148 absolutely typical of gifted children" she said " you really need to have him
1149 assessed" ((Intake of breath)) looked into the assessment it's expensive did get a
1150 grant towards it erm and Brenda D said "No you must never do that you must not
1151 do that no because he'll get a low (.) score because he's not in a good place at the
1152 moment an his self-esteem" An I said "kids like this apparently like this sort of day

1153 it's a full day" "Oh no no" Anyway headmaster said "when d'ya wanna go you can
1154 have the day off that's fine" And (.) but not within the MAT worker's hearing so she
1155 was all "no no we agreed that you weren't ever gone do this" sorta thing and then
1156 "well no headmaster says we can have the day off" Anyway he did enjoy it It was
1157 the Friday before the SATs week (2) The SATS were done He did (1) he enjoyed the
1158 SATs week cos it's quiet an you just get on with the work. The results came back th
1159 this 9 year old was reading as a sixteen year old doing maths age 10 to 13 and I said
1160 to the headteacher because I'd previously said to the headteacher "how bright is
1161 Alex?" (.) and he said so bearing in mind P said "well we can't we can't do any tests
1162 because because he doesn't write anything enough down" He said "he'll probably
1163 achieve what he needs to achieve by the end of the day ((interruption)) Erm an I said
1164 "rea by the end of the year really?"
1165 ((Recording interrupted to move rooms))
1166 J: Right ok so I was saying about saying to Mr Smith "how bright is he" and he said
1167 he will achieve he'll probably achieve what he needs to achieve by the end of the
1168 year"
1169 M: {Mm
1170 J: {an I said well surely he's already done that. He said "well he'll probably exceed
1171 what he needs to achieve by the end of the year" An I said "mmmmm" an he said
1172 "he's an he's an able child (.) in an able class if he was in an inner city class school
1173 maybe it would be different" or it would be more noticeable or some some
1174 M: {Mm
1175 J: {phrasing like that (2) Then the results came back an I said "what d'ya think of the
1176 result"s An he said "well it's a long report" (1) 31 pages "Well he's erm (2) he's an
1177 unusual child (1) He likes tests he performs well in tests he can do stuff we didn't
1178 even know he could do (2) an then in the afternoon he was expelled (1) So I ((sigh))
1179 my experience is (2) so overshadowed by what I perceive to be (2) erm lack of (4) er
1180 observation (1) of what Alex was doing so his whole experience of the playground
1181 (1) that ball (2) erm (3) understa spea any adult that could speak to him an an try an
1182 work with (.) him Mr Smith did try an erm (.) engage with him he did er (.) ask Alex
1183 an a couple of other boys to help sweep the snow an stuff like that an he did
1184 recognise that Alex liked Harry Potter an when they had a film week or whatever it
1185 was he did save the poster of Harry Potter films and give it to Alex but (2) Things like

1186 they I asked them to set up a chess club or a (.) model making club or a Harry Potter
1187 club to keep him busy in th cos they were saying what happens something happens
1188 in the playground he gets agitated by it an it carries on through into the school in
1189 the afternoon

1190 M: {Mm

1191 J: {{{Intake of breath an er but the chess he beat everybody but he tailored his game
1192 to how he was playing against people so people who were didn't know how to play
1193 (1) and some er e then he wou he would play much more gently an he didn't have
1194 to be (1) vigorous or whatever

1195 M: {Mm

1196 J: {there's one boy James who did know how to play and they played hard together
1197 an an Alex beat him an anoth Robert erm hates board games and he played against
1198 Alex and Alex said to me "oh I'll tell you something that happened to" when we
1199 were listening to Chris Evans what happened what did you do for the first time
1200 yesterday "I'll tell you something that happened to me for the first time yesterday I
1201 lost a game of chess" I said "oooh who's that against" an he said "Robert" I said
1202 "Robert Robert doesn't even like board games how did that happen" He said "well it
1203 went on for ages well in fact we didn't finish In fact he went to the toilet twice
1204 during yunno one of the times it's his go" I said "twice" he said "yeh I went with him
1205 once an when we came back my queen was gone" and one of his friends said
1206 "ohhhh cr oo what a shame Alex's queen's gone" He said "but I didn't put it back"
1207 (1) Yunno because he felt he could win

1208 M: {Mm

1209 J: {without it an er but they didn't finish the game and the teacher wouldn't take a
1210 photograph of the board so she said "just go on who's taken the most pieces" (.)
1211 and Robert had taken the most pieces so erm he was down as winning and (1) yet (.)
1212 that did not spill into the afternoon

1213 M: Mhm

1214 J: So I think that shows some element of (.) understanding an yunno easy goingness
1215 or whatever so but Alex did say well if I beat James who's beaten everybody and I
1216 beat him (1) that must mean that I've won (.) the league or something but he was
1217 expelled before that happened. He wrote a poem to go into a poem book that was
1218 (.) not really directly to do with school but (.) a lot of them did it an then it would be

1219 who was published got a pencil Alex left and was not given the pencil even though it
1220 was around to be given to him (.) Never came even though we were on C's books all
1221 the way through till the next October or something
1222 M: Ok
1223 J: An then what else well these little badges that you can get bronze silver gold for
1224 good behaviour erm he got his bronze an then he was the second boy in his class to
1225 get silver. Robert got it first an got it yunno the next assembly. Alex got it a day after
1226 that but didn't get it for few days cos the headteacher was always busy an then th
1227 th we it was happened to be a fundraising Saturday headteacher wasn't busy asked
1228 for it then got it. So he didn't get the adulation or not that I think particularly Alex
1229 would want that but its (.) just the same message (.) other people are adored and
1230 praised and whatever an you're not (1) Whatever you've achieved is not really
1231 worth anything (.) we won't mention it
1232 M: {Ok
1233 J: {but we'll just keep putting out all these bad things and saying more about them.
1234 So like one of the erm times that there was trouble an he was excluded (.) PE lesson
1235 (2) something happened (4) he was crawling, the teachers tell me he was climbing
1236 the out the inside of the (.) the wall the chain link fence or what whatever it is. They
1237 have to walk outside that mugger, along a public footpath and then into the school
1238 down the corridor, go to get their clothes that they've left in the corridor an then
1239 come back an er go upstairs and change if they're a boy straight across change in
1240 the classroom if they're a girl (1) Alex says that after that lesson when he had a
1241 female teacher and the male PE teacher he was walking at the back the teachers led
1242 it (1) he was swinging his sweatshirt arm which he's done before walked into the
1243 school swing walking forward with his sweatshirt arm going round a girl had got her
1244 PE her clothes and was walk crossing this path of other children walking into the go
1245 to the classroom to change (1) she collided with this moving sweatshirt arm (.) So
1246 she should've stopped Alex should've stopped but neither of them did and Alex was
1247 excluded for that. But I'm saying why if he was so awful in the lesson how come he
1248 was (.) walking at the back on his own erm or even if even if he's got that wrong why
1249 was wasn't a teacher walking next to him an yunno was say stop swinging that Alex
1250 or yunno whatever
1251 M: {Mm

1252 J: {the situation
1253 M: {Mm
1254 J: {th th there's so many holes there. An when I've asked the school "w yunno what
1255 happened what happened" Mmmmmm flimsy things come back lay much later an
1256 its just not (1) good enough to (1) for me to believe them
1257 M: Ok
1258 J: An they say oh Alex lies an er (2) it's just not enough yunno th th there's gaps t
1259 here there's gaps there an being inexperienced now I'm more experienced bit more
1260 an I cos I part of me thinks is this all gonna happen when he's in year 7 and 8
1261 M: {ok
1262 J: {so at the moment he's being taught out of school (.) so today while you we've
1263 been er taping this we've had an incidence where Alex's come home from with Seb
1264 from XXXXX he's done a bit of writing (.) For some reason it probably be cos he
1265 probably thinks I've done the writing I'm entitled to go on the computer even
1266 though we haven't got time to go on the computer because you're going to
1267 athletics. Erm that might be what's (2) is this this timing thing you asked about does
1268 he have a timetable (1) Not as such (2) or not at all (2) but its same th er because its
1269 like we have to go somewhere on Wednesday for climbing an he knows its
1270 Wednesday now because it used to be Wednesday cubs an cubs has moved an now
1271 he's a scout and scouts on Friday so e can yunno is is an he's an an even me when
1272 I'm saying why did we move that an he said because of cub yunno he knows all
1273 M: {Mm
1274 J: {the issues and it's not been a problem before
1275 M {I'm just thinking looking at what you've said and I'm trying to make sense
1276 J: {yeah
1277 M: {of the moves so
1278 J: {Yeah
1279 M: {P,
1280 J: {C
1281 M: {C
1282 J: {S
1283 M: {S
1284 J: {and now E well E

1285 M: {E so
1286 J: {and now nowhere
1287 M: and now nowhere so
1288 J: {{{stutter}} I think E officially. He's still on roll at E
1289 M: Ok (.) So what happened at E?
1290 J: At E (.) So we were only at E from January (.) So P till the end of year 3. C for most
1291 of year 4 but er the last half term he was still on their books but was managed move
1292 to S
1293 M: {Ok
1294 J: {using Individual programmes an pupil
1295 M: {Yeah
1296 J: {referral unit. Then started S (1) a week later than everybody else and only a
1297 couple of mornings an then an an and it only lasted till the 10th of October (2) but
1298 taught by (2) PRU in the afternoon nurture thing (1) Which Alex liked cooking, rats,
1299 games (.) [REDACTED]
1300 but that's because erm because what happened at S ((clears throat)) (1) he had to
1301 write a story of his of his
1302 choice an the girl next to him decided to write about unicorns he told her all
1303 unicorns are dead she laughed to begin, she may have laughed to begin with, but he
1304 pushed it an then she cried and then from that (.) ended up with him sittin so that's
1305 upstairs classroom ended up sitting up downstairs under a table spitting and rocking
1306 and rocking the table with his head that's why it was rocking he was moving the
1307 table with his head, reading. The TA who'd been assigned to him to yunno move
1308 around with him cos he needs extra support an scaffolding
1309 M: {Mm
1310 J: {an attention so even her being there made no difference. She said to me
1311 ((coughs)) he says he when he gets in the car he's gonna take off his seatbelt and
1312 jump onto the road (1) So this a busy part of the A6 we had to walk to the car to
1313 begin with and he I thought mmmmmmm but I don't think he will. We had to walk
1314 on a bit of a ginnell first where there's no cars and he was silly but he got to the
1315 bottom before me, to the A6, he waited for me an then walking from there to the
1316 [REDACTED]
1317 [REDACTED]

1318 [REDACTED]

1319 [REDACTED]

1320 I said get in an we're either gonna get some new shoes or go for a run (.) which I
1321 never do erm thinking he needed energy out but (.) he said get some shoes well I
1322 still went past where we could park (.) to go for a run which meant we went past C
1323 school. He ducked as low as he could this when we went past the school cos he
1324 didn't want anybody seeing that he was out of school during school time when we
1325 went past C an I'd been a bit insensitive not realising that might happen (2) "Why
1326 you come up here?" "Because we still might park and go for a run but there's no
1327 parking space so I'll carry on" "O I didn't know this road led to here" From that
1328 moment on absolutely fine

1329 M: {Mm

1330 J: {{{(coughs)}} but never went back to C er S erm but that evening (2) Pupil Referral
1331 Unit Mr Oscar had already preorganised a meeting with headteacher at S and us (.)
1332 An he said "I understand th I feel like communication's broken down between
1333 school and home so yunno do you trust them? You're lucky that he's in school" blah
1334 blah, blah blah, blah blah and we took he kept telling us how we've gotta trust
1335 school trust school an the reason that communication had broken down is because
1336 about homework and the homework was (.) you had to do (1) well a sheet with say
1337 KIRFS, Spelling, week list, year list an then choose something from this grid. So I
1338 didn't know what a KIRF was, we didn't have a weekly spelling list, I could see the
1339 yearly spelling list. We'd had this is like the third or fourth week we'd had had one
1340 weeks spelling list which was trout round those sorts of words and the other thing
1341 there was a grid you could choose things to do or you could do more than one if you
1342 wanted to (.) Obviously Alex wasn't in school all of the time so somethings he didn't
1343 know what they were because we hadn't done those lessons but there was some
1344 general things like look up Canada (.) some facts about Canada

1345 M: {Mm

1346 J: {But one of the thing they had erm something city Media City (2) some computer
1347 programme that you can learn through

1348 M: {Mm

1349 J: {an erm (1) Education City it might be anyway (.) And one of the things was have a
1350 go at some French games in erm on (.) Education City. So (.) we we got the

1351 password we went onto it an first question was what year (.) Well Alex was year 5
1352 then so we put year fffffive even though (.) his French won't be year 5 but (.) let's
1353 see what happens. Then games wasn't an option but play was an option so we
1354 clicked on play and it had automatically came up with some random questions
1355 which Alex decided was about wardrobe and I worked really hard to try and answer
1356 these multiple choice questions and Alex said "thank goodness you're here thanks
1357 mum for doing this with me" An I said "we're doin it wrong something we've done
1358 wrong here" So I went in and I asked about the homework an I said "what's KIRF?"
1359 An she said "Key Incident Recall Far Facts It's at the front of the book" Certainly on
1360 the front of the book there was maths Key Incident Recall Facts but it wasn't called a
1361 KIRF and so I said "Oh oh right ok" An she said "anyway he should take he should
1362 pay attention to the lessons and take control of his own homework and pay
1363 attention an d d d d d it's his responsibility". An I said "right spelling lists" she
1364 said "there's the yearly spelling" I said "yes I can see the yearly spelling list at the
1365 front of the book, weekly spelling list we've only had one in the last three weeks and
1366 that was round trout" an she said "well that's not even for his level" (1) An I said "an
1367 then doin this grid" I said "we chose to do French" an she said "level three
1368 activities" what he should've done an I said "well it doesn't say that on there" "He
1369 should listen he should listen in the lesson" So I said to Alex he said "I haven't had a
1370 French lesson cos they're in the afternoons an I'm only there in the mornings" An I
1371 asked the teacher to confirm that cos it's a different teacher an she said "oh yeah
1372 but we can put French in the morning if you want" I said "no it's not that it's about
1373 who's telling the truth an that sort of stuff"
1374 M: {Mm
1375 J: {an erm so I thought if the if the headteacher of a class of a school with 18 kids in
1376 it (1) one of which is this managed move can't follow what's goin on (.) well this is
1377 not gonna work
1378 M: {Mm
1379 J: {Anyway so we had this meeting in the an the erm (.) Mr Oscar saying look yunno
1380 you've got to trust the school trust the school you're lucky to be in a school blah b
1381 blah blah an erm (1) an he said until yunno (.) er there's reference to when the
1382 managed move finishes yunno wwwhen the managed move finishes then we can do
1383 cer An I said "well when does it finish" and we looked at her and she said "well

1384 actually (2) tomorrow I'm deciding whether to stop it" (2) And Mr Oscar said "Oh (3)
1385 right (2) mm ok well that will make it different but tomorrow" She said "Yeh" "Well
1386 at least that's quick we can know tomorrow" So the next day I slept on it an I
1387 thought this isn't the right school for us anyway. It's too cramped physically, there's
1388 no year 6 to look up to, there's no bright children, there's a lot of ASD ((swallows))
1389 but I'm not sure and Gifted Futures stresses of the six different sorts of bright
1390 children (.) one of them is twice exceptional where they have giftedness and
1391 something else which could be dyslexia, could be ASD, could be whatever an they
1392 said if you're in that situation make sure you're taught somewhere where they
1393 recognise both (1) traits
1394 M: {Mm
1395 J: {because (.) dealing with one and not the other (2) is gonna lead to disaster (1) So
1396 at the most (.) if Alex is ASD we've got to address the giftedness as well
1397 M: {Mhm
1398 J: {If he's not ASD we have to address the giftedness so I'm pushing that an now (2)
1399 now it's being listened to and the fact that we had those tests done and the fact
1400 that Individual Programmes did similar tests and came with similar (.) results shows
1401 that (2) we're not biased, wrong (2) yunno
1402 M: {Mm
1403 J: {all those sort of things
1404 M: {Mm
1405 J: {it backs that up and now it's being taken seriously (2) erm an they're teaching
1406 him at his level if he (1) can be bothered to engage with a teacher again because
1407 he's got himself into a situation where he thinks puh they're all rubbish (.) not
1408 another one
1409 M: {Ok
1410 J: {not another one so the advocate who MAT worker has put us onto Alex won't
1411 even see him an he he's been three times now the first time ((swallows)) he
1412 accepted that Alex might not wanna see him. The second time he tried an he said
1413 how's it gettin on with school how you thinkin about this an erm I thought you're
1414 not talking to him in the way he wants to be spoken to (.) but eventually they
1415 started talking about hamsters an they looked something up an they had a
1416 relationship and that was fine. So the next time Alex just couldn't be bothered to

1417 wouldn't come down and thi (1) the advocate said to me I said "oh the hamster
1418 stuff one of the stuff hat you ordered yunno together (1) one's come and one
1419 hasn't" And he said "oh was it the lead" Cos they're looking up a hamster lead
1420 yunno
1421 M: {Mm
1422 J: {To walk the hamster an I said (2) "you decided that the sizes was too too big an it
1423 wasn't suitable for a hamster that wasn't one of the things that you were" An I'm
1424 thinking this is advocate he's meant to be paying attention to what Alex thinks it's
1425 the same again it's not paying attention
1426 M: And where's this advocate from? How where's this bit in?
1427 J: {Erm so E (.) school asked for family support worker which comes from the MAT
1428 team to get involved and she got the advocate who is paid for by county council but
1429 not answerable to (1) education or social care or
1430 M: {ok
1431 J: {anything like that (.) But he (.) So I called Alex several times and Chris from erm
1432 Outside Teachers who's teaching Alex now (.) or he's the headteacher
1433 M: {Mm
1434 J: {He said (1) I'd rather it was slow. I want (.) don't offer Alex any incentive to come
1435 to our lessons I want to know when he's genuinely wants to come. Erm an because
1436 there'll come a point where he won't be able to hel hopefully there'll come a point
1437 where he can't help himself but be involved. Erm (3) er he said he doesn't if he'd if
1438 he don't wanna come down fine, don't push it, don't push it. So that was my (.) own
1439 attitude towards Paul not pushing it. So I asked Alex to come down when Paul
1440 arrived. I asked him to come down after Paul had read the EHCP an I asked him to
1441 come down when erm (3) a little bit after that. An Alex said he would come down in
1442 a couple of minutes but he didn't. An I had a (1) I expected that I shouldn't be a part
1443 of this but I coul an I had somebody else to come round to talk to me about the
1444 pantomime I'm doing and the
1445 M: {Mm
1446 J: {choreography. So we were doing that in there Paul was sitting here Alex was
1447 upstairs in his bedroom reading, dressed. Erm (2) an then Paul went an called him
1448 from the bottom of the stairs an I heard Paul use the word rude. Now I don't know
1449 whether he said (1) it's rude not to come or that's rude or it's a bit rude not to come

1450 I don't know but I said to a I said to Alex "what did you say to him" He said "I didn't
1451 say anything" So an then Paul said "well I don't think he's comin so I'll erm I'll try
1452 once more" But when I'd gone up an asked Alex to come down, Alex said just tell
1453 him what erm I'm happy with y whatever you say mum (.) whatever you say,
1454 whatever you think, whatever you say, whatever you think I'm happy for you to be
1455 my advocate
1456 M: Okay
1457 J: {So anyway so school wise so S finished on the 10th an that was the unicorn
1458 incident yhe meeting was on the 10th. I then contacted school the next day on the
1459 11th to say (.) I tried to contact school but couldn't speak to the headteacher I spoke
1460 to Harriet B the erm SEN CO Fundery person who's sorting out the funding between
1461 C an the managed move an yunno
1462 M: {Mhm
1463 J: {all that sort of stuff. An I said please get the message to the school that I will not
1464 take it personally if she cancels the managed move because I don't want it to
1465 continue an I contacted somebody else Individual Programmes I think to let them
1466 know
1467 M: Mm
1468 J: Anyway the next day I got a phone call from school the headteacher to say just to
1469 let you know I've decided to th that we will continue with it. An I said "Oh well I've
1470 decided not to" An she said "Oh why" an I said "well I think it's not your fault but
1471 the school's small, the playground's small there's no Year 6 (.) he's not got the sense
1472 of belonging, it's too late now, missed it, it should've been in earlier an whatever.
1473 An I just don't think it's working, I don't think it's gonna work now" An she said "oh
1474 well I was only keepin it on so that you could keep the pla the place at Pupil Referral
1475 Unit" (.) An erm Pupil Referral Unit kept being a place all the way (.) He was then
1476 being taught by Individual Programmes who that's when they wanted us to redo the
1477 work because the file had been lost
1478 M: {Right
1479 J: { Erm and that then the money ran out on around about the 5th of November sort
1480 of time. I stopped work why I did stop work but I first of all took parental leave for
1481 five weeks (2) to try and sort it out because I expected (1) Lilly James to ring me bler
1482 because Mr Oscar had said the county council "will let you know which school they

1483 have chosen for you him" An I wasn't hearing a thing an I tried to contact Lilly James
1484 an she wasn't replying an then I bumped into somebody who I knew was a (1)
1485 SENCO worker because I'd seen her when I was a dinner lady at B an she had links
1486 with P an I said "do you remember Alex" an she said "course I remember Alex
1487 because I've been helping with Casper R (2) An then she said it's not for Lilly James
1488 to contact you with school you've got to find a school (1) An then somebody else
1489 said why don't you try E they don't exclude (1) Went to E for trial days in the last
1490 week of the Christmas term (2) Alex liked it
1491 M: {Mm
1492 J: {he called it the second-best school in the world and (.) then he started properly in
1493 January (1) erm (2) the pupil referral unit place was kept open apparently until
1494 Easter but actually it wasn't (1) They did stop it after a couple of weeks when Alex
1495 didn't go anymore
1496 M:{ ok
1497 J: {didn't need to he was full time at E. The day one that I collected him from
1498 January Alex was in tears before we'd even left the village why because somebody
1499 kicked him in the face "How did they do that your tall" "Somebody else held me in a
1500 headlock then somebody else kicked me in the face" Now me as a dinner lady at B I
1501 know we have to stand in certain places so that we can see there and see there
1502 M: {Mm
1503 J: {an somebody else is there an they can see there an the yunno (.) And yet when I
1504 was collecting Alex when he had an enforced timetable at E (1) in erm par part time
1505 timetable in February I would collect him at lunchtime there was one member of
1506 staff in the front playground which was shaped like a big capital letter E so there's
1507 bits yunno if you wa could see them you couldn't see what was goin over there an
1508 sometimes the ball went into the road an he came out (.) an got the ball and
1509 brought it in. So I know it's again that not observing
1510 M: {Mm
1511 J: {properly and seeing what was going on. Anyway he chose to stay in most
1512 lunchtimes and most playtimes and play on the computer. He had a friend there
1513 which helped enormously and (.) but that friendship broke when a boy called Fred

1514 [REDACTED]
1515 [REDACTED]
1516 [REDACTED]
1517 Erm he wheeled Alex's chair away from the good computer that Alex got most of
1518 the time I don't know what's good about it. His friend came in took his position. Alex
1519 came back defended his territory. Alex bit (2) an the other boy kicked (.) so it was
1520 equal badness
1521 M: {Mm
1522 J: {set up by Fred who was nothing to do with it really. Fred in the playground Fred
1523 was involved with this headlock and kicking and (1) erm (.) I think Fred also used to
1524 reach out across Alex's keyboard and type some letters (.) that annoyed him. So in
1525 the last weeks at E Alex was doing that to certainly one ASD children but the
1526 headteacher said Alex was annoying the ASD kids (2) He was pressing their buttons
1527 an by that he was literally
1528 M: {pressing their buttons
1529 J: {pressing their buttons but also (.) pressing their trigger buttons. And on this par
1530 well last day erm they sensed that (.) Alex wanted to go out and play which was
1531 unusual so he wants to do somethin an he'd been sort of since lunchtime fine
1532 mornings ((inaudible)) lunchtime a bit triggering other people's but triggers. Went
1533 out to play on the threshold of going out Fred an one other boy playing roughly with
1534 hea not headlocks but some sort of wrestling still actually sort of inside school
1535 ((Swallows)) Alex jumped to try and join in an they all got told off and sent outside.
1536 Then they played (2) tiggly off the ground or something like that
1537 M: {Mm
1538 J: {an so they're standing on hoops to be off the ground safe an Fred (.) in the past
1539 has pulled the hoops out from under Alex and Alex did that to Fred (.) on that day.
1540 Alex was told off for it and sent inside on the way inside there's a rounders bat on
1541 the floor he picked it up (1) shouldn't have been on the floor. I think he flailed it to
1542 keep the teachers away from him. They managed to get it off him an hurt his (.) a
1543 wha cos he he went to another corner of the room where there were lots of
1544 rounders bats picked that up an they managed to get that off him an one of these
1545 getting them off him they ma cos I said "what did you try and hit anything" "No"
1546 "did you try and hit anything" "No" "Did anybody get hurt" "No" Er yeh the only

1547 thing that got hurt was his own shoulder blade
1548 M: {Mm
1549 J: {when they tried to get it off him ((Intake breath)) anyway from the then so an
1550 then he went into another corner and he ended up on the floor and they were
1551 sitting on his leg (1) cornered [REDACTED]
1552 [REDACTED]
1553 they told me that Alex was destined for prison (.) And so when I went to collect him
1554 normal time to collect him the TA and the headteacher in the T the headteacher's
1555 office, the the office. They said so bad news you're not gonna like it, it's exclusion
1556 from he's never coming back here it's exclusion with something until further notice.
1557 M: {Ok
1558 [REDACTED]
1559 [REDACTED]
1560 [REDACTED]
1561 [REDACTED]
1562 [REDACTED]
1563 [REDACTED]
1564 [REDACTED]
1565 [REDACTED]
1566 [REDACTED]
1567 [REDACTED]
1568 [REDACTED]
1569 J: {so that's what happened to him there (.) So I think (.) the unfairness of him being
1570 the only one pulled in
1571 M: {Mm
1572 J: [for that sort of stuff but (2) they sensed he was going to do something before he
1573 did it so they were watching (.) for that sort of thing (1) and so they were right in
1574 that respect why was he but he an he still says Fred was always yunno did my
1575 keyboard
1576 M: {Mm
1577 J: {an so but he that was one person to him that he could maybe tolerate it him
1578 doing it to another person who could maybe couldn't tolerate it or Alex's has got an
1579 ASD diagnosis maybe he couldn't tolerate it. Yunno there's there's all those levels of

1580 things an but you see being told that he was destined for prison. Whereas Alex now
1581 who's in the next room, no supervision on him his reading is fine (.) reading is fine.
1582 Erm so there's that sort (2) oh an they did say oh he calmed down quite quickly
1583 afterwards (1) but yeh they couldn't have him in the school anymore to protect the
1584 other ASD children maybe I don't know and the headteacher said "I don't think he is
1585 autistic anyway, he's got serious mental health issues" ((Intake of breath)) So th that
1586 tea an th the headteacher said I've got four options I can either home school, take
1587 him out of school and home school him, I can find him another placement
1588 somewhere, I could do a managed move or he can be taught out of school until the
1589 money runs out (2) And I went to Y school (.) an she was "what we don't do it th w
1590 kids would not do any headlocking that's no no. Right I need to speak to the teacher
1591 and the erm educational psychologist and it's difficult to get them to meet up" but
1592 they did meet up. I didn't go, if I would've been available I would've gone but I
1593 wanted them to have the meeting rather than delay it to when I couldn't go. Lilly
1594 didn't go but she sent an email which has been sent to me wh an she said oh in the
1595 light of it he shouldn't attend school anymore and (.) erm it had been sort of twisted
1596 a bit an she did say "it's unfortunate th that they chose to use that as the" whatever
1597 but (.) erm ultimately now he's out of sch when as he's been out of school my
1598 husband actually used the phrase "mmmm everything's better now they've taken
1599 away the bad influence of school" So th this is the phrase that we say to ourselves
1600 M: {Mm
1601 J: {and what's going on now ((sighs)) What is going on now (.) What is going on with
1602 me is I'm uncertain what's happening
1603 M: {Mhm
1604 J: {What's going on with him (.) He's uncertain what's happening. He's always much
1605 better when he's had a friend to play (1) or he's gonna see a friend so he does
1606 Creative Writing on a Saturday where he has a friend there (1) And now he's started
1607 doin erm woodworking on a Thursday, same friend, it's in Sheffield, there's six boys
1608 the most of them are home schooled an erm an he absolutely
1609 M: {Mm
1610 J: {absolutely loves it. An he's only been twice so far. An he said "oh how how was
1611 the age (.) yunno limit" and I said "16" an you could see him thinking woah I've got
1612 several more years of this but he won't because the idea is he'll be (.) er at H

1613 Secondary so everything is (2) up in the air an even the Outside Teachers (1) the
1614 teacher that they've chosen for Alex so far baby steps little bits at a time
1615 M: {Mhm
1616 J: {is English and ((intake of breath)) they've said erm "there's no doubt about it Alex
1617 you're gifted at English we we're throwing away school. We're doing everything
1618 yunno this is to your level yunno what, he didn't say what an opportunity but we
1619 will do this an you will yunno it it'll be forget school all that unpleasantness we're
1620 here for you, we're listening to you, you can trust us an derdededer. An Alex sort of
1621 can't help himself but answer some of the questions
1622 M: {Mm ((laughs))
1623 J: {an whatever she's gonna make him write something this time
1624 M: {Ok
1625 J: {she thinks. We'll see how that goes (.) Erm but I said "Oh this is great great (1)
1626 erm but what about the maths which is the subject that we've always been told he's
1627 been gifted at" (2) "Hm What Erm (.) Oh right ok (.)maybe" and Chris said "well
1628 maybe I was told that but erm you've shown me lots of writing stuff (.) An er
1629 normally they're only gifted in one English or Maths so to have both is rare" And
1630 school right from nursery all the way we've been told Alex's gifted at maths
1631 M: {Mm
1632 J: {One teacher in year one said and English really good at English after that nothing.
1633 So I've said to erm so he goes to this creative writing thing in X town more because
1634 (3) we didn't know what was happening with the education so he's done it for a full
1635 year now so this is the second year erm (1) an he absolutely loves it so an then he
1636 was invited to erm be part of a small group to write a play for radio 4 (.) and I said
1637 "Ff Wha brilliant opportunity Yes " And me as a writer of a pantomime I would love
1638 that
1639 M: {{{Laughs}}}
1640 J: {but parents aren't allowed to go it's just for the kids but they have to attend this
1641 at X City on one day and they have to attend these workshops on the other days
1642 during half term. We can do it all if you think he's suitable because school don't
1643 think he's very good so I said "How's his writing" to E "Well not very good but he's a
1644 STEM student you wouldn't expect much from a STEM student" Ok So I said "well if
1645 you think that he'll "he's brill e" she didn't say he was brilliant she said "he oh he's

1646 fantastic he can come and be part of it because he always contributes he always
1647 engage he's always erm funny erm and er he always challenges the questions and
1648 the instructions but always politely, always respectfully, and we always encourage
1649 that." I said "mm can I pass that on to the headteacher because I I'm wanting him
1650 M: {Mm
1651 J: {to contact you but I know he hasn't got round to it yet" An er headteacher "I
1652 didn't say he wasn't very good at writing I just said he was better at Maths" (2) So
1653 we've got English lessons going on at the moment (.) I thought it was English chosen
1654 because his reading he's reading (.) so you're already got him engage
1655 M: {Mm
1656 J: {"what book are you reading
1657 M: {Mm
1658 J: {if you won't read the book I'm asking you to what book are you reading
1659 M: {Mhm
1660 J: {we can work with that" But er no I though I though English erm he said "oh right
1661 ok" an erm the teacher he said "she can she did science A level she can teach
1662 anything" And so I said "Oh C Chris said you can teach anything" An she was a bit (2)
1663 An I said (.) I've been doin this with him Maths an she said "where do I get that from
1664 then?" An she did actually get something wrong that I was pointing out to her. An
1665 apparently, she told me later, that sh'd told Chris "I can't teach Maths, I can't teach
1666 Maths" So she's nervous about that. So he says he's got another teacher called Josh
1667 to do the Maths and we haven't got a date that that's gonna start yet. But (.) and
1668 now there's this teacher Rebecca who does English and Media Studies who's already
1669 in H secondary so he's trying to build a posse round Alex
1670 M: {Right
1671 J: {But he doesn't wanna lose Debbie cos Debbie is making progress but Rebecca's
1672 subject is English but it's Media Studies as well so maybe we can do something with
1673 that. Er hence, discussions about Philip Pullman because Alex's just finished the
1674 trilogy an she said "Oh does he know it's on BBC soon" ((Swallows)) so trying to
1675 draw that in or remind him what he knows and those sort of things
1676 M: { So is there? I'm just sort of listening to how you talking about that group of
1677 people
1678 J: {Mmmm is there a co-ordinated

1679 M: {erm I'm just wondering like is it is there a difference in your relationship with
1680 them just or what do they do? because it seems to me like your saying that they're
1681 doing something that's working?
1682 J: {Debbie is doing something that
1683 M: {OK
1684 J: {is working (.) Chris got Debbie there
1685 M: {Mm
1686 J: {So I think Chris's doing something that's working and if Rebecca is part of the
1687 same thing then how can I say that's not working so Debbie is doing by working
1688 because (1) she absolutely listens to what Alex says and she responds like if he's sit
1689 on the floor she sits on the floor
1690 M: {Mm
1691 J: {If he sits on that table she she says I'm coming round there erm if he gives her an
1692 answer that isn't the answer she's expecting so it's wrong
1693 M: {Mm
1694 J: {but it does have some something in it she works with that
1695 M: {Mm
1696 J: {so there's a there's a response all the time an erm an that she asks him she says
1697 "what homework what do you want to give to me what d'ya think I should know
1698 what d'ya think" Yunno so there's so he's ooh "I think you should read this an I think
1699 this an" An then they talk about the books that she's reading. An she'd talk to me
1700 normally in the middle of things while she's waiting for Alex to do something or
1701 while she cos last lesson I think he it was a two hour lesson an he was reading and
1702 wanted to get to the end of the chapter so he came down after a quarter of an hour
1703 or something an th she said "that's absolutely fine" (.) No problems no forcing
1704 anybody to do anything
1705 M: {ok
1706 J: {so whether there's PDA Pathological Demand Avoidance, which is on the autistic
1707 spectrum, whether that's part of it but some people don't talk about it some people
1708 do talk about it we erm E School also set us up to go to CAMHS and Clinical
1709 Psychologist and because of going to CAMHS then Action for Children wouldn't talk
1710 to us because we were going to CAMHS. She saw us she said ((swallows))"well he's
1711 autistic isn't he, he's autistic. There's no other signs of any other mental issues

1712 because of what you've said and what you've not said and what he said and what
1713 he's not said. Clearly he's clever and what you told me he's clever I'm I'm not doing
1714 any, Lilly hasn't had a chance to test him on anything but she says yunno you've got
1715 this other body of evidence whatever erm
1716 M: {So that was CAMHS who said
1717 J: {that was CAMHS
1718 M: {and who were Action for Children?
1719 J: {Action for Children is something that the that TA who had been in the police I
1720 spoke to him on the phone an he said "well there's something called Action for
1721 Children they might help" Because I was saying "I think Alex needs counselling for
1722 his experience with the bullies and that nepotism and all that sort of stuff in P"
1723 M: {Ok
1724 J: {because unfortunately it is gonna happen again. There is gonna be nepotism in
1725 his life and there is gonna be bullying in his life. So he needs to be told by somebody
1726 not me (1) yeah they weren't right (2) but it is gonna happen again and it happens
1727 to a lot of people and you have to (.) somehow learn to deal with it. When you're
1728 older you can walk away. When you're at school you can't walk away so you're
1729 trapped in that situation an actually yunno you've been dealt a rough hand in those
1730 circumstances. But nobody's doing that they're just saying you're wrong, you're bad
1731 you're to blame your and an the parents are bad parents, we were told we were
1732 bad par. That's another thing to learn we the MAT teacher and the headteacher told
1733 us er just before friday half term that we were bad parents and we haven't put
1734 enough routines in place and we haven't put enough boundaries in place. My friend
1735 who's a social worker (.) who doesn't see me that often (1) she attended one of the
1736 MAT work meetings with me er more than one she came to I went to the first one
1737 on my own I think maybe she came with me the first one. And then after that our
1738 therapist came as well and our therapist because we'd had some therapy time on
1739 NHS an she said well I can use it with you or I can attend these meetings with you.
1740 So attend the meetings with us. An she and the social worker after the second
1741 meeting, were jabbering at each other "who was that woman?" An I said an then
1742 she "yeh she's awful isn't she" An I said "Who were you" an they said both looked at
1743 me an they said "the woman with the glasses" an then they carried on with the "y y
1744 she she should never 've said that that is absolutely inappropriate and she's not

1745 trained to say" An I said "which one" "the one who said such an such ((inaudible))"
1746 an then both in the clammering about
1747 M: {Mm
1748 J: {how awful the meeting was. And the first meeting that only my friend came to as
1749 I say she's a social worker and she she works (2) as the person in between the
1750 professionals and the family
1751 M: {Ok
1752 J: {So she said "I have never been in that situation, Jenny, being on the side of the
1753 parent where you have nowhere to go, they were all ganging up against you" and
1754 the last because when we were told that we were rubbish parents and hadn't put
1755 boundaries in place and what else we were told (3) no routines and Seb, Me, Seb,
1756 headteacher and MAT worker (2) we came away thinking we were aw everything
1757 was awful. And we both felt suicidal. Different things. So by the so that was, I think
1758 that meeting was on a Monday or a Tuesday by Friday (3) we spoke to each other
1759 about it. Seb had considered driving into walls. I had considered pillows not just for
1760 me no. Our child is a menace to the public, we have created him, the whole
1761 education system would be better off without him, the world would be better off
1762 without us. We have no future. That's how we felt. Spoke to each other about it.
1763 Had no actual plans about doing anything
1764 M: {Mm
1765 J: {We know why we're thinking this (.).We're thinking that from that meeting. So
1766 since then we have we are not gonna be spoken to like that again (.). We are
1767 stronger (.). we are (.). we feel like that was spoken to us an from a a point of
1768 ignorance, certainly unhelpfulness, these are meant to be people that are helping
1769 us, guide us through the situation an (1) we know that now an to the point that right
1770 ok another MAT worker, another Family Support Worker, ok ((intake of breath)) E
1771 says that we got Alex's got serious er mental health issues and we've got to go to
1772 CAMHS an we've got to (2) erm have this Family Support Worker which we have to
1773 welcome into our house and so let's go through it all again, even though we've had
1774 a social worker already and she said sorry there's no ca. That was all to do with the
1775 seatbelt taken off
1776 M: {Mm
1777 J: {So Brenda D rang me, I was in London at the time, "Erm, I've been told that Alex

1778 said he was gonna take the seatbelt off and run into the road" "Yeah, yeah" "And
1779 what was your reaction to that" (1) "I don't think he will do it. We've got to go to
1780 the car (3) We'll see what happens sort of thing" Well that reaction was wrong (.)
1781 and because of that the MAT worker had worked out that they were gonna get the
1782 social worker involved so the soc ser so in this house an I didn't want to see that
1783 MAT worker anymore ever again. She came to this house with a social worker, it
1784 wasn't the social worker who was assigned to us because she was ill, so she hadn't
1785 read the files and stuff like that so th this. I'd never met her before anyway
1786 M: {Mhm
1787 J: {even the one who was meant to come but so this one came blind so to speak an
1788 our therapist. An I recorded the interview and went through all everything that'd
1789 happened and then at the end the social worker said "So why am I here?". And the
1790 therapist said "Exactly, why are you here?" An Erm Brenda D said "o o o well er erm
1791 I I I er safeguarding, safeguarding" "Well what's the safeguard?" "Well er" and then
1792 Alex was due to come back any moment an I didn't want Alex to see people. He
1793 knows that you are doing a PhD
1794 M: {Ok
1795 J: {so he shouldn't ha an he knows that erm an I think I might have even said it's all
1796 gonna be anonymised and we're all "OH"
1797 M: {{{(laughs))
1798 J: {Erm talking about I'm sure we've had that conversation over dinner so (.) but he
1799 there's that many people coming through
1800 M: {Mm
1801 J: {so for him to take his clothes from there I don't but it sounds like he was in a
1802 weird mood anyway maybe doing the work, maybe he felt like he wants to go on
1803 the computer because he didn't go on the computer all last week because he forgot.
1804 He was entitled to an hour at the weekend an he forgot. So he has got an extra hour
1805 to use at some point
1806 M: {Mm
1807 J: {He did do some stuff on the computer because we did some stuff to do with
1808 Ghengis Khan and Photoshop and Excel, so he hasn't not been on it but not for
1809 doing stuff
1810 M: {Mm

1811 J: {because too busy an that is the case in point because he's either at XXXXX
1812 because I'm at work (1) or lesson or going to athletics so we have got issues of (.)
1813 that sort of
1814 M: {Mm
1815 J: {when he says I don't have any free time but he does have free time but he
1816 chooses to read (2) An it's that balance he he can't see you can't have your cake and
1817 eat it. Anyway so what was I saying about then (.) Er the MAT worker she came in so
1818 yunno why am I here, safeguard, so Alex was due to come back from pupil referral
1819 unit or something taxi and I didn't want him to see Social Workers in the house so
1820 everybody scarpered quickly which was agreed so we didn't finish it properly but
1821 the therapist said "check what, ring up find out what the safeguarding issue was" an
1822 the safeguarding issue was that issue then. Anyway so that rumbled on for another
1823 (.) month an a bit an she wanted to speak to all the schools an not all schools would
1824 speak to her an eventually she said "I'm sorry there's no case to answer, I'm closing
1825 the file, there's nothing there" So for E to bring it up again (2) say right MAT worker
1826 gonna be assigned to you I thought oh here we go again (.) So Katy D was our MA
1827 Family Support Worker I said "I don't want Brenda D" "Oh no Brenda's left" Erm
1828 Katy D and she (2) it's a bit she's dyslexic she's going back to college to do some
1829 course so now she's not our Family Support Worker
1830 M: {Mm
1831 J: {she's been replaced by Tilly C. D' you know Tilly C ((M shakes head)) Ok but Katy
1832 wanted (.) when I said "Oh Alex plays chess" she said "Oh I play chess an I'm quite
1833 competitive" So she played chess with him an actually shhshe made a mistake
1834 because she set up a chess board, she made one on A3 paper, and in the white
1835 squares she wrote things like talk to Pythagoras, ask a friend that sort of thing, so
1836 she was makin it into a thing an Alex th this isn't chess
1837 M: {{{(laughs))
1838 J: {what is this? And making the pieces as well
1839 M: {Mm
1840 J: {So it wasn't a ch an even she didn't even come an she sent somebody in her
1841 stead so she said "I'm sorry, I'm sorry (.) We will play chess prop, bring your chess
1842 board an we will play a proper game of chess. So they did play a proper game of
1843 chess. Alex won (.) but Alex thought that she let him win (.) An then she came again

1844 to say I'm sorry I'm leaving, I'm going to back to so your new person and she wanted
1845 to meet Chris as well erm so she saw us more often but anyway.

1846 [REDACTED]

1847 [REDACTED]

1848 [REDACTED]

1849 [REDACTED]

1850 [REDACTED]

1851 [REDACTED]

1852 [REDACTED]

1853 [REDACTED]

1854 [REDACTED]

1855 [REDACTED]

1856 [REDACTED]

1857 [REDACTED]

1858 [REDACTED]

1859 [REDACTED]

1860 [REDACTED]

1861 [REDACTED]

1862 [REDACTED]

1863 [REDACTED]

1864 [REDACTED]

1865 [REDACTED]

1866 [REDACTED]

1867 [REDACTED]

1868 [REDACTED]

1869 [REDACTED]

1870 she said "now I'm gonna also I'm leaving" an de der de der "an it's gonna be Tilly
1871 who does it" But she said "I have to say (2) Alex played chess really well he beat me
1872 fair and square and I had got him in check a few times but he then it just came from
1873 nowhere" An I said "Oh he thinks you let him win" and she said "I did not (1) I
1874 absolutely did not" she said "I'm rusty

1875 M: {{{(laughs)}}

1876 J: {but (.) I played to win"

1877 M: {Mm
1878 J: {an he got me (.) fair and square. An erm an he said "but you let all your pieces
1879 wide open you" he said "there was a couple of times when I could have taken more
1880 an an I'd an you yunno I'd laid myself that you could take me an you didn't" And she
1881 said "oh well I didn't notice I didn't notice" something like. So she had a lot of
1882 respect for Alex and that was sort of buildi an now Tilly's come (.) ((swallows)) and
1883 Tilly was er she's got (1) erm two children one's seven (2) I think the other one must
1884 be five but I might have that wrong and they wanted a pet, wanted a pet, wanted a
1885 pet and now they've got a hamster. So she was interested that Alex's got a hamster
1886 because her hamster had arrived a week before she came to us. She saw what Alex
1887 had built (2) and she said "Ohh" (.) and she called Alex and she said "d'ya think my
1888 seven-year-old could build that" And Alex was (2) really polite and didn't say (.) of
1889 course not
1890 M: {(laughs))
1891 J: {erm and apart from anything else they might burn themselves on the glue gun.
1892 He sort of said "erm (1) well (1). erm (1) er" yunno he was holding it back and then
1893 he said an I said "well let's start with Alex have you burnt yourself?" An he said
1894 "yeah a couple of times" (.) So I said "that might happen" and yunno
1895 M: {Mm
1896 J: {one thing. Anyway (.) then we've had another meeting with her and with Chris
1897 and she said about Asperger's she said erm "oh (1) I've got er a niece and a nephew
1898 who are Asperger's and the neph the school says they can take as many GCSEs as
1899 you want" and Chris said "Oh this is really success story then they're succeeding at
1900 school doing what they need to do at school" And she said "well the nephew's taken
1901 11 and the niece's decided she's gonna beat him so she's doing 12 but" she said "I
1902 feel really sorry for them" "Oh Why" "Er because well they're a bit nerdish aren't
1903 they an erm (1) socially awkward I mean (.) So Alex is in scouts? yeah keep him doin
1904 that because that's the sort of it's good for that sort of person" An "but they're
1905 probably alright in their own little world later on" And afterwards I thought (1) she's
1906 supposed to be helping us
1907 M: {Mm
1908 J: {and she's been so dismissive (.) of a pair who've done alright at school and scouts
1909 an this

1910 M: {Mm
1911 J: {in their own little worlds So I sent her an email (2) an I said (.) "erm I've been
1912 thinking about how those two Asperger's children were described at our meeting so
1913 I didn't say what you said
1914 M: {Mm
1915 J: {Erm an I said "I'm not (.) given the fact I'm not sure about Alex's own diagnosis
1916 anyway but I've read a lot to know that (.) many people with this diagnosis have
1917 special skills as well and (.) we not in their own little world in our world we are
1918 benefitting from (.) advances to technology
1919 M: {Mm
1920 J: {or anything and it's happening at the moment" an I said "this might've this
1921 shouldn't they should be celebrated for their skills, not ostracised, pitied, bullied
1922 and (.) we of all people should (1) start that vocabulary and understanding because I
1923 think this is gonna be the next ME TOO (.) moment but not in a sexual sense"
1924 M: {Mm
1925 J: {an erm so that's going back to my first point that I said the neurodiversity
1926 mentioning it earlier
1927 M: {Mm
1928 J: {as a (1) fact of the world
1929 M: {Mm Mm
1930 J: {rather than making people who are in this (2) situation feel ((sigh)) what have we
1931 done wrong
1932 M: {Mm
1933 J: {and my niece (.) who stayed with us for three weeks (2) there's some similarities
1934 in some of the things she thinks or whatever and Alex an she said to me without
1935 Alex in hearing she said "whatever you do ((swallows)) don't have conversation with
1936 Seb where you're saying it's your genes it's from you
1937 M: {Mm
1938 J: {an erm allocate blame" because she said "it if cos that if child hears that feels
1939 that i it's a wrong thing it's bad enough calling it a disorder (.) but erm (.) it's yunno
1940 it's it needs to be turned on its head
1941 M: So that's one thing, that you said at the
1942 J: {Yeah

1943 M: {beginning about things needing to change. You've obviously been through like a
1944 lot of
1945 J: {yeah
1946 M: {exclusions here
1947 J: {yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah
1948 M: [So coming back to that question
1949 J: {and the other thing is that exclusions
1950 M: {Oh ok ((laughs))
1951 J: {exclusions to be told that it's about (.) we need more routines more boundaries
1952 (.) we're not yunno decent parents enough or yunno whatever
1953 M: {Mm
1954 J: {but the routines and boundaries an then(.) have exclusions (2) what happened to
1955 the routine, what happened to the boundary (.) What happened to my job (.) Yunno
1956 how're we meant to balance that (.) You can't and then also to be in the letter it
1957 says do not take them to any public places otherwise you (.) might be fined
1958 M: {Mm
1959 J: {and to the point that we didn't (.)and he's trapped inside what can you do (1)
1960 And so that also needs
1961 M: {Mm
1962 J: {significant changes so now when we get a letter like that we're (1) absolutely
1963 ignore anything like that an the work that we've been sent (.) to to do for him to do
1964 has been (3) one of them was a photocopy three photocopies from E recently when
1965 he was when he left
1966 M: {Yeh
1967 J: {we were given three (1) I think they came in by email so they were scanned a d
1968 ouble page of maths quite simple (1) I think it was erm (3) it was like (2) if you've got
1969 13p and a doughnut cost 2p how many can you have that sort of question (.) Quite a
1970 few of those (.) but on a on a so if this is double page there might be question
1971 question question question question question question
1972 M: {Mm
1973 J: {but the scan (1) hadn't got that bit of the page ((shows bit missing))
1974 M: Ok
1975 J: So we had three pages of that which was simple enough to do (.) Hadn't even

1976 checked that we couldn't even read it (.) and no follow up of all the work that we've
1977 sent there's no follow up how was it, d'ya need any more anything like that but then
1978 I have done all of the information I have done the information to school saying this
1979 is what we're doin (1) this is what we're doin an when then we got a telephone call
1980 from Individual Programmes (.) saying "oh this is come Individual Programmes is
1981 starting again" and we had arranged (2) going back a bit but (.) in February (.) this
1982 year so Alex's year (.) 5 when he was at E an he had an enforced part-time timetable
1983 during which time (.) the headteacher said his behaviour was virtually impeccable
1984 (1) which makes me think flexi-learning is the future erm I took the opportunity to
1985 go to H Secondary and say look "I don't know if he's gonna be accelerated I don't
1986 know (2) if he's gonna (.) I don't know what's gonna happen but I feel like we should
1987 (.) be aware of this school so can we come and visit" "Yeah you can come and visit"
1988 So Mrs (.) Start I think her name is who was the SENCO Co-Ordicator or that sort of
1989 role she met us we were a bit late she said "don't worry about that" She said "it's
1990 Alec isn't it (.) the genius" (3) "Er it's Alex I don't know whether he's a genius" She
1991 showed us round for a bit an er she took us into the cafeteria first so obviously it's
1992 closed yunno it's four o'clock
1993 M: {Mm
1994 J: {so everything's seats on tables and stuff like that an she said "this is where they
1995 eat and this is how they do it and the money's on cards that you can yunno so you
1996 people can't steal
1997 M: {Mm
1998 J: {money" and that sort of stuff and she said "but if this is too noisy (1) an
1999 environment" which obviously it was quiet then but she said "if you're not
2000 comfortable about this there are other places to eat" An I said "no I don't think this
2001 is gonna be a problem" An then as we were walking I saw these sort of more open
2002 plan toilets so there's a (.) you break off the corridor you can see a corridor with
2003 cubicles either side cubicles either side an the sinks are here that you can see from
2004 walking up an I said "Oh" an not quite unisex but almost
2005 M: {Mm
2006 J: {and I said "oh open plan toilets" which to me means there has been bullying in
2007 the toilets before but now it's open plan and everybody can see what's goin on and
2008 she said "Yeah but if you if that's too open for you an you want a more privacy" an I

2009 said "no I don't think that's gonna be a problem" And we carried on and we saw
2010 some other things and then we met Mr Lamp and she said "Ah Mr Lamp (2) er w can
2011 you continue taking this family round if you've got time because Mr Lamp is taking
2012 over the role I used to be the SENCO Co-ordinator and now he is an it will be suit if
2013 he shows you round" He said "yeah yeah I can" an he said "it's Alex from E isn't it"
2014 (1) He said "well you're wearing the sweatshirt so that did help" Right so he showed
2015 us round ((swallows)) an er (.) an I thought Alex an then there's a climbing wall there
2016 and they'd just started their climbing (.) Friday night climbing (.) club

2017 M: {Mm

2018 J: {Which I think is the ony thing they use it for (.) an oer he said an erm Alex was
2019 (.) quite interested in an he'd never seen a pottery wheel and yunno all these sort a
2020 th 3D printer all this an er at the end (2) he said "if you think this school is suitable
2021 for you yunno come back and have as many visits as you want" (.) An I said "well
2022 erm" an I I I I must have been gushing something I was happy about an he said
2023 "actually we did (.) I did know the name because (1) er Lilly James has been in touch
2024 and also I've been in touch with pupil referral unit so we were expecting your call
2025 we were expecting you to want to come round we didn't have your contact details
2026 so we couldn't contact you but we've been expecting this and we've been able to
2027 speak to the different schools" An I said "Oh right" I said "what I really want is for a
2028 better bus service between B and you. He said "w we n n n" and then I said "what I
2029 really want is for him to come and do erm practical chemistry once a week or once a
2030 fortnight now"

2031 M: {Mm

2032 J: {and he said I'm sure that can be arranged give me a ring when you want to start"
2033 "WHAT" and then he was dealing him with another family who'd just arrived and I
2034 said I I said "I will I will ring you I will ring you" So (.) an he said yunno "if you think
2035 it's suitable come have some more visits if you want some" So we went the next
2036 week with Seb had the same tour

2037 M: {Mhm

2038 J: {and then sat in a room and arranged what day would be suitable and that sort of
2039 thing and how it would work an he said "have you got any money associated with
2040 this ch yunno funding" and I said "no" and he said "that's unusual for a child that's
2041 gone through all this (.) to not have any funding" He said "but I have a pocket

2042 money that can help with this sort of stuff" And we bumped into a couple of people
2043 the climbing tutor, who also does geography and sort of engineeringy man and
2044 making stuff on (2) the mills
2045 M: {Mm
2046 J: {pieces of kit an erm Alex was ((mimes staring at it)) an when we left when we
2047 arrive when we went the first time an it was just me an Alex erm Alex was furious
2048 with me taking him out of erm E school and he wouldn't speak to me in the car now
2049 that doesn't happen (.)
2050 M: Mm
2051 J: ever at any other time (.) He would not speak (1) But he didn't realise he wouldn't
2052 have been in E school anyway that afternoon ((swallows)) but he would not speak
2053 an I said "Alex" as we approached H Secondary I said "you'd better start talking
2054 otherwise they're gonna think you're strange" An when we were there he was
2055 absolutely fine then when we left he was in a really good mood and he bumped into
2056 a scout and (.) waved at the scout and erm (.) an when we left I said "Oh what what
2057 did you think he said "I really loved it" an I said "what did you like best" thinking it
2058 would be the climbing wall he said "everything (.) everything" An I said what d'ya
2059 think about going there" "YEAH" Ok (.) when we went with Seb saw the scout again
2060 M: {Mm
2061 J: {and Mr Lamp said "well we could put him in erm the same house as the scout but
2062 he's not necessarily a good role model" but actually maybe it is because it's
2063 somebody he knows it's almost like that same Year 6 when
2064 M: {yeh
2065 J: {a bigger boy plus he sees him in scouts helping as a young er I don't know if it's a
2066 young leader
2067 M: {Mm
2068 J: {or what but it's somehow he's helping so he's recognised him from there so
2069 there's a sort of protective air an I think it will be and the other person we know
2070 who goes there is Lizzy er who lives in B who's in the pantomime and (3) Mr Lamp
2071 said "oh yeah the lovely Lizzy o yeah we could put him in the same class as that"
2072 yunno as her an he was more pos but I think ultimately it will be good to go with
2073 the one who's the scout (.) maybe. Anyway then we went to see (.) erm Billy Elliot
2074 that was there show (2) a lot of swearing (1) "What does wanker mean" (2) "You

2075 don't need to know that at the moment" "mmm but I want to know" "No no you
2076 don't need to know at the moment" Ok so all yunno he's sitting in the middle and
2077 Seb an I are hearing this language an we're (4) Ok we're having to explain to him
2078 M: {ok
2079 J: {the whole issue of the culture (.) the situation (.) yunno
2080 M: {Mm
2081 J: {the stress (.) all that sort of stuff. Anyway erm so it brought on his language a
2082 notch as did the PRU as did C's boys toilets that was the first one (.) Erm anyway so
2083 what was I saying so (.) we went to so when we were talking the second time with
2084 Mr Lamp in a small room an we talking about the money and stuff like that
2085 ((swallows)) erm we seemed to agree that Alex could start (.) after half term after
2086 May yeah after half ter it was still May cos it was May the 10th when Alex was so it
2087 was yeah May after Easter maybe (.) Anyway the idea's he would start maybe once
2088 a fortnight
2089 M: {Mm
2090 J: {an he (.) Mr Lamp said Monday (2) afternoon and then when the exams were on
2091 in maybe there wouldn't be any
2092 M: Mm
2093 J: An then after the exams they have a walk a sponsored walk type thing an the
2094 whole school does it an he said that would be a good time to come an then there's
2095 the starter days for th the intake (1) and that those would be good days to come so
2096 it was all planned and it might even end up being weekly towards the end (.) Fine (.)
2097 That was as agreed. Then (.) so that was ssss (1) February March (.) April ((Intake of
2098 breath)) then erm an I said to school we've been to ((inaudible)) so this was all
2099 without E knowing so right we've been to E school and we've "the only thing I would
2100 say is not to do it on a Tuesday because Tuesday morn we and not to do maths
2101 because we're gonna teach him Year 7 maths on a one to one basis on Tuesday
2102 morning so we don't want him one to one in the afternoon with
2103 M: {Mm
2104 J: {Something else" An he said "it works very well but we can't teach him other
2105 things but we can teach him maths" Right the first Maths lesson that he'd got extra
2106 money for this the funding came through
2107 M: Ok

2108 J: Erm first Maths lesson the teacher didn't come. I don't know why so they had (2)
2109 KNEX roller coaster that somebody else had brought in an before an it had been
2110 successful so they built that (.) I don't know if it was for all of them (.) or if it was
2111 ostensibly for Alex an everybody did it but that was fine they built it and over a
2112 week they built it up an an made it work but then it was broken so it didn't actually
2113 an then at one point somebody (1) Fred started doing some stuff (.) on his own and
2114 Alex went to Fred cos then he stopped doin it in an said "where are you how far did
2115 you get" "I can't remember" "What have you done" "I don't know" So Alex was
2116 furious with that an then erm something else happened maybe someone's pushed a
2117 anyway it broke an they built it up again and then they actually didn't work.
2118 M: Ok
2119 J: So a bit frustrating (.) But that made us buy one
2120 M: Mm
2121 J: and then it didn't come on Ebay so then we bought another one and then the first
2122 one came so we've ended up with two which he's built and he's built all himself an
2123 in he did it all in two weeks or something like that amazing an I'm trying to still built
2124 I'm trying to make him see reason that if you sell them on Ebay around November
2125 time you will keep your money cos people will be looking for Christmas presents
2126 and this will be yunno so we should take pictures bler bler ((Coughs)) Not
2127 interested. He can't yunno the idea of (1) throwing anything out
2128 M: {Mm
2129 J: {hard for him at the moment but yunno I'm a bit the same so erm anyway so that
2130 was the first maths lesson that didn't happen. The second maths lesson (2) did
2131 happen (1) in the afternoon that's when he was excluded
2132 M: So
2133 J: {So he never had any more so the money was there and the money was also
2134 gonna be spent for the TA (1) the one with the spit (.) erm to spend more time with
2135 Alex (2) so presumably he had his contract then so that was being spent even
2136 though Alex wasn't there (.) An I said "look an what about this so we want to start
2137 doing this chemistry thing and (.) H secondary then said "Oh" Oh H Secondary had
2138 said before (.) in the in the in the intervening time between saying yes yes come
2139 erm then when we were r is erm can because he's not on roll here can erm E offer
2140 some money (1) and E said "No it's all been allocated" (.) And apparently it's going

2141 to be thirty pound a session an I said "well we can pay 30 pound" "No it's not for
2142 you to do that" Erm anyway on the last day when Alex was excluded the
2143 headteacher said (.) "he doesn't realise how many letters I've written for him I've
2144 even got some money for him to go to H secondary" But that hasn't (.) materialised
2145 M: {Ok
2146 J: {And so he didn't go to H Secondary all that time. Lilly said er (.) cos H Secondary
2147 said "oh no if he's excluded from school he can't come here not while he's off roll"
2148 or off something like that
2149 M: {Mm
2150 J: {an erm (1) an when I spoke to Lilly after about (2) four weeks of trying to get hold
2151 of her an she said "well that's not a reason he shouldn't be going to H Secondary he
2152 should be going anyway I'll look into it" an then when I next spoke to her she said
2153 "it's the head said no we want him more settled" so yunno (.) they'd drawn a line
2154 under an it was gonna happen anyway (1) But hopefully it will (.) I'm expecting I
2155 want it to happen now but (2) it obviously isn't and (2) I've got to I feel like I've got
2156 to (3) slow down all my aspirations and just be led by what Chris can do and now it
2157 seems like there mi Alex's got his fund his erm EHCP thing has come through 6000
2158 pounds plus 6000 and 25 and Chris says yes that's erm the full six hours (2) So he's
2159 only gonna get six hours of tuition (1) with Outside Teachers (3) Right (2) Ok and
2160 apparently we're gonna have somebody holding our hand through this whole EHCP
2161 thing no we're not we're gonna get paperwork two to three weeks later than they
2162 said it was coming an yunno I'm constantly ringing up ringing up ringing up ringing
2163 up ringing up ringing up where is it what is it what do we do but we have got a
2164 meeting tomo on the Thursday the 10th about it so I know (.) austerity I know
2165 everybody's pushed but if we (2) have somebody holding our hands and they're not
2166 there not answering the calls an not (1) what sort of holding hand's that (.) Erm cos I
2167 applied for an EHCP when he was at C I mentioned it in February when he was at C
2168 because that lady who was the headteacher of the autistic school she said apply for
2169 an EHC she said "have you got an EHCP" an I said I" don't know I did fill out a" She
2170 said "no you'd no if you had an EHCP you haven't got one apply for one of those
2171 because that will register to the local authority that this is a bright child who has
2172 been excluded from two schools (.) That is unusual what's goin on and it will make
2173 them look" (1) So I mentioned it to C in February when we were told we were bad

2174 parents "oh no no no no there's no need for that no need for that no need for that
2175 no no its graduated response we" ner ner ner "and we're doing the funding thing
2176 first an if that doesn't work then we're" dddder "an then after that EHCP no no no
2177 need for that" (1) Whereas B school headteacher cos I was headteach dinner lady
2178 there at one point and Lilly said we should go to B school when it broke down at S
2179 school and B school then said (.) had a meeting (2) don't know who they had a
2180 meeting with (.) maybe they just rang up the other schools she said "no not after
2181 what the other schools are telling us no he definitely" Which is exactly what Y were
2182 saying
2183 M: {Right
2184 J: {No, never, not after what the other school an B said "he needs to go to" (4) is it A
2185 School is there a school there where she said there's a a a twin yunno there's
2186 mainstream next to Rainbow
2187 M: {Mm
2188 J: {or whatever it's called and he can dip in and dip out but I don't think (2) I don't
2189 think any a (.) at scouts Alex's not dipping in and dipping out
2190 M: {Mhm
2191 J: {It just needs to be something that (.) he gets on with an he enjoys an yunno
2192 there's I think he I don't think he does deals well with (.) impatience (.) cos I said
2193 "Yunno Alex you're gonna have to wait for other people to do some stuff sometimes
2194 you just have to wait" He said "I gave them plenty I waited I think I wait I gave them
2195 plenty of time in P I waited fifteen minutes" (.) Fifteen minutes if he's getting doing
2196 it like that fifteen minutes is nothing (2) for other people so I I don't know anyway
2197 so wh where was I goin with that sentence erm uh just the whole thing about H
2198 Secondary I don't know what's happening I don't know if I don't know what's
2199 happening how does he know what's happening
2200 M: {No
2201 J: {or if he did wants to happen what do I want to happen I don't know
2202 M: So thinking about all of that
2203 C: {Mm
2204 M: {and all you've been through
2205 C: {Yeah
2206 M: {this experience

2207 C: {What would make things better?
2208 M: {Wha what what needs to change?
2209 C: Needs to change erm parents need to be put in touch with other parents most
2210 definitely
2211 M: {Mm
2212 C: Now there's something called Future Action which has workshops for erm
2213 talented children and you book it it tells you what Year group they're doing
2214 sometimes it says 2-6 sometimes it'll be 5 and 6 whatever and you er don't think oh
2215 well my child's Year 3 but really clever so I'll put them in the Year 6 one No you put
2216 them in the in the right one ((intake of breath)) but Alex's been to a few of those (.)
2217 and when I first rang her up she said "Oh sh d bullying as well wa oh n again" the
2218 same sort of noises that some ser she recognised the things I was saying whereas (.)
2219 other mums "Oh er have you been to the doctors have you done this have you done
2220 that (.) You know they know so much but they don't know unless you walk in my
2221 shoes you do not know what it's like ((intake of breath)) So she and she said "Well
2222 what we do with here (.) erm if you don't mind (.) and I says to all of the mums I er I
2223 put you in touch you all of you can see each other's emails so you can ask direct
2224 Was this good for you? What did you do what you do then?" And I did do that and I
2225 had some emails coming back that were really erm emotional and touching and erm
2226 some of them were "Well that doesn't really apply to me you need a you need a
2227 good Educational Psychologist" B said when he was in trouble at C "Get the Isn't the
2228 Educational Psychologist on board?" Lilly James has asked "Don't C have the same
2229 arrangement" And I asked "Can we have an Educational Psychologist please?" Form
2230 came (1) and it there's something like (sound of turning pages) I had to sign
2231 somewhere here but here it says something like Parents will be invited to comment
2232 on the Educational Psychologist will meet with the parents as well and I ring I
2233 remember ringing and saying "Yes I want this to happen" And presumably because
2234 it costs money C didn't do anything so all that time, the only time, so I met (.) there
2235 was a meeting to do with the sch the managed move (.) er on a day that I normally
2236 worked and that week, that day I'd swapped ((swallows)) not because of this
2237 meeting (.) because of something to do with work so I got a phone call are you
2238 coming to this meeting I don't know anything about it and it's normally a day that I
2239 work I wouldn't expect to well I said "do you know what I don't wanna see Brenda D

2240 again and I don't really wanna come to C school and have any more meetings"
2241 "Shall I tell you who's here (1) Lilly James" "I'm coming (.) I'm coming" So I met Lilly
2242 there and she said (1) so this is when after Mr Oscar from PRU said after the first
2243 week that he was there in the autumn term said "I haven't spoke been in contact
2244 with S School but it's as I'm just ringing to let you know that Alex's been fine here
2245 there's been no issues no behavioural issues it's just as I expected he is gonna get
2246 bored here (.) My advice is he needs to be in mainstream school (.) as quickly as
2247 possible for as long as possible" Right well I've noticed there's a football day and a
2248 cross" "Perfect (.) Perfect (.) I would definitely support him being in those things" So
2249 I've mentioned it to school
2250 M: {Mm
2251 J: {an there's this meeting an it was I raised it then or it was raised and erm S School
2252 said "no because we haven't got the funding (1) across from the other school" And
2253 (.) Lilly was a bit "Wha what what's go" Erm an erm then there's er "well why isn't
2254 the fund and why" "no because I haven't got the staff I can't take him cos I haven't
2255 got the staff levels" "What what what d'ya mean" "Well the funding hasn't come
2256 through" "Well why" "and an anyway we haven't appointed anybody" "Why w well
2257 is there anybody in mind" "No there's nobody in mind" (.) "So you have to" "Yeah
2258 we don't know how to put the advert because we don't know if he's gonna be erm
2259 employed by C or S" "Does that matter" "Yes it does matter" An I thought (1) you
2260 don't even know who will be doing the work (.) you're gonna have to advertise,
2261 interview, they might have to give a period of notice on their job this is not gonna
2262 happen for several months
2263 M: {Mm
2264 J: {So I was horrified by that
2265 M: {Mhm
2266 J: {And the next meeting was in S and there was Lilly didn't go but Harriet B was
2267 there and Russell W from Individual Programmes an the first thing was said was we
2268 need to cut a lot of these extra people who are like Behaviour Support, all these, we
2269 don't need it all. So cut it out and try and get Alex on roll at S as soon as possible cos
2270 there's something to do it's census day because It all came down to money which I
2271 don't mind I understand but so then I wrote a a stiff letter on cardboard to Jessica
2272 Parry (Chief Exec) yunno who that is don't you?

2273 M: Yes

2274 J: Yeh an erm is it Ally Smith the er councillor for Educational Services saying my son

2275 is a managed move and things have fallen between stools because the funding isn't

2276 moving from one school to another can you sort that out and then when that all

2277 went pair shaped then I wrote again and said he's not in a school who's finding the

2278 school what do I have to do can you make the the funding

2279 M: {Mm

2280 J: {needs to go with the boy an we need to yunno support and Ally Smith did reply

2281 to me and say erm (2) something like everything's in hand and n (.) but it was wishy

2282 washy an it wasn't

2283 M: {Mm

2284 J: {quite so an then when I got a call from Shire County Council complaints

2285 department (2) Well I said "I had I haven't made a complaint" "Well I did wonder if

2286 you'd made a complaint" I said "I haven't made a complaint but I feel like (.) we've

2287 fallen between stools an I'm having to sort of rattle

2288 M: {Mm

2289 J: {cages and say what is going on

2290 M: {Mm

2291 J: {what is which what is the plan (2) There is no nobody's tellin

2292 M: {Mm

2293 J: {me anything and in fact all the time in the pupil referral unit everything to do

2294 with the pupil referral unit every single thing about it going to it (.) and thing no we

2295 had no formal writing letters about it that he would be attending there

2296 M: {Ok

2297 J: {it was all by telephone call from Mr Oscar to me (2) Even though it was supplied

2298 by (2) another school maybe (.) So that whole yun bearing in mind what state of

2299 mind you're in

2300 M: {Mm

2301 J: {to not have something in writing that you can look at and say oh they said it was

2302 Monday or they said it was yunno

2303 M: {Mm

2304 J: {That's but as I say I'm a (.) yunno bright educated person who's got (4) bravery

2305 whatever confidence

2306 M: {Mm
2307 J: {to speak (.) What about others who can't yunno what state are they in. So now
2308 we are in a much an and in all the middle of this my mum was a bit ill, she moved
2309 house, She moved to X town that work did an we brought this that needed work
2310 doing to it, she brought a house needed work doing, she came and lived here while
2311 Alex was at S and his anxiety levels I presume this is the terminology ((Intake of
2312 breath)) rose to the point that he went to breakfast club at S says he wasn't eating
2313 anything, says nobody noticed says the bowl smelt (1) I went in they said "You did
2314 you had half a bowl the other day" (2) So A somebody didn't notice he was eating
2315 something but "yeh" he said "but it was only half a bowl and I didn't eat very much
2316 an the bowls still smell" An he didn't like the way they were being washed up an
2317 there was yunno
2318 M: {Mm
2319 J: {there's all that sorta thing and so I'm very conscious like at the moment for some
2320 reason when we get in the car he's always winding the window down so it's cold so
2321 I'm trying to wind wind it up, he's winding it down. He then wants the heating on
2322 cold. I said "look Alex I'm the driver the driver needs to be comfortable" (.) An then
2323 we compromise on I would say like a third of the window open and the heating
2324 might be on middle but he just doesn't but this is this the sort (.) of crazy behaviour
2325 that I link with (.) the smell the bowls smelling and
2326 M:{Mm
2327 J: {that sort of thing so an with my sister saying for the last six years she's had
2328 terrible September I'm thinking (.) we're September October we don't know what
2329 we're doing is this what's happening (.) Is that what the bowls was all about his
2330 anxiety and mum was living here at the time now mum's not living here we went on
2331 holiday with her in August in September in Switzerland. He, mum an I shared a
2332 room, Seb and Alex shared a room (1) Mum really didn't like (.) Alex (.) then (.)
2333 Presumably he didn't like ((inaudible)) Alex seems to push me away (2) by tellin me
2334 (1) I'm rubbish at this an I'm rubbish at that an (1) erm well we don't want mum
2335 doin this whatever but then everybody seems to say he wants you he wants more
2336 time with you he's jealous of the time your spending with your mum and you're
2337 going to see your mum when your mum's upset an your mum's house needs work
2338 on it yunno all those sort of things so it's a really hard

2339 M: {Mm
2340 J: {mixed messages
2341 M: {Mm
2342 J: {to deal with there. Added to which (.) Seb an I (.) our attitude to the whole
2343 parenting thing so (2) I would like Alex to do some washing up and Seb like empty
2344 the compost bin th the recycling bags into the bin. Easy 25p job (1) easy earner. I
2345 remind him and remind him and remind him erm he might do it he might not do it
2346 but Seb sort of almost walks down the stairs with him opens the lid for him an I said
2347 “that's not him doin it that's not him doin it you're doin it (.) really” “Well I bl bl ay”
2348 So we're different come from different points on that as well which doesn't help but
2349 (.) What would make it better (.) to be in touch with other people who've been
2350 through the same thing. Even if it's different the whole (2) talking (.) Yeh (.) Other
2351 parents at the school gate (1) yunno just knowing what that is like (2) Erm the fact
2352 that you are accused of being so on that parenting course I went to (.) there's a boy
2353 who was Auti I saw her the other day erm er autistic whose now got an autistic
2354 diagnosis but she was being told at that parenting class that she wasn't putting
2355 enough routines in place and boundaries in place and he's the (.) third one of three
2356 children (2) the other two fine so (1) An he really is gets very very very agitated
2357 when it's like nativity season, everything's different. We haven't got any of that
2358 problem Alex's quite fine with change of routine (.) Absolutely fine with it what he
2359 think that he thinks that he's (2) maybe entitled to things but it's like we know a boy
2360 who just doesn't know what to do with himself when he's not on a computer game
2361 and he's got a little wotsit that he takes to bed at night and does an Alex says “he's
2362 wrong for doin that they're wrong for givin that to him an he shouldn't be doin this”
2363 an so he erm an I say “d'you understand why” I said “the thing is Alex (.) these
2364 things weren't around when we were kids an it will come out at some point what is
2365 the best thing to do. Technology is moving too quick for us to adapt to it and know
2366 what is the right thing to do so everybody does what they think is right” but if you
2367 look at Daniel's parents they're all on the computer all the time. So they're doin to
2368 him I look at us I am for tasks like committee, writing this pantomime doin the
2369 posters but not for games (1) So I think we need to er up our computer use a bit but
2370 (.) at the same time doin all these things like the athletics. He'll come back, he'll be
2371 delighted, whatever will have happened (.) he'll be happy doin whatever they're

2372 doin now
2373 M: So
2374 J: Do you want the light on?
2375 M: {more parents in, putting people
2376 J: {it's around something like that
2377 M: {in in touch with parents. Anything else that you would think would make a
2378 difference?
2379 J: {I haven't been to an autism course somebody told me last week oh yunno we
2380 thought we know everything about it oh n n n but she said but we did learn
2381 something actually
2382 M: {Mm
2383 J: {but the aut the really when there's an autism course or something like that you
2384 need (1) a creche (2) because it's hard enough for me to go to work
2385 M: {Mm
2386 J: {who's looking after Alex then. Seb's work turns a blind eye, we're really lucky
2387 about that. Mum doesn't want him on her own now but partly because she thinks
2388 it's not good for a 10 year old to be with an 85 year old for a lot of the time erm (.)
2389 an she said "oh he's been really good" an when he was over the summer erm yeh
2390 from May
2391 M: [Mm
2392 J: {to the end of term he went to her house when I was workin an I said "has he
2393 done his work" "yeh yeh he just sat down an did it" an so some of it was
2394 handwritten stuff some of it was maths some of it was erm typing a story on a
2395 computer "yeh he jus ust got on with it an then we went for a walk in the park or
2396 went to the shops or went to the library an yeh he's just got on with it just did it"
2397 But a couple of times she said "oh he di he di he sai he said he didn't have any" I
2398 said "he has got some that's why I wrote it in that black book what I set him" An she
2399 said "I don't wanna get involved with telling him off he's got to do this because I'm
2400 his grandma and yunno" ((this was whispered)) I don't want to get involved with
2401 tellin him off that's what I just whispered then because she whispered
2402 M: {Mhm
2403 J: {she so she on the hand she was telling me everything was fine (.) and then she's
2404 saying well actually I'm a bit frightened of telling him off about things so perhaps

2405 not as fine I thought he was but she did go to some of her friends or her friends
2406 came round an they all thought Alex was so handsome an polite an all these sort of
2407 things but not normal for a 10 year old boy to be mixing with old ladies so
2408 ((swallows)) Anyway so she decided don't want to do that anymore not when it's
2409 just her on her own (.) So for me to go to a daytime course
2410 M: {That's
2411 J: {Who's lookin after Alex (2) or an evening an really both parents should go so I
2412 suppose we could have babysitters but when you're not even confident about (.)
2413 socialising normally th th this is a babysitter babysitter (1) teachers can't look after
2414 him so we can't go to something like that unless something pops out that's so easy
2415 to go to
2416 M: Ok in terms of the experience with the schools (.)because you you've had
2417 experience of four
2418 J: {Yeah
2419 M: {schools
2420 J: {yeah yeah
2421 M: {Is there anything you think needs to change, could be different, would
2422 J: {Er
2423 M: {make things better?
2424 J: { I did feel that a lot of professionals were telling us stuff (2) that this is like
2425 Behaviour Support an all the yunno the headteachers, the MAT workers, and none
2426 of it (1) was the same (1) Which made me think (3) if you don't know (1)how are we
2427 meant to know. And yet we see him for longer than you do an one of the things that
2428 was said was well of course he's alright at scouts that's only for a couple of hours.
2429 But it's not for a couple of hours sometimes its a weekend
2430 M: {Mm
2431 J: {an it is with kids and sometimes they do things (.) they've annoyed Alex an he's
2432 just ((puffs air out)) he's yunno found his own way round it. So I don't (.) I th I think
2433 with schools ((swallows)) they've got their budget which is restricted, they've got
2434 their curriculum which is restricted an they've got their SATS to worry about (.) An
2435 then around here they've got mixed age group classes so they've got a lot of (3)
2436 restrictions, limitations, hard work before they've even started an that's if all
2437 children are beautifully behaved (.) an if they're not then you've got problems and I

2438 just don't think they can cope with it erm (1) think Mr Smith (2) did what he thought
2439 was (1) Mr Smith can be like Teflon shouldered in that it will run off because he did
2440 the right thing he was in contact with the MAT team (.) he was in contact with
2441 Behaviour Support (.) he was in contact with Individual Programmes and did what
2442 they said. Oh by the way the Individual Programmes when nec that came back on
2443 course in May (1) after Alex left E (1) they contacted us they wanted to make
2444 appointment to book in to bring a computer
2445 M: {Mm
2446 J: {an get all of everything working we never got to that far before but they
2447 obviously worked out that was what needed to happen I said "just a minute (1) if
2448 there's an issue of money being spent an it's bein spent on Individual Programmes
2449 don't let it be Individual programmes spend it on the H Secondary thing because
2450 that is stimulating. Individual Programmes was not stimulating he was being taught
2451 by a teaching assistant doin this very very basic work (1) at least with Debbie she is a
2452 teacher
2453 M: {Mm
2454 J: {an she is working (1) yunno a very high level
2455 M: {Mm
2456 J: {but he wouldn't pass an exam now but he's much higher than his peers an (.) he
2457 but he (.) an the the erm the Clinical Psychologist said "well if they're autistic then
2458 they're a third younger than their chronological age an their sort of social (2) and
2459 emotional behaviour but then if he's 16 in his reading an (1) a Maths getting up
2460 there if he was taught it he's got the ability to do it that is a wide range difficult for
2461 him to manage difficult for you to manage difficult for the school to manage" So I
2462 think (.) so when Brenda D said "oh yeah I think there's somethin in the North East
2463 Shire I'll look at it" She never did anything about that an when I reminded her of it
2464 six months later she said "oh (.) well it would be nice if there was something but
2465 there isn't
2466 M: {Ok
2467 J: {an I don't know what home school group Lilly said (1) cos she made some
2468 reference to the home schooling or I with me saying that E said and we can choose
2469 hoom home schooling but I'm being a bit frightened of it because I don't think that
2470 I'm capable of doing it all plus I don't wanna be locking horns all the time. Erm (.) an

2471 she said an I said an I understand if you do go home schooling then you can't erm go
2472 back into school if you wanted to an you have to pay for your exams an she said "it's
2473 not like that" (.) So I still don't know what it is like (.) erm but there's there's it she's
2474 the only one who would talk about home school in a normal way whereas all the
2475 rest have said that is completely different from what we do an oh we're not even
2476 talki we can't talk about because it's diff so you're feeling like you you you're
2477 already blind in this situation an you'd be really blind in that situation but you know
2478 a lot of people do it and then gradually when you're under this stone that we're
2479 under you find a lot of people. An they rea they can talk to you because they know
2480 you're not gonna you are gonna judge but in a diff with a different parameter
2481 because you've been through it
2482 M: {Mm
2483 J: {An you know it's like it's like it is literally like trying to put a square peg in a round
2484 hole you can't (.) and forcing Alex to do that is just not working and doing it more
2485 and more and more and more and more is not going to work so it needs to be a
2486 different thing (.) And so that's why I have hope with this Outside Teachers but he
2487 says "well yunno we'll get him school ready for year 7 nnn" An I'm thinking I think
2488 the same thing's gonna happen in year 7 (.) But what's happening now (1) an Chris
2489 said "I want it I as soon as he's ready I want to put him in for an exam because then
2490 he'll have a piece of paper to say yeah you've passed an exam you've you've done
2491 this" but now he seems to be talking a different language "we're getting him year
2492 school ready for year 7 an he'll be with his peers cos he wants to be with his peers"
2493 (2) Mm does he (2) which peers are these that he doesn't know yet (.) Erm and it's
2494 nice that he doesn't know them but then they'll all know each other so they'll have
2495 friendship groups but then everybody's making new friendship grou groups all the
2496 time an then you're gonna have the same mixed ability ((intake of breath)) probably
2497 not very many people like Alex (3) Mm It's gonna be the same pattern (.) possibly
2498 and puberty which might have already started or not
2499 ((laughter))
2500 J: So I feel like we really are (2) just literally holding on (.) for whatever knowing that
2501 this is gonna continue until he's 18 I think because 18 if I hope he stays in education
2502 but I think there's a real possibility he might say "I can leave at 16 I'm out"
2503 M: {Mm

2504 J: {so now my message to him is Alex take the opportunities that you've got here
2505 now because if you don't you're gonna want to do them you are gonna want to do
2506 them because it's gonna be in your interest to do these exams but you'll be to
2507 having to go to school in the evening that you'll be paying for an then do you exams
2508 (.) when all your mates (1) are doing fun things (.) or earning more money so and
2509 then you'll get a better job an you'll earn more money cos that's what y y unno you
2510 want. He's driven by money he's interested in money dunno why. An somebody said
2511 "what d'ya want for Christmas" an the answer was "I don't know I don't know" I
2512 don't know what he wants erm
2513 M: What do you want for Christmas?
2514 J: What well
2515 M: ((laughs))
2516 J: {what I want for Christmas is calm
2517 M: {Mm
2518 J: {What I (.) d'yunno what the basic thing I really want for Christmas I would like (2)
2519 to have some time with my mum and us as a familiy that is nice that might not
2520 happen and I would like us to watch something on television or a lot of things on
2521 television that make us laugh (1) together (1) That's all I want (.) I don't that's all I
2522 want an I don't think I'm gonna get it (1) So at work I said "I'll work all of it all of it all
2523 of it all the time erm but I would like the 30th and 31st off cos I'm painting
2524 pantomime scenery and I've booked the hall and stuff like that" and she said an I
2525 said "I know most people will want the 24th and 26th, 27th off so I'll work it all" (.)
2526 She said "but you've got a 10 year old" an I said "yeah" she said "but" I said "no all I
2527 want for Christmas is calm calm and if it's a bank holiday an that means Seb's off I
2528 can work (.) I can do it" Because what I'm hoping (2) is if we're financially we and we
2529 are because we've had a rebate on the heating, we've had a rebate on tax, I've earnt
2530 something so I'm I've got my account is flush at the moment that's a I can have
2531 anything I want and that's great I can even put some new windows in if I want to
2532 but I'm not gonna be here the same time and winters just started but we did have
2533 three months of I'm overdrawn again I'm overdrawn again and Seb saying "what're
2534 you spending your money on what're you spending your money on" (3) His feet
2535 now, Alex's feet are size 41 so that
2536 M: {{{laughs}}

2537 J: {could be one thing we're going through
2538 M: {Oh dear a bit of a growth
2539 J: {Yeh
2540 M: {spurt
2541 J: {yeh absolutely
2542 ((laughter))
2543 J: {An trousers well Seb's bought the trousers but what am I spending the money on
2544 we we're not doing anything but there is no money (.) so that's been an added
2545 stress but now we're flush an I think that's so what I would like is erm (1) a nice time
2546 with the family (2) don't think I'm gonna get it and a nice (1) erm wage of money
2547 to book a summer holiday that would be nice (.) time together. I'm thinking we
2548 gonna go to the Isles of Scilly because we can take the dog, I've been to the Isles of
2549 Scilly before I'd like to go in the season when the tides are really extreme so we can
2550 walk across one island. Accommodation is more expensive than going to
2551 Switzerland. More expensive (.) So Seb said don't do it I'm thinking ((deep sigh)) we
2552 have to do it we have to do it cos if we don't do it now when are we gonna do it an y
2553 y y we should do it, we can earn the money an we can do it, we can do it'll work (.)
2554 So I will do it but do I know whether we are gonna be happy (2) or are we gonna be
2555 having a Aaagh fighting each other all the time, I won't take mum erm (1) dunno
2556 dunno so all I want is calm. I met an old boss today in X Area he didn't recognise me
2557 cos my hair's cut I've got make-up on I'm dressed posh rather than in mud and he
2558 goes to me, he's a landscape architect and arbore culturist, he's gone greyer so (.)
2559 we walked past each other
2560 M: {{{laughs}}}
2561 J: {I thought just a minute I called him an his wife an said "oh how are you" He said
2562 "Ooh ((sound of struggling to find words possible surprise)) I said I know I work at
2563 that silly clothes shop expensive clothes so I have to look like this" He said "well
2564 bbllllll you look smart with your short hair" he sai he said "are you not doing any
2565 more landscape architect an you're not working in Sheffield" an I said "no" an he
2566 said (2) "Waste" (1) That's what it feels like I said "but what am I doing instead I'm
2567 teaching somebody who can't be taught" An I could see an his daughter works as a
2568 teacher in a special school an when I was working with him she was having chairs
2569 thrown at her an stuff like that and he was saying "Ugh ugh ((gulp)) as good as oh

2570 the monsters" an
2571 M: {Mm
2572 J: {an so (1) I I'm thinking well what do you think yunno what do you think of me
2573 now. Whereas my other boss I went to see him I don't know six months ago an he
2574 said "((sigh)) I'm sorry you have to go through this" (1) Which is a lot more
2575 understanding than I would ever give him credit for
2576 M: {Mm
2577 J: {So there's diff er I presume it matters what they've seen in other people an (.)
2578 Cos he did say one of my colleagues her daughter's amazing, flying through school,
2579 flying through school erm bet she's gonna go to XXXX School, money behind her,
2580 ability behind her (.) but she's socially she won't wash, she's never had a boyfriend
2581 (.) something strange (1) So he's perhaps already pre prepared an er so he's
2582 probably thinking what is the world coming to the next generation's the next
2583 generation is is all not working an why isn't it working an that's why you're doin this
2584 PhD
2585 M:((laughs)) Is there anything on that note, Is there anything that you
2586 J: {advise
2587 M: {would like to say that you haven't said
2588 J: Well clearly if we've failed in four schools (.) it's us
2589 M: {{{(deep sigh))
2590 J: {but it is small village schools and we haven't had an opportunity to go to a bigger
2591 school (.) Should we go to big one should we go I don't know cos I think Lilly now
2592 thinks oh erm smaller groups is better where he but we we haven't we've just tried
2593 the same model four times it feels like
2594 M: {Mhm
2595 J: {well except the last two schools were really small with a lot of ASD children an
2596 that didn't work (.) So I think (2) I'm I (1) I'm want I like the idea of Chris teaching
2597 him and putting him in for exam next year and see wha cos that's completely
2598 different and see what happens because I would say we're not a sporty family erm
2599 even though all the athletics nernernern part of the football team an nerner ner and
2600 the cricket he's doin now we the season's stopped loves it all (.) but that's not from
2601 us that's just from us saying "do it yunno y'might" I I support scouts he loves scouts
2602 that woodworking thing he loves the only thing he hasn't loved that I thought he

2603 would like (.) is music I thought he would like to play the piano in fact I thought he
2604 would like to play the guitar an he had one guitar teacher he liked, then he moved
2605 school had another guitar, didn't like that guitar teacher and hasn't picked it up
2606 again an hasn't shown any interest doesn't really we don't really listen to much
2607 music so that's part of the problem. So he's not got a but he's got a radio he could
2608 have the radio on in the morning an listen to whatever not interested (.) but erm he
2609 does like (.) all that outdoor tree climbing climb so I think I thought he might be a
2610 fell runner might like to do something like that but he's not linked the athletics and
2611 the being outside yet even though I tell him you'll probably want to be he's a mmm
2612 not na
2613 M: {so it sounds to me like you're describing erm (.) a curriculum or an education
2614 that (.) plays to his strengths and his interests
2615 J: {Yeah
2616 M: {and is individualised
2617 J: {Yes
2618 M: {Is that
2619 J: {Yeh
2620 M: {Have I got that right
2621 M: {Yes but erm he (3) he says he doesn't like French "no no I'm not doin any
2622 French not doin any why do I have to do French why I'm not I'm not gonna do
2623 French I'm not gonna do French or German an why would I do it I'm not gonna do it
2624 I'm not gonna do it" and part of me thinks (.) maybe he shouldn't ever be forced to
2625 do any foreign languages maybe that'd just be a nice cop out for everybody
2626 shouldn't do it but then I did buy a taped tape (1) so that's old old language (1)
2627 course an he was furious with me for getting it an but when I asked him to write
2628 something down for his computing so I told him how showed him to do something
2629 an we went through it an I said right now write it down in this your computing book
2630 (.) how to do it ((sound of turning pages)) or maybe (.) it's in another book, can't
2631 remember which book anyway he wrote down the instructions how you do it an at
2632 the bottom he wrote Voila
2633 M: {{{(laughter)}}}
2634 J: {Spelt wrong (.) but I knew exactly what it an I said right he spelt it I think he spelt
2635 it W A double L A. I said "I know what you mean there but this is how you spelt it"

2636 he said "oh right ok" So does he really not want to do any French (.) an then on the
2637 computer on the piano oh "I don't wanna do any don't wanna practice don't wanna
2638 practice don't wan" in fact practising is the thing he doesn't want to practice that's
2639 part of the "don't wanna practice" but then when I sh show them a tune (1) to try to
2640 get them playing this duet really simple right hand and Arpeggio's left hand this is
2641 Seb an Alex they are capable of doin it (.) but no they wouldn't do it but then Alex
2642 immediately rose to the challenge and all I said something to him a little joke I said
2643 "if you can find an If you can play me an Arpeggio you can have an extra ten minutes
2644 on the computer" (2) An after sort of five goes he got it
2645 M: {so a curriculum that he is motivated to
2646 J: {Yeh
2647 M: {to do
2648 J: {yeh
2649 M: {whatever that motivation might be
2650 J: {that's right we shou an it changes it moves
2651 M: {Mm
2652 J: {so at the moment we saw the Mongolian episode of Top er The Grand Tour
2653 which is the first one he's seen I knew that I knew there wasn't much swearing
2654 because if I'm watching something an there's swearing I'm wincing
2655 M: {Mm
2656 J: {An I wasn't wincing an then I thought well maybe we can watch it. An he
2657 absolutely loved it. An I said well there's there'll be some others you can see them
2658 but not all of them. So we saw the Mozambique one and he found it hilarious
2659 ((inaudible)) this fish taking fish an one of them is always fallin over on the
2660 motorbike another one's got an aquarium in the back but when he breaks the water
2661 sloshs down here an they obviously didn't expect that to happen even though they
2662 must (.) work out some scenarios before an the other two were laughing so much
2663 clearly they did not expect it to be like that an the one who's drivin an every now an
2664 agai when it sort of happened an Alex fell about laughing on that an he gets that
2665 slapstick humour certainly but he he he even sophisticated humour he can get it an
2666 erm an he wan he's desperate to watch some more an I said ((inaudible)) "I've got
2667 to think about which ones you can watch" an derdederderderder (1) but he's
2668 getting older I'd love him I'd love him to watch James Bond think he'd love it all that

2669 stepping over crocodiles an that sort of stuff an I'm thinking oh it's so misogynist an
2670 errrr sex scenes an things like that an I think there probably mild but we can't do
2671 that yet but he's ready he's ready for that level (2) of the other side of things
2672 M: {Yeh
2673 J: {so we're in this sort of difficult an I'm sure that when he's 18 an he can do what
2674 he wants he will succeed in doin (.) somethin he will find success but in this yeh
2675 M: So on that note
2676 J: {On that note, on that terrible disappointment
2677 ((laughter))
2678 J: Is that enough material for you
2679 M: Thank you
2680 ((recording finished. Debrief conversation followed. Jenny then asked to switch the
2681 recording back on to say the following))
2682 J: Right I was thinking about new ways of teaching that sort of thing so I went to a
2683 grammar school so I has 12 plus erm 12 plus exam it was called and we went
2684 straight into the second year at the grammar school because we stayed an extra
2685 year in primary just was XXShire that's what it was. Erm so I'm used to that level of
2686 strea streaming or selection process so I don't see it as a bad thing. But (.) Alex's
2687 experience I think selection should happen (.) but in a different sort of way it's
2688 almost like erm (.) people shouldn't go to one school maybe they should go to two
2689 schools er say Monday Wednesday Friday one school Tuesday Thursday another
2690 school so they can (1) be selected to (.) be like mini apprentices on the things that
2691 they're really good at so don't force for example Alex to do Modern Languages (1)
2692 but do encourage him to do more cricket than he would normally do at school so
2693 I've purposely chosen something that's not an academic thing but that sort of thing.
2694 Maybe don't force them all to be (.) part of a show if they don't wanna be part of a
2695 show but the ones who do wanna be part of a show it'll be cracking it will be
2696 absolutely wonderful get er cohorts from different schools an get an th then they all
2697 want good parts an they'll all be they'll support it brilliantly erm but then the others
2698 maybe want to (2) cook maybe they want to do languages maybe they want to
2699 yunno but don't force them all to be the same give them the opportunity for
2700 different friendships sets rather than be (.) stuck in that zone with the same ones for
2701 four years five years an then yunno that sort of thing End

Appendix 9: Heather's transcript

- 1 M: Thank you for coming (.) and thank you for agreeing agreeing to be part of the
2 research. Erm obviously what I've spoken to you before about (.) what the aims of
3 the research are but it to summarise that it's (.) I want to get an understanding of
4 what's happening around er exclusion particularly exclusion of young people with
5 autism
- 6 H: [Mhm
- 7 M: [and I think that as a mother who has experienced that, that there's valuable
8 insight to be gained (.) from that that we as professionals can learn from in the
9 future.
- 10 H: Yep
- 11 M: So just how I see the research going and how the interview going (.) rather
12 than having (.) a set of questions that (.) would come from what I would think
13 are the important issues ((checking dictaphone recording)) just checking it's
14 recording ((laughter)) rather than, rather than having a set of questions that I think
15 are the important issues I want to kind of leave it open (.) for you to go wherever
16 you want to go with that story
- 17 H: [Yeh
- 18 M: [because as I've said it to you before, I think the knowledge is in you rather
19 than in me because
- 20 H. [Yeh
- 21 M: [you have experienced it. (1) So, I've got just two questions that hopefully will
22 help you to (.) tell your story and I'm gonna go along with you kind of, (.) nodding in
23 places and encouraging you in places to continue talking. Does that make sense?
24 ((laughter))
- 25 H: Yes that's fine ((laughter))
- 26 M: Ok, so er my first question is (.) that I understand that E has experienced
27 exclusion (.) from school (.) can you tell me about that?
- 28 H: Erm E was first diagnosed as being autistic when in (1) it was July 2017 when we
29 got the official diagnosis, we'd been on the pathway for a couple of years, on and
30 off, erm (1) due to more and more social problems (.) as she was in school and
31 progressed through school it was becoming more and more obvious that that
32 something was (2) not quite right erm and she wasn't hitting sort of the milestones

33 in terms (.) the social and emotional (1) development. (.) Erm so
34 we got the diagnosis erm but we'd she'd been refusing to go to school, she
35 hated school, she didn't want to go in, she was kicking and screaming to go in erm
36 (2) that was sort of the end of year 4. (.) Erm we managed to put a little reward
37 system in place to get her back in to going to school so she was going into school
38 and she was doing ok. Erm the start of year 5, she was (.) going in but wasn't really
39 doing any work, wasn't really engaging, erm and (1) I got a phone call one morning
40 in October (.) err (2) 2017, (.) I had to think of the year then,

41 M: [Yeah

42 H: [an (1) to say come in she'd had a meltdown, er and they needed me to go home,
43 which wasn't a regular occurrence they didn't normally need me to go in. Erm
44 so, I goes in and (.) the headteacher pulled me in, and (1) she basically said I'm
45 going to have to permanently exclude her sh and (.) they took me in to the room
46 where she was, erm she was confined into this area that was just (.) a mess,
47 there was (.) papers everywhere, displays had been ripped off the walls, there was
48 tables and chairs flipped over and she was in a a rage basically, and she didn't even
49 recognise me (.) being there at first.

50 M: Ok

51 H: I got right (.) rather upset and took a step out, erm (1) calmed myself down went
52 back in sort of (1) went over to her, sat down with her and she just sort of (.) came
53 down and and we just sort of (2) breathed and and it's right I'm taking her home,
54 and the headteacher she sort of said right well I'll I'll send all the paperwork that
55 needs to be erm (.) gone through and we'll talk about that, I said Ok that's fine. Erm
56 didn't really have that much sort of headspace to deal with it. I didn't really
57 understand what it meant or anything at that time (.) and erm (1) main priority was
58 getting E home

59 M: [Mm

60 H: [and getting her calm again. Erm (3) later on in the day she kind of (1) knew that
61 she had been permanently excluded and she got really upset and she kept saying
62 sorry and sorry and sorry and and ((intake of breath)) and then sort of over the next
63 few days, we kind of (2) sort of got the (4) incident report

64 M: [ok

65 H: [of what had happened and what had led up to this meltdown and what not. Erm

66 (1) it was (3) a change of routine (2) and (.) the teachers had implemented
67 something, (.) erm or were meant to be implementing something. The teacher had
68 explained it to E that morning (.) but then wasn't there at lunchtime when E went to
69 find out what was going on. Erm so she said well I'll go and do what I would
70 normally do then I'll go outside and they wouldn't let her, which is when she went
71 into this other room and then they wouldn't let her get out, they kept her in this
72 room (1) it was sort it was lunchtime so there was kids here there and everywhere,
73 erm so they wanted to (.) keep all of the other children safe which is (.) ridiculous
74 because she's never attacked another child,

75 M: [Mm

76 H: [she just wanted to be outside. Erm she just got more and more agitated and
77 frustrated and just had a complete and utter meltdown and they still wouldn't let
78 her leave, and it was then that they rang me to go and fetch her. It was (.)
79 unavoidable to be fair. (1) So, then we (3) sort of got ourselves together and (.)
80 yunno gathered more and more information (.) and then went through the whole
81 sort of (.) process of right this is what happens now and she's not allowed out
82 during school hours for the first few days, and (.) and the local authority will be in
83 touch with you about what happens next, and (.) erm it was just an absolute jumble
84 of yunno (.). So so complicated and (2) we (2) had a couple of people from the local
85 authority say yeah right ok this is what's gonna happen an (.) but it didn't really sink
86 in, but we kinda decided we wanted to take it to the governors

87 M: [Mm

88 H: [because we didn't really agree (.) that she had been permanently excluded.
89 Which then kind of got me to (2) doing lots of research (2) as school policies and and
90 (1) all this that and the other, and I contacted National Autistic Society and
91 explained to them what had happened and they sent me so much information it
92 was fantastic, and (1) we had er called a governors meeting and said look they
93 didn't follow their own behaviour policies, you know she's never had a fixed term
94 exclusion and the school said well we didn't we thought that's what she'd want and
95 and the governors basically said no we are gonna (.) uphold the decision to (.) keep
96 her excluded and (.) and yeah. So then, (1) it kind of went from there and it was
97 right so well this is what we do now and (1) it's been absolutely awful ever since to
98 be fair. (.) She's been anxious, she's been depressed, it's just got so worse and

99 worse and she's still not back in full time school nearly two years later (.) because
100 she just can't handle it.

101 M: [Ok

102 H: [She doesn't trust people, she doesn't trust teachers or doctors. She just (1)
103 stays inside, doesn't want to go anywhere, doesn't want to do anything. She's (.)
104 not happy anymore and it's absolutely awful ((intake of breath)) so that's the basic
105 side of it. Yeh ((laughter)) It's been a bit of a process.

106 M: It sounds sounds like a (.) like from thinking and listening to what you are saying
107 it sounds like it was it sounds like it came a bit like out of the blue (.) really

108 H: [Yeah, yeah

109 M: [is that is that your sense?

110 H: Yeah it was. I mean we'd had some problems (.) in the months in the months
111 before (1). Since she was excluded in the October (.), but then sort of the May er
112 May June time was when she was (.) really sort of (1) I don't want to go school and
113 she refused to get dressed in the morning, she refused to get in the car, she refused
114 to get out of the car. Erm (.) when we did get her there she would try and
115 escape and try to break through the security door but then (1) we managed to sort
116 of take it sort of strip it all back and it was right ok if you can't get your uniform on
117 you don't get your uniform on let's just get you to let's get to school and we'll sit
118 and we'll (2) chill out for five minutes in there and then we'll see how we go and (.)
119 and we (.) gradually built it back up again, and she had this reward chart erm so that
120 (.) on a Friday she could (.) do something, well because she hated the singing
121 assemblies that were on a Friday

122 M: [yeah

123 H: [she hated the singing the singing assemblies, so they said well during that time
124 someone will take you outside and you can do either some baking or some roller
125 skating around the playground or something that you want to do and that worked
126 really well. (.) Her year 5 she had a new teacher (.) new teacher was amazing (.) and
127 she was right ok I want to know as much as we can so that we can really try and
128 help her, and she'd got (1) she was er down to play a musical instrument that she
129 was really looking forward to, I wasn't because it was the trombone

130 M: [[[laughs]]

131 H; [ok (1) but you know so long as she was looking forward to it, she had the

132 residential coming up as well later in the school year and she was really looking
133 forward to that and (.) er we feel a little bit let down. Erm they'd been accepted to
134 (1) er to (.) Autism Outreach they'd made a referral to Autism Outreach and they'd
135 just accepted and were in the process of making an appointment to come and see
136 her and whatnot to discuss strategies when she got excluded. It's like they didn't
137 really give anything a chance. It's like they kinda went we can't deal with this
138 anymore and gave up and it was really (.) disappointing and really, really frustrating
139 and (.) they had been amazing up until that point and (1) it was just (.) heart
140 breaking that (.) they'd given up

141 M: [ok

142 H: [so yeah.

143 M: So, you talk about amazing, what was amazing? What was what was working for
144 you, for E at that point, what was good?

145 H: They had (.) there was a pastoral manager there and she was fantastic. She was
146 so lovely, the whole school absolutely adored her, a lot of her time was spent with
147 E trying to yunno (.) because E was (1) she could be quite challenging sometimes.
148 Erm (1) they'd got (.) sort of sensory things to help her in the classroom, she'd got
149 her own little workstation in the cloakroom outside, so she could go there if she
150 needed to, erm (.) they like they put the reward system in place. (.) Erm (1) on the
151 days where she was struggling to go, in we would kind of go into the staff room and
152 have a cup of tea with her and she was allowed to have a cup of tea (.) and erm,
153 they were just (1), it seemed like they were really trying

154 M : [Mhm

155 H: [but sort of (.) only through sort of the exclusion and me kinda going well (1) they
156 cudda done that actually, yunno they could've had behaviour service
157 support (.) involved before she had a diagnosis. They could have come in and
158 helped. Erm ((intake of breath)) they didn't give a chance with Autism Outreach to
159 come in, there was other referrals that should have been made like speech and
160 language to help with her communication difficulties which is kinda what she was
161 struggling to communicate how she was feeling. Erm (1) it was ((intake of breath))
162 there were other things we could do and then there was other children in the
163 school, yunno, that were (1) behavio(h)urally challenged

164 M: [Mm

165 H: [and they would regularly be disruptive or (1) getting into trouble for incidents
166 and (1) and yet they were still there, and I think there was other quite serious
167 incidents that there was never any exclusions for and (1) they kind of (3) I don't
168 know (3) it's like the goalposts had changed because she was coming into school
169 and there were things that she was looking forward to but it's kind of like they
170 forgot (1) and they kinda went (.) it's not working, she wants she doesn't want to be
171 in school, so if we give her a fixed term exclusion she's getting exactly what she
172 wants When, really, she just needed that break to kind of reset

173 M: [Yeah

174 H: [and we know that now from personal experience because she's (.) been in (2) a
175 new school for Year 6. Erm she's only been doing a few hours a day. Erm and in
176 October she had a little bit of a (.) erm another breakdown. Erm (.) where we had to
177 go to (.) the GP for an emergency referral to CAMHS cos she was (.) saying she
178 wished she was dead and (.) it was it was (.) quite (1) a difficult

179 M: [Yeah

180 H: [scary time. Erm so we (.) said right no she's not going to school

181 M: [Mm

182 H: [we're not forcing her to go to school, erm and we let her have the time off to
183 sort of rest and recuperate and, and then she did go back again (.) because she was
184 able to, wanted to and and it's like they didn't trust that (.) she would (.) and (3) so
185 hindsight's a wonderful thing but yunno

186 M: [Hmm

187 H: [they're the prof(h)essionals at the end of the day

188 M: Is that how you see them and that's how you (1)

189 H: [yeah

190 M: [saw the school?

191 H: [they're meant to be the ones who who can point us in the right direction. I'm
192 trying to deal with things as best I can as a mum but I don't know how the system
193 works, I don't know all these (.) different services that can come in and help and
194 it's like I say it's only through hindsight and through the exclusion with people
195 saying well did they do this? No, they didn't do that. I didn't even know that was an
196 option. Well what about this? (.) Not a clue (1). There was another (2) child who was
197 (2) having behavioural issues. I'm not sure of the details because obviously they

198 don't disclose but

199 M: [Mhm

200 H: [he went to the same sort of centre (.) that E was going to for a while, (.) erm in

201 that (.) first year, (1) and (.) he was going there in the afternoons because he was at

202 risk of exclusion (2) and given that she'd been obviously being having problems

203 months and months before, well why wasn't this an option to us, to to take her out

204 of the situation, take her somewhere else and work on these skills and so (1) why

205 weren't we given that option (.) that could have helped her.

206 M: So, you feel like (.) do you feel like you weren't given (.) information?

207 H: Erm yeah (.) information, opportunities (.) yunno it's like it's (1)

208 part of it's like a whole big secret (1) and whether it's down to the fact that

209 sometimes they have to pay for these services I'm not sure, I have no idea, no idea

210 how it works but (.) I know sometimes they have to (.) fund these things, and if

211 they haven't got the money then to do it then (.) it's (.) it's difficult for them. But

212 that that was another thing they could've done, they could've applied for additional

213 funding because she was on the SEN register, she was newly diagnosed and ((intake

214 of breath)) it was just, it was like (2) they just dropped the ball and they just let us

215 down. They didn't (1) give us all the options to keep her in school so (.) she

216 obviously got excluded and and it's made things a thousand times worse. She's

217 a totally different child. It's (1) quite heart breaking ((intake of breath)).

218 M: It sounds it, it sounds it (1) So, how have you how have you kind of (.) managed

219 things since (.) that event?

220 H: Erm (2) research ((laugh)). Research er was a huge part of it because (1) since

221 she's (.) been excluded we looked into (2) demand avoidance because she was it

222 was very much a (1) asking her getting her to do anything at all was met with a very

223 firm no. Erm so I looked into demand avoidance strategies which was basically

224 (.) stop all your demands (.) you need to (.) yunno, she needs to feel like she's in

225 control again. An cos she didn't, she didn't have any control over anything which

226 is why she was saying no to everything ((intake of breath)). So (1) I was looking into

227 all this which was a bit difficult at first and you kinda go er it's fine if

228 you don't want to do this, it's fine if you don't want to do that ((intake of breath))

229 but (.) eventually she'd come round to it herself, and it was like (1) it was brilliant

230 (.) because it was like ooh ooh aah this is working. (.) Erm (1) it's been (3)

231 very difficult (1) as a family (1). Erm my son was (1) very much like why does she
232 get to stay home? (1) why do I still have to? I don't want to go to school (.) why does
233 E get to stay home every day?
234 M: Mm
235 H: So he found it quite difficult to understand. ((intake of breath)) Put a lot of
236 pressure on me and (.) my partner. Erm who's who was sort of the opinion,
237 although yes, she'd been let down by the school and he was very much upset with
238 that, he was like well she just needs to get on with the (.) things and and this is
239 what's happened and we just need to deal with it and it's like (.) well actually no
240 ((intake of breath)) we need to work on why it happened and and build her back up
241 again and and make sure things are right in the future and he'd say well we can't
242 control everything bluhh and no but we can certainly help ((laugh)) and and do
243 things the right way
244 M: [Mhm
245 H: [so so it's been a massive strain on (.) us personally. I have absolutely no social
246 life. Well, I have a little bit more now than I did before but I couldn't go out
247 anywhere during the day cos E didn't want to leave the house, she didn't want to
248 leave her room sometimes. Erm I can't have a normal job because (.) I've got no one
249 to watch her. Erm and I can't put her in childcare. She's (.) just (.) not suitable
250 for nor(h)mal childcare. Erm (2) it's been very isolating. (1) Erm (.) very, very
251 stressful. So we do bits where we can, try and get out when we can and my
252 mum comes up (.) erm once a week to watch her for a little while (.) so I
253 can get out and do something and ((intake of breath)). It's (2) but me and my
254 partner don't really get much time to do things together anymore cos one of us is
255 generally got to stay at home (.) with the kids and it's ((trails off))
256 M: It sounds kind of isolating you know when you tell me what's going on like like
257 there isn't (.) other than your immediate family
258 H: [Mm
259 M: [I wonder where where the other support is from in terms of school was
260 it there ever?
261 H: No not really. We had six hours a week where she'd go to (.) erm a centre (1)
262 which she wasn't massively keen on (.) but she'd (1) go. Erm she didn't really do
263 much there (.) she wasn't massively (.) keen on it (.). She had a one to one TA and

264 she was with other children who were (1) a lot more extreme (2) in their behaviours
265 (2) more of more of the time. E has very occasional (.) sort of explosions (.), whereas
266 these other children were (1) quite volatile a lot of the time
267 M: [Ok
268 H: [so she didn't feel like she fit in with them and so she wasn't really keen on
269 going and we had a tutor come round (.) for an hour a week (1) but (.) the
270 programmes that they were using were quite babyish and she didn't really
271 want to do any of that, we had half an hour lesson (1) on line, which was (.)
272 generally ok, there wasn't really much (.) in terms of education but ((intake of
273 breath)) but (1) that was it as far as her education was concerned. As far as anything
274 else is concerned there's not really a lot (.) to support you (.) as a family It's (2) or if
275 there is, it's very hard to access and (.) find (.) it's yunno
276 M: And do you feel like the onus has been on you in terms of finding things?
277 H: Yes (.) oh very much so, very much so. it's (1) you get the occasional (.) sort of oh
278 there's this support group an (.) that people hear of but (.) we can't always go to
279 them because sometimes they are during the day, when the kids are normally at
280 school, which I obviously can't go to (1). Erm (1) and (1) they just seem to be at odd
281 times or if I can take her with me then she doesn't want to go to them, and so
282 right (1) so (2). Erm ((laugh)) paediatrician actually she said to me (1) erm (2) there
283 is a (.) new support group that's just been set up I think it's at St Johns Ambulance
(.) headquarters (1) er once a month and I kind of turned round and said yeh I know
284 I run it ((laughter)) She was like oh right ah (.) well obviously I couldn't take E to that
285 because I was actually running that. It was the only thing I could actually do at the
286 time and it was once a month and so (.) E couldn't obviously couldn't come to that
287 and she was right ok well there are workshops to go to but yes I can't go to them
288 because they are during the day when I can't get childcare (1) Oh right ok then (2)
289 Well (1) right then thanks for that is that all I get then? (.) Yeah that's it (1) Basically
290 (.) if you can't get to the workshops, you can't get to the help groups then (2)
291 there's not a lot they can do. (.) So mm (.) ok.
292 M: So, you set up this (.) support group and you run it?
293 H: Yeah, well yeah, it's through Autism Xarea.
294 M: [yeh
295 H: [so I'm employed by them and they wanted to expand to the X area so cos I (.)

296 knew (.) my boss from one of the support groups I used to access down in X area
297 when we lived down there when she was going to school a lot of the time (.) and we
298 were sort of very new on the autism pathway and I used to go and go well I don't
299 really know whether I'm supposed to be here or not because yunno I don't know If
300 she has got autism cos she's not been diagnosed and it was (.) yunno If
301 you think that that's what it is then we can help you through (1) fabulous
302 ok. So (1) erm (1) yeah we've got a (.) support group up here which (.) there are a
303 few support groups up here (.) but again they're quite difficult to access (1) it's
304 frustrating (.) and even if you can access them the kids don't always want to go.
305 M: No
306 H: The one that I run is aimed at under twelves (.) ish (.) it's very flexible but (.) it's in
307 a playcentre and E's (.) not bothered about playcentres anymore, she's eleven but
308 in her own mind she's a teenager already (1) and you don't really find any teen
309 support groups
310 M: [Ok
311 H: [they're very few and far between (1) there's one in X area (.) but again ((intake
312 of breath)) can't really get to that either ((sigh)) so there's not a lot of (.) support
313 out there.
314 M: So do you, I get the kind of whole feeling when you're talking again it's about
315 that isolation and the no support (1) kind of anywhere that you can access?
316 H: Pretty much. (1) Especially not not for er children who have been excluded
317 anyway, It's (2) it's few and far between.
318 M: What do you think what do you think's the issue? What what you say not for
319 children that have been excluded what do you draw a difference there? Can you
320 H: [It's (3) It's It's very strange (.) I've got (.) I'm on a support group online
321 M: [Mm
322 H: [and there's a lot of people on there who have experienced exclusion but this is
323 like all over the country
324 M: [Yeah
325 H: [and the kind of specifically in this (.) group, that there's people that have been
326 excluded (1) and (3) we are all of the same opinion, what do you do with your kids
327 when they've been excluded? When you try and get them back into school and
328 the (.) the local authority said to me she's not ready to be in school full time, so

329 they only gave her six hours a week (.) of interacting with other people, which
330 made her feel more and more isolated so she didn't want to go, so by the time
331 they said oh no she's ready to go back into school, she really wasn't ready to go
332 back into school cos she'd missed almost a full year (.) and she didn't know how to
333 be with other mainstream kids anymore, in a busy environment. (1) And so, at the
334 beginning they were like no she's not ready and (1) when they said she was she
335 really really wasn't ready. And so you've kind of made the problem worse here (2)
336 an (.) so ((puffs air out))
337 M: It sounds like you kind of disagreed with what was going on?
338 H: Yeah and they had to sign off on her being ready to go back to school
339 M: [ok
340 H: [we said we wanted to try an get her in somewhere as soon as possible
341 M: [Mm
342 H: [but (1) somewhere that was (2) either on a reduced timetable or something (.)
343 so that she was still accessing the school
344 M: [Mm
345 H: [to try and overcome the difficulties and not being sort of isolated and made
346 to feel guilty for (.) being excluded for having a meltdown (1) and it's kinda
347 basically what happened. She felt (2) an enormous amount of guilt and the longer
348 she was kept out of school because they were saying she wasn't allowed to go back
349 (.) the worse she felt. So, she didn't want to go back in the end and it's (.) then they
350 stuck her in a school she didn't want to be at either (.) ((Sigh)). So yeah that didn't
351 go well either (.) so It's right
352 M: So, you say they stuck her in the school so you had no choice about where she
353 went?
354 H: No, no not exactly, they made us think we did
355 M: [Ok
356 H: Erm cos (inaudible) we wanted we moved to a new area so there was a school
357 right round the corner from us, so we thought that would have been fantastic
358 location wise. Erm (1) and she said, well the woman, it was our caseworker, said
359 well unfortunately, we've just put someone back into school in the same
360 year and we don't particularly want two sort of children who've experienced similar
361 sort of things or of a similar sort of personality being in the same year because they

362 might just sort of (2) cause an explosion off each other (.). Right ok I understand that
363 (1) so, then they were looking at the schools (2) and they suggested (.) X school
364 which is a catholic school. (2) E has very strong (.) opinions on religion
365 M: [Ok
366 H: [She is not religious at all. She doesn't want to know anything to do with religion,
367 which is fine. (.) Erm so that was already a bit of a (1) she's not gonna want to go
368 there, she's going to stick her heels in and not want to go there and (.) so I said (.) I
369 don't think that's a good idea, I don't really want you to try and send her there and
370 they said well unfortunately religion isn't a good enough reason for you not to want
371 to send her there. (1) I kind of went pardon (2) how is that not a good
372 enough reason (.) that It's (.) basically completely against her own beliefs (.)
373 that they would want to send her there anyway. And anyway (.) erm and so that
374 was when we kinda realised that actually we don't really get a say in this, they've
375 chosen a school and (1) because we haven't given a good enough reason that (1)
376 they have to send try and send her there anyway. Erm the bonus being on that
377 point was they went to meet with the headteacher and the headteacher basically
378 said they don't think that it's right for her because er well several reasons one being
379 that (1) there is a waiting list to get into that school (.) and the waiting list is full of
380 catholic families, she would pretty much be the only non-Catholic child at that
381 school (1) and (.) she would (.) not really fit in and would be made to feel even more
382 of an ((tails off)) anyway. So, the headteacher, (.) she basically said I don't think it's
383 right and I was so so pleased to hear that.
384 M: Ok
385 H: So, they suggested another school, it's just a mainstream school and the school
386 itself is lovely but she didn't want to be there (.) and then she didn't get on with the
387 teacher ((sigh)) either, really didn't get on with the teacher ((shaking head))
388 ((laughter))
389 M: So what sense did you kind of make at that point about her not wanting to be
390 there, what
391 H: [I honestly don't know, I still don't know one hundred per cent
392 M: [Ok
393 H: [her mental health is is so (1) fragile
394 M: [yeah

395 H: [she's got no self-esteem (.) but she doesn't trust teachers (1)
396 M: [ok
397 H: [from what happened with the exclusion and (.) she she does say quite
398 often they (.) punished me for being autistic (.) basically
399 M: [ok
400 H: [I had a meltdown and they were they caused that meltdown and then they
401 exclude me for it and (.) so she didn't trust anyone
402 M: [Mhm
403 H: [erm especially not teachers, anyone in that sort of role, anything to do with
404 School. She just didn't trust them, so she didn't want to be stuck somewhere.
405 And then to be stuck with the teacher who doesn't really (.) get it (.) was even worse
406 (.) So obviously the school placement hasn't really worked out very well, she
407 didn't go for the last six weeks
408 M: [ok
409 H; [Erm (3) she just couldn't cope with it anymore so she (2) she did really well to go
410 as much as she did (2) but it just didn't work and now we're (.) heading to secondary
411 school and she's (3) really just (2) dreading it (3). It's (2) it's very nerve racking,
412 especially for me. ((laughs))
413 M: I can imagine, I can imagine. So, you say that the teacher
414 H: [Mm
415 M: [she didn't get it. So, can you tell me about that, can you expand on that for
416 me?
417 H: Yes. The teacher, the Year 6 teacher, that she had (1) she seemed very
418 lovely, she did come across as very lovely (.) erm and she said her brother's autistic
419 (.) and she's taught many autistic children over the years so she knows about autism
420 and what not but (3) E's demand avoidance (1) is (3) difficult to manage (.) and
421 when you have a teacher who's saying you must do this you must do this you must
422 do this, the more she says it the more E's going you've got no hope, absolutely
423 no hope (1). And (2) it was (2) er (2) they have a thing in the morning when doing
424 the register of saying good morning to each other to the children individually and
425 the expectation is that they say good morning back and that's fine and that's polite
426 (1) but E in certain (.) situations she she can't speak
427 M: [mm

428 H: [she she physically can't get the words out. So, we've seen this, whether it's with
429 people that we know and she's just feeling a little bit nervous or if there's a big
430 room of people, she will just kind of walk in and kind of go ((makes noise to indicate
431 clamming up)) and clam up (2) and so the teacher's is saying good morning E (1) and
432 E's not saying anything. There's a class full of new people (.) and she's very out of
433 her depth, all of these people know each other already and so she doesn't say it.
434 So, the the teacher is saying look you must say good morning E when I say good
435 morning to you and she's kind of like god right now I've done something wrong (.)
436 M: [ok
437 H: [but this kept going on and on and on and on (.) and the teacher kept saying that
438 she was rude for not saying good morning (1) and the more obviously they made a
439 big deal out of it the worse it got, the more anxious she was (.) cos she's got severe
440 anxiety as well and it just made it worse and we said in one of the meetings we
441 had together you need to not (.) give her any demands because that's what is
442 working, it's a slow process but it's working and she will come to you in her own
443 time. And (3) just before (.) she stopped going, towards the end, erm, she's had a
444 one to one TA throughout this time as well, She well she'd been swapped from
445 February onwards which she also didn't get on with but we didn't really have a
446 choice in who the TA was because that TA was employed by the school (1) erm so
447 we didn't really (2) have a choice, if that makes sense
448 M: [Yeah
449 H: [which is (1) unavoidable but erm (2) they said good morning to her and she
450 didn't say it and so they again told her that she had been very rude and that she
451 would need to learn to to respond to people politely as she, as she yunno she goes
452 through life life and de de de, making her feel absolutely rubbish. So, she got really
453 upset and they ended up calling me erm about an hour after she had been there
454 saying she's really upset, I think she needs to come home, ((intake of breath)) and
455 her TA said to me (.), about the good morning thing again, she said "we didn't force
456 her to say it". You wouldn't have gotten her to say it even if you did try to force her
457 to be fair ((laughter)) Erm she said "but we were just explaining to her how rude it
458 was that she didn't say it" and I was like you didn't get the point at all. (2) The point
459 is (1) is just to drop it basically because the more you make a big deal out of it, the
460 worse it gets and they just didn't get it (.) and it's like (3) what they should've been

461 doing, just to sort of make it easier was ((intake of breath) teacher says good
462 morning E. E obviously doesn't ((swallow)) say anything back. (2) I can see that you
463 are here, we'll move on. And move on
464 M: [Mhm
465 H: [leave it, not na na na na na you're so rude blah blah blah. And because when
466 even when she was little (1) erm she was very (1) shy, well she come across as very
467 shy, and the children on the way to school would say morning E and she wouldn't
468 be able to say hello to them and so (.) I'd sort of say are you saying good morning E
469 and she she wouldn't answer me. So, I'd say good morning, whoever you are, and
470 sort of model it and then move on. I wouldn't make a big deal out of it. I wouldn't
471 make a big fuss. And then eventually, it took a couple of months, but eventually (1)
472 she did it herself (2) and it was like, yunno. I've explained this to the school and the
473 Educational Psychologist we had had agreed that yes these this will work erm, it was
474 like the teacher and the TA they just didn't get it, yunno, they ignored the advice,
475 no, no she's a child she does as she's told. It's like you just don't get (.) it doesn't
476 work like that.
477 M: It sounds like meetings you had because you say one of the meetings
478 we had
479 H: [Oh yeh we had loads. The last one I think there was about fourteen of us (.) in
480 that room, there was me, her stepdad, class teacher, TA, headteacher, erm, SENCO
481 from the new school, cos a lot of transition meetings erm, her new TA from the (.)
482 new school, there was someone from Autism Outreach, someone from Behaviour
483 Support, and someone else (.) I think, the educational psychologist, er the
484 integration pathways (.) lady, (2) er, there were lots of people regular meetings
485 ((Laugh)) So we've had a lot of meetings.
486 M: And what did you feel, how was it, because you talk to me and it sounds to me
487 like you felt like you weren't listened to necessarily but can you, I don't want to kind
488 of feed that information into you, but
489 H: Yeh (.) there (.) It's been very odd, every meeting's been different
490 M:[Ok
491 H: [erm (2) with the headteacher and the teacher (1) erm (1) it was like obviously
492 the headteacher has things that she has to do, and I understand that, and she came
493 across quite yunno I'm sorry there's not much I can do with regards to this but

494 maybe we could try this or ok we'll listen to this but the teacher didn't really say
495 much, but again she didn't really agree with what we were doing
496 M: [ok
497 H: [she was in fact quite clear from the way she (2) I can't even explain it, it was just
498 that sort of the (.) air of I don't really agree with what you're saying but (.) I can't
499 really do anything because I'm just a teacher and, anyway. Erm (1) the Educational
500 Psychologist was wonderful (1) and (2) the lady from autism outreach, again,
501 was brilliant because (.) and her positive playworker, who she's had (.) pretty much
502 since the beginning of being excluded, she does half an hour sessions a week and
503 helps her with her emotions and and things and they've got really good rapport.
504 Erm
505 M: [That's good
506 H: [they listen
507 M: [Ok
508 H: [and I always felt like this is fantastic, these people are listening to me, and
509 they're agreeing with me. But (.) it kind of felt like that anyone sort of employed by
510 the school (1) or any of the school staff (.) it was like they had their hands tied and
511 they can only do so many things and (1) they kind of sort of say well yes ok we'll try
512 that, but you kind of get the idea think, the impression that (.) they're only saying it
513 to (2) what's the word? (4) not please us but just to kind of placate us, it's just like
514 yes ok we are listening to you but that's not gonna happen. It's that sort of (1) ok
515 M: In terms of like you say they had their hands tied, what what makes you think
516 that's going on?
517 H: They (.) I know they have certain paths they have to follow with regards to things
518 like exclusions, (.) like erm the headteacher (.) from the old school, erm I get on
519 quite well with her actually now which is surprising but ((laughs)) but I have quite a
520 good rapport with her now, and there's certain channels that she has to follow, erm
521 certain procedures, certain people that she has to speak to and she has to do
522 things (.) a certain way. Which is (.) right ok I understand that ((inaudible)) and
523 school exclusion is not something that they have to do that they can take lightly.
524 They can't just go oh I'm done with this, you're excluded and then deal with it
525 afterwards. They have to kind of go right (1) am I justified in in this and and this is
526 what is going to happen next and this is blah, blah, blah, blah. (4) Erm and with the

527 teachers they've got other children (.) in a classroom and they can't (.) sort of be
528 seen to (.) be making special (3) adjustments. They can to a certain extent if that
529 child's on the SEN register and been recognised as having a special educational need
530 because they are (2) obliged to make reasonable adjustments (1). Erm, (.) but they
531 won't if they don't have to (.) because they have (.) over twenty other children in
532 the class that they need to try and keep control of and if one's been given special
533 treatment, then someone else kind of goes well hang on a minute (1) why does she
534 get away with doing that and not me. It's like E wears (.) was wearing a different
535 uniform and (1) they were trying to, in the beginning, they were trying
536 to say oh no she really should be wearing a a blue school jumper. Well, right well (1)
537 I'll get rid of the er skeleton hoodie, this one ((indicates jumper H is wearing)) that's
538 got a great big skull on it
539 M: (((Laughs)) It's a great hoodie I like it
540 H: [She would not take it off, she would not take it off, I can, I can try and get a plain
541 black one but you won't get her in a royal blue jumper, you've got absolutely no
542 hope (.) and (2) the TA wasn't very ha, you could see it in her face that she wasn't
543 very happy about it. She was quite patronising when she was speaking to me but,
544 well you try living with it ((laughs)). You know we're very limited on the wardrobe.
545 ((laughter))
546 H: She won't take that hoodie off anywhere. And she gets people coming up to her
547 saying oh you're all skin and bones you are and she's kind of looking as if to say you
548 what? God (.) someone's talking to me, go away ((Laughter))
549 H: But yeah, we managed to get her to wear a black (1) jumper with a hood on (.),
550 an cos she'd always hide in her hood, she needed that hood (.) but the teachers
551 were all like (.) well we don't really want to be er (.) the other children will feel a
552 little bit left out, and I'm like that that's the other children that's your problem it's
553 not mine. ((laughs)). You kind of, you end up getting a bit of a thick skin really. It's
554 like no, oh god (1) I'm done. it's like when she wouldn't go into school, when she
555 wouldn't have her hair brushed, and I'm like right well erm you don't have to have
556 your hair brushed today let's just go to school and it was just (.) picking your battles
557 (.) and, I'm like, I don't care about the other children, I only care about my daughter,
558 and if this (.) having a a different coloured hoodie (.) means that she's in a classroom
559 at least trying to get an education then (.) you can all (2) go away in a not so polite

560 term ((Laughter)). It's er one of them. But yeah, the headteacher she's (2) she's
561 obviously again got certain things to follow like with regards to applying for funding
562 and (2) when Integration Pathway stepped away we needed a new TA for E but she
563 had to apply for (1) funding, special funding for (2) a TA to be able to afford it
564 because we didn't have the EH EHC

565 M: [Ok

566 H: [at the time. Erm now we do so she gets that funding so we don't have to jump
567 through those extra hoops anymore but she was ((intake of breath)) I've got to
568 apply for this funding and an (1) we don't know how it's going to work and what the
569 timeframe is and then we've got to do interviews for new TAs and it's got to be the
570 right person for E and an (1) that was great and the TA that she had was a lovely
571 person, she was fantastic TA, but she didn't go didn't gel with E. E's got a very
572 difficult personality (2) and someone who is very happy go lucky and come on E let's
573 go and do this and let's do this and da de da de da and E just kind of goes are you
574 real or what?

575 M: (((laughs))

576 H: [She's just like I don't think so. (2) But yeah, the headteacher she was on
577 obviously on such a tight (.) deadline from being accepted for the funding to
578 interviewing and then it only being a temporary position for a few hours a week (2)
579 and I can understand why (.) it would have been difficult for her, but part of me
580 didn't really care because at the end of the day this is my daughter's future

581 M: [Yeah

582 H: [so yunno, so it's difficult (2) for them but (1) part of me just really doesn't care.
583 The system is what it is and then you've got all the (.) other families out there that
584 are struggling and they're going through similar things, and they're all fighting to get
585 the right support for their kids and you end up almost fighting each other to get to
586 the top to say right we need this now (1) and the teachers are kind of going ((intake
587 of breath)) who do we deal with first? And it's normally the person who is shouting
588 the loudest, the person who's kicking up the most fuss, or the child that's the most
589 challenging that gets to the top because it's right we can get that one settled (.) but
590 then there are families who aren't, who are struggling like mad but their child's not
591 got so many needs in school or the parents aren't really making a big fuss about it
592 cos they're just waiting, (1) they just get shoved back, further and further back and

593 it's so (.) wrong that (1) everyone's sort of (.) having to fight so hard. And even even
594 the teachers in the school are having to fight as well because they're all having
595 funding cuts as well which doesn't help matters. So they're like right we've got less
596 and less money to try and help families and all these families are getting angry with
597 us and we're angry with the government because they keep taking all the money
598 away from all the special needs funding, and it's it's absolutely broken. (.) The whole
599 system is just falling apart (.) an so many people going into home education now
600 because (.) there's just (.) too much stress and the kids mental health's going
601 downhill, the families are breaking apart because the parents don't, yunno (1) they
602 don't know what to do and it's awful and it's been an absolute eye opener, since
603 we've had the exclusions, to how many people are really struggling (1) and going
604 through absolute hell (1) and (.) again part of you kind of sits there and goes ((intake
605 of breath)) I haven't even got the energy to to feel sorry for them because we're
606 going through it ourselves (1) and (.) it's awful, it's absolutely awful (3) ((Laughs))
607 M: It does sound like, because you use the words fighting and an it kind of sounds
608 like it's been a real battle?
609 H: It has. It's been (2) absolute hell (.) an when E was (.) excluded, (2) I'd (.) just had
610 a miscarriage
611 M: [I'm sorry
612 H: [erm (4) in the July we lost my partners mum (2) as well. She we lost her to
613 cancer as well. So obviously he wasn't doing very well himself. I'd known her well
614 over 15 years as well so, yunno. And then we had the miscarriage, E got excluded,
615 (1) then I fell pregnant again ((intake of breath)) and it wa(h)s like woah I wasn't
616 expecting that. ((sighs)) Now what do we do? and then we moved house and it was
617 like so on top of everything else that was going on everything
618 M: [everything
619 H: [everything was just like aargh. Er an I think if we weren't in such a stressful
620 situation with all of the other things, then we probably would have gone (1) to a
621 solicitor (.) for disability discrimination
622 M: [Ok
623 H: [and probably stood quite a good chance if we had but I just didn't have the
624 mental space to stand up and an fight. (2) We'd ((intake of breath)) gone to the
625 governors erm (1) they'd said no erm an it was quite disheartening but (1) I

626 wouldn't have wanted to send her back there anyway.

627 M: [ok

628 H: [She would have felt she wouldn't have wanted to go back cos she, yunno, she (.)

629 felt awful, she felt guilty, she felt (.)embarrassed and (2) she was scared, not scared

630 of all the teachers, but, yunno, she didn't know how to act with all the teachers. She

631 wouldn't go back in the playground after that either, so collecting my son wasn't fun

632 M: Of course, yes because he's at the same school

633 H: He's still there now and (2) I think (2) ugh, as awful as it sounds, I think it's been

634 an eye-opening experience for the headteacher. I do get on quite well with her (.)

635 now. Erm I didn't fall out with her then either, to be fair, but it was obviously a little

636 bit tense. Erm but that was her first ever school exclusion, she'd been quite new to

637 (.) being the headteacher at the school as well. Erm (1) I think it was since then,

638 she's kind of gone right ok well this happened then this happened, what happened

639 with E and trying not to make the same mistakes again or ((intake of breath)) what

640 not

641 M: Ok. Do you do you see that that's the way she views it, Is that

642 H: [I don't think she'd ever admit it but yeah. I think that she knows that mistakes

643 were made and more could have been done. Erm (2) it's so some of the other

644 teachers who I'm (1) rather close to actually, erm being H's teachers, erm (2) one of

645 them has actually, (1) very quietly, and an very sort of on the hush hush because

646 doesn't want to lose her job, said that she did not agree with the way that it

647 happened. She didn't agree that E was excluded and they could have handled

648 everything so much so much (.) better.

649 M: Mhm

650 H: Erm (.) and It's quite reassuring (1) from it for it to come from a teacher (.) to

651 kinda go (1) for them to say no this wasn't handled right. And (2) it was it was, I

652 don't know, like I say, it was reassuring really

653 M: [Ok

654 H: [to think that, yunno, this isn't in my head, this isn't me thinking they could've

655 done more. This is someone who works there saying, we could've done more and

656 the teacher that (1) she'd (.) her teacher from the start of that year, had

657 only just joined the school and she had some (.) she'd been brilliant in (.) the

658 transition meeting before the holidays and she'd said right. She sat there with a

659 notepad and she took so many notes, what does she like, what works, what doesn't
660 she like, what can we do to help her calm down and she was amazing and she's, she
661 was absolutely gutted that she didn't get a chance to really sort of (.) help and I was
662 like I love you, you're a great teacher. ((sigh)) ((laughs)) But she has been fantastic
663 for me son so, so he's had both of these two teachers who are amazing
664 M: [Yeah
665 H: [Erm, so we've had some good come out of it.
666 M: So you've said a couple of times now I think that the relationship with the
667 headteacher (.) you actually get on well with her now
668 H: [Yes
669 M: [what's different, what's changed, what's good (.) that wasn't?
670 H: ((breathes out)) I think it was very (2) when E was there again, it's it's this feeling
671 that, (1) it might all just be in my head to be fair, but
672 M: (((laughs))
673 H: [there's only so much that a headteacher can do (1) in hyunno that they're
674 allowed to do
675 M: [Mm
676 H: [and sometimes you almost think (2) they want to kinda go oh sod the system I
677 want to do this to help
678 M: [Mm
679 H: [but they can't. So they have to remain very professional with you but then
680 ((breathes in)) we went through the exclusion which again was quite tense and then
681 the governors meeting was, I think even she was anxious in that one because yunno
682 but and we'd said to her afterwards says look it's nothing against you personally
683 M: [Mhm
684 H: [I need (.) to take this to the governors because (.) for E I need to make sure it's
685 the right thing and (.) we could have fought harder but I had (.) anxiety problems as
686 well which didn't help so I left my other half to do all the talking
687 M: [Mhm
688 H: [and he's fantastic at these things but I'm like no, no, no, no, no, could've done
689 more. But (2) after that, after E sort of (.) was, the initial sort of (2) ((inaudible)) with
690 it all being so full on, I'd sort of go in and they'd ask how she was, they'd always
691 asked me how she was doing

692 M: [Ok
693 H: [Erm, I wasn't sure whether it was out of guilt or or whether it was actually
694 something nice, I've no idea, paranoid all the time now. Erm (1) and I'd be quite
695 happy to tell her when she'd had a bad day or when something wasn't going right
696 because I kinda of (1) part of me wanted her to (.) know that this is because she's
697 been excluded
698 M: [Yeah
699 H: [because you made that decision to exclude her things are now going really
700 rubbish
701 M: [Mhm
702 H: [and that's partly your fault (1) and I wanted her to know it all
703 M: [Yeah
704 H: [but then (2) the more I kept doing this, it's like well, I'll tell her things are going
705 really well then and she'd actually be really pleased. Erm, I'd go to her with a
706 question about (1) something, anything, could've been anything to do with schools
707 or (2) how something works and how (.) when behaviour support comes in or, or (.)
708 how much Autism Outreach can actually get involved with school, anything random
709 like that, and she'd give me as much information as possible. And now (2) it was In
710 the last couple of months I think, I'd asked her for (2) if she knew anyone, or any
711 sort of place that we could access sort of occupational therapy
712 M: [Mhm
713 H: [erm to try and (1) see if there's anything they could help us with and she actually
714 sort of sent me a message saying look this place, erm, someone I know has used
715 them before and they're really good and an so actually she's been quite helpful
716 now. So, it's all kind of turned from a little bit of a me kind of going you need to (.)
717 feel guilty for all of this
718 M: [Mhm
719 H: [and ra ra (1) to a bit of a nicer rela(h)tionship so it's which is great for my son
720 M: [Yeah
721 H: [because obviously he still goes there, he's got another two years there, so it's
722 nice that we can ((intake of breath)) get along (2) ((laughter))
723 M: Well it's
724 H: [it was a bit worrying to begin with at first. It was like oh god I've got to go into

725 this playground and everyone's going to know and an, yunno. I think that's partly
726 why E didn't want to go back into the playground because god everyone is gonna
727 look at me, I'm the kid that got excluded. Half the kids didn't even know about it,
728 M: [No
729 H: [until (1) Hayden. Hayden, obviously tells his friends and an. Even the kids in her
730 class they didn't, they just thought she'd left, and (1) so they'd come up and say
731 where's E? I've not seen E, what's E doing now? And I'd kinda go she got excluded
732 and they'd go ((intake of breath)) REALLY! What did she do? (1) Erm she had a
733 meltdown (.) and they're like oh (.) ok (.) fair enough ((laughs)) ((phone drops on
734 floor)) ((inaudible))
735 M: So, did you feel that (1) kind of sense of stigma then as well? it's like you were
736 saying about going
737 H: [Mm (2) yes very much so. Erm there's been several times where E's obviously
738 been kicking and screaming in in in the past and trying to escape from school, or
739 going into school or she'd come out of school and something had, she'd had a really
740 bad day and as soon as she walked out of that door she'd just go pooow and she'd
741 be angry and her fists were clenching and she'd be (.) scowling and growling and
742 shouting and and Hayden would have to kinda go and sit somewhere to the side and
743 getting really upset because he's like oh god my sister's having a fit again. Erm and
744 an me having to try (.) and calm her down enough and an so er it's, you kind of
745 ((swallows)) almost forget that people are there (.) in that moment
746 M: [Mhm
747 H: [and then when you walk back into the playground it's like (1) it's like, whether
748 you imagine it or not, people are stood there going oh god did you see that
749 yesterday, did you see this happening, oh well maybe she just needs a bit more
750 discipline, maybe this, and do yunno that sort of thing that (.) you imagine that
751 everyone else is doing and they're (.) probably actually not (.) but everyone is kind
752 of stood in corners whispering, judging and and it's (.) it's not very easy to walk into
753 the playground. Especially when you have to stand and wait (1) for them to finish
754 school and you're just stood there on your own and kind of going oh for god's sake,
755 it just feels like all eyes are on you, yunno you're the parent of that kid that's
756 naughty. And an it was never anything to do with her being naughty but (1) when
757 they don't knowthey don't know and it's ((sigh)) it's not very nice

758 M: No

759 H: You kind of get to the point where you don't care anymore. You just kind of walk
760 in and go problem?

761 M: (((laughs))

762 H: [bye, off you go. You end up getting a thick skin with it ((laughs)). It's like oh
763 my days, it's it's awful that you've just got to really protect yourself cos if you expect
764 all of these negative things coming then then you can (.) deal with it. Whereas if you
765 go in thinking everything's all sunshine and rainbows then someone says something
766 negative you end up a a blubbering mess on the floor. And ugh If you're trying to
767 fight for (1) getting the right support then you've got to scream and shout otherwise
768 they can say no no we're not doing that and you kinda go oh ok then and so well
769 then you feel like your letting your kids down so , no, no, no, no, no, no, no.
770 ((laughter))

771 H: It's been a learning experience

772 M: [It sounds like it

773 H: [that's for sure

774 M: [It sounds like it

775 H: [Oh it's mad, absolutely mad.

776 M: So, thinking about, obviously you've been through that experience now and part
777 of this research is is hoping (.) to kind of inform policy and practice in the future (.)
778 certainly in terms of the way professionals work. Erm (2) can you tell me what you
779 think needs to change?

780 H: Oh god ((laughs)) scrap the system and start again. No, erm, well it would be
781 lovely if they could do that but it's not gonna happen is it. (2) Phrar, I hate politics
782 but, but government (.) needs to stop (.) cutting (1) the funds and an (.) services and
783 (1) because (2) everything is getting worse, it is, there's more and more children
784 being excluded and (.) then the services just aren't there to either keep them in
785 school or once they've been excluded to (.) help them to get back in school. Erm an
786 it's rubbish and (1) I do feel sorry for anyone working in it (.) because they're (.) like
787 we want to help, most of the time, they're like we wanna help, not everyone does
788 yunno, but they can't because their hands are tied. Well we can't offer you anymore
789 services so (.) here's six weeks of er some sort of play therapy to help (1) yunno and
790 then (.) the kid's just getting into it, right no sorry you can't do that anymore we

791 need to move on. Right ok. Erm, an even the NHS services, it's like CAMHS is so
792 oversubscribed as well, so the mental health side of things. We've been (.) referred
793 to them before and they've said no. We had them down in X area which was
794 fantastic, surprising but, we had them in X area

795 M: [Mhm

796 H: [that was again that was eight weeks. Erm (1) come up here, (1) referred to
797 CAMHS, they said no. Erm ((intake of breath)) and it wasn't until (.) she reached
798 crisis point and said I want I wish I was dead (.) that they kind of went yeah ok now
799 now we'll see you. Did it really have to get to that (.) to be able to get the support?
800 Did it really have to get to the fact that E was excluded before we got all of these
801 agencies suddenly involved? And they still can't do half the half the things that they
802 need to to help. We're referred to s an s an blablabla, I keep wanting to call it
803 something else, speech and language, they said no and (.) occupational therapy and
804 they said no. And I'm like right ok, so so these things that were being refused are
805 things she actually needs

806 M: [Yeah

807 H: [because her communication skills (1) are er er a problem. Her with occupational
808 therapy her co-ordination, her sensory needs

809 M: [Yeah

810 H: [there are so many little things (1) and if you work on the little things (1) then
811 everything is like the saying about the look after the penny an the pounds look after
812 themselves

813 M: [yeah

814 H: [so it's the same with all the other things, you look after all the other little issues
815 and the other ones get easier to deal with erm but there's just no funding there.
816 And (1) teachers are ((breathes in)) so stuck, schools should I say, are so stuck
817 because they're right. Because sometimes they have to (1) put the funding up (.) to
818 apply for certain services to come in

819 M: [Right

820 H: [and obviously each child gets allocated a certain amount and then (.) children
821 with SEN they get extra and (1) then after that obviously you have to apply for
822 additional funding. Again, it's slightly confusing ((intake of breath)) that I'm not
823 quite (.) fully aware of it. But (1) if they were only allocated (.) the money (2) with

824 the services they've got they can't apply for anymore. They can apply for extra
825 funding but whether they'd get it is a different matter. They have to then prove that
826 they've used all of the resources that they can (.) but then that's another what
827 twelve weeks (2) in which time everything could escalate and go out the toilet. It's
828 (.) the system's (.) mental and a lot of it's to do with the funding cuts and ((breath
829 in)). I don't know if it would solve anything if they did throw a lot more money
830 because (.) then you've got all these different pathways. (1) Which is another thing
831 that I think is a problem (.) because when we first started out and said right (1)
832 something's not right we need some support here, (1) erm bearing in mind we are
833 crossing Xarea and Xarea borders here

834 M: [yeah

835 H: [because we started in Xarea here. So they said right, first port of call is school
836 nurse, (.) school nurse then referred to (.) CAMHS, CAMHS then referred to
837 paediatrician or (.) went from CAMHS, but we never got seen by paediatrician in
838 Xarea because the wait time's ridiculous.

839 M: [Ok

840 H: [Moved up here. So, (.) given that we'd seen the school nurse and CAMHS already
841 in Xarea, we went to come to Xarea and (.) they referred us straight to the
842 paediatrician who accepted straight away, fabulous, fantastic, this is great, this is a
843 brilliant start, things are going to be so much better. ((intake of breath)) So we saw
844 the paediatrician (3) but then we just saw the paediatrician (1) and (3) she didn't
845 have the ADOS assessment (2) because we had enough evidence to er, you know,
846 we'd done enough sort of. One thing I'm good at is doing my research (.) properly
847 and evidencing it and we'd taken reports and (.) I'd taken lists and lists and lists and
848 lists of all these different traits that things that (2) on their own might not be a
849 problem

850 M: [Mhm

851 H: [Erm that, yunno, a lot of people (1) can (.) or can't experience blah, blah, blah,
852 blah, blah ((intake of breath)). But put together with all of the others then you could
853 get quite a good picture.

854 M: [Mhm

855 H: [Erm, so because of this evidence, (.) took that in, but we saw her (2) three times
856 before we got any sort of, yunno, well what's going on with this (.) diagnosis? (1)

857 Erm (2) and then we just weren't hearing anything back from the paediatrician. So I
858 rang clinical psychology because she said it needed to go to a panel of and it needed
859 to go to clinical psychology. Right fabulous, and me thinking she should probably be
860 assessed by clinical psychology because so far we've only seen (.) paediatrician
861 M: [Mhm
862 H: [(Intake of breath)] and she wasn't very engaging, E wasn't (.) engaging in the (1)
863 she was being silly, she was masking (.) quite a lot,
864 M: [ok
865 H: [she was sitting spinning around on a spinny chair. Erm but (2) Clinical
866 Psychologist said er no we've discharged her. (2) You've not seen her, how can you
867 discharge her? Because the evidence again, we did such a good job with the
868 evidence, (.) that they said yeah she's autistic, here's your diagnosis. (2) Right (.)
869 what happens now? Well you can go to workshops and support groups. (2) Right but
870 she's got all of these other little issues that we really need some support with
871 M: [Ok
872 H: [can you not refer us to all of these places? (1) No no she's autistic, it all falls
873 under the autistic spectrum. (3) Right, ok, so I think she might have dys, she might
874 be Dyspraxic because she struggles with a lot of, (.) yunno things like that. Well it
875 just falls under autism. So how do I get the support for these little things? Go to
876 workshops. Oh ((intake of breath)) right ok. (2) Now if we would have gone a
877 different route, and not given them so much evidence, (.) then she might have
878 referred us to occupational therapy and speech and language and had an ADOS
879 assessment and they could've found all these little things as we went along and
880 then they could've gone yeah she's she's quite possibly got (1) Sensory Processing
881 Disorder or Dyspraxia or (1) Cognitive Processing Disorder and then we'd get like (.)
882 extra agencies to come in and dun dun dun. Then then they'd say right this is what
883 we do with this and this is what we are doing with this, off you go. Fabulous, that's
884 great. (1) But we don't have that. (2) And no-one wants to see us now (.)
885 M: [Ok
886 H: [because and even CAMHS, to a certain extent, they didn't want to know
887 because she's autistic and autism and anxiety go hand in hand. So, her anxiety is
888 probably just her autism. (.) So, (.) yes but now what do we do? (.) Go to workshops
889 and support groups. ((Intake of breath)) Right (2) I can't access these (.) because

890 she's been permanently excluded because of all of these issues so now what do I
891 do? (2) Not a lot, (.) there's nothing, (1) you don't. There is no clear pathway, cos (.)
892 when I speak to other parents who have said about their child's been (.) diagnosed
893 with autism ((swallows)) they've gone oh well (.) school referred us here and then
894 then they referred us here and they referred us there and then this happened and
895 then we got our (.) diagnosis and I was like (.) well how come your journey's been so
896 completely different? And I know everyone is, everyone on the autistic spectrum is
897 completely

898 M: [Yeah

899 H: [different. (1) But how come there is no one set pathway? (2) and (2) at the very
900 beginning it was a case of right you need to go to your school nurse, school nurse
901 says go to your GP, GP says they can't talk to you about it you've got to go back to
902 your school nurse ((intake of breath)). (1) You jump through so many hoops. And oh
903 er in the very beginning it's er go on parenting courses. (2) Right Ok. Ok, that's fine,
904 I'll go on these. ((intake of breath)) So I went on three.

905 M: Ok

906 H: I've done all the parenting courses. So, then you go and see another professional
907 who says have you been on this course? Yes, three times. Oh right, ok, ok, right, and
908 then they kind of look at you as if to say yeah but did you do it properly? ((Intake of
909 breath)) it's like seriously, they just don't give us the credit half the time. They don't
910 listen to parents. Professionals don't and and they, not always anyway. Some of em
911 do, some of them are fantastic ((laughs)). I've got to say, my educational
912 psychologist (.) is amazing, he is fantastic. Erm (.) which is (1) wonderful when you
913 get the right professional (2) it's great and they listen

914 M: [Mm

915 H: [and it's even better. (3) And then they say yeah we'll try this and we'll try this
916 and we'll try this and then they kinda go right well we've done all we can do but and
917 we don't know where to send you anymore. And it's like (.) now what do I do? (1)
918 Now where do I go? (1) And (1) there's just no (1) clear path to follow and I don't
919 know how to make that better. (.) And (1) I don't know what (.) It's like there should
920 be a pyramid (.) of (.) right what sort of problems are you having? (.) Right, (.) Health
921 Visitor, School Nurse, ((intake of breath)) GP, that's how it's meant to be, I
922 understand that, that's great, right. ((swallows)) And then, ok this sounds like it's it's

923 a bit more complicated so (1) then what needs to happen, but they're like, someone
924 will say you need to go here and then they'll say no, no, no, you need to go back to
925 this person and then I go right well we'll go over there and then they'll send you
926 straight back to there where you started. And it's like (2) and no-one communicates.
927 (1) They don't communicate with each other. You would think they would. (1)

928 M: [Mhm

929 H: [So right, this person is flagged up on our system if that child was under
930 Social Services (3) every single little thing would be (3)

931 M: [Mhm

932 H: [written down. (.) Every person who had been involved in that child's life would
933 be written down but half the time they've 've never heard of each other (1). And I'd
934 say I thought you all did speak? and it's like yeah but only if there's a direct link or
935 something. There's some sort of secret code

936 M: (((laughs))

937 H: [or something that no-one understands ever, that means that yes sometimes
938 they speak to each other but other times they don't ((sigh)). It's like (1) I don't get it.
939 It's like we're missing a trick somewhere along the line and unless you know the
940 system ((intake of breath)) then you don't know where to go (.) so you end up stuck
941 (3) sitting there going (.) I need some help here. Well, have you have you had a MAT
942 team? What's a MAT team? How do you get one of them? You speak to the MAT
943 team, Oh no it sounds a bit too complicated for us or oh no the MAT teams don't
944 exist anymore (1) well how come I've just spoke to someone from one then?
945 Nothing makes sense. There's nothing that's clear at the minute. I mean the
946 Children's Centres they're all being shut down. (1) Erm they used to be brilliant
947 because they used to know, they used to know who you can go to (1) but they're
948 getting rid of all the children's centres (.) So no-one can go right I'll go to my
949 children's centre because I know someone there can help me or point me in the
950 right direction. You can't go to them anymore because they've all been shut down
951 because of the funding. (1) And it's so frustrating. Erm, yeah (.) so, I don't know
952 what needs to happen (2) but something does.

953 M: If you had a magic wand and we could wave it (.) what would it look like for you
954 and E, you know, in terms of the process, what would have been different?

955 H: ((Intake of breath)) That (1) all of the referrals (1) that we (2) that people had

956 suggested in the beginning, (1) so pretty much everyone I've mentioned so far (.)
957 M: [Mm
958 H: [would have actually gone, and not only would they have been gone, they would
959 have been (2) accepted. (1) Now (.) that in there is a slightly (.) different issue
960 because obviously some (.) people can't work alongside other people like ((intake of
961 breath)) if you are under a paediatrician then sometimes you don't need CAMHS
962 M: [Ok
963 H: [so the paediatrician discharges if you need to go to CAMHS or bler CAMHS say
964 No because, anyway. And so there's certain agencies that can't run along run
965 alongside because they basically do the same thing.
966 M: [Ok
967 H: [Behaviour support and Autism Outreach (1) generally don't work (1) along (.)
968 side each other, so you wouldn't have one from each at the same time. Erm, (.) so
969 yeah that's fine. But (.) to have these options, to have the referrals (.) go through
970 and also to be accepted would be wonderful but again then you're stuck in a system
971 of (.) long waiting lists but yeah ((sigh))
972 M: So there wouldn't be waiting lists?
973 H: That would be wonderful, that would be absolutely fantastic
974 M: [We've got a magic wand
975 H: Yes magic wand, no waiting lists, let's see all of the professionals (2) that would
976 help (2). But ignoring the system itself, I'd want it to make her happy. (2) I want her
977 to find (.) joy in things again, (1) cos she's miserable. I look at photos (1) even from
978 when she was at her most stressed when she was melting down (.) constantly. (1)
979 And there's videos and pictures of her laughing and being silly and pulling funny
980 faces and dancing around (1) and if you take a photo of her now she's sad with her
981 hood up, in her room, under a blanket, not wanting to move. It is (1) horrible. (1) I
982 want her to be able to find (2) happiness, again. So, I don't care whether she
983 actually goes to school or not, well I do because I want her to have an education,
984 but ((intake of breath)) I want (.) her to have an education she enjoys.
985 M: [Yeah
986 H: For her to not be so depressed. I want her to play again because she doesn't play.
987 She's not played for a (.) good couple of years. (2) I'd want her to be able to go to
988 school and (.) to be happy and to moan about the fact that the teacher has given

989 her loads of homework and, and (.) that she's not allowed to go out with her mates
990 because she's got all of this homework to do and, d, d, I've made her stay in and (.)
991 tidy her bedroom. But it's (1) it's not like that. (1) She's since she's been excluded
992 she's (1) become so withdrawn and depressed (.) and it's heart-breaking and I just
993 want her to be happy again. (1) I just want her to enjoy things (1). It's as simple as
994 that really. (1) It's (1) bluh ((laughs)) as a technical term
995 M: It sounds it
996 H: [it's bluh
997 M: [it sounds bluh. (.) It does
998 H: [It's horrible. (2) And it's the exclusion just made things s so much worse than
999 they needed to be (.) and we didn't get the right support (1) and if we would have
1000 got the right support it never would've come to this. But this is where we are now,
1001 it's all we can do let's keep pushing forward and shouting louder than everybody
1002 else and fighting for that support that It's (3) there somewhere you just have to find
1003 it. It's like finding a pot of gold at the end of a rainbow. (2) No that's not a good
1004 analogy because that's not real
1005 M: (((laughs))
1006 H: [that's not real, so yunno. A needle in a haystack would be a good one because
1007 at least at least you know the needle's in there somewhere. (2) ((breathes out))
1008 M: It's been a tough time. I can see it's been a tough time. (.) I think you're amazing,
1009 I think E's amazing and to have you as a mum that's out there there battling for her.
1010 (1)
1011 H: I'm not getting emotional (1)
1012 ((laughter))
1013 H: I'm not, no, no, no
1014 ((laughter))
1015 M: Is there anything you (.) want to say that you kind of don't feel you've had the
1016 opportunity to say, anything else that you can think of that you think might be
1017 important?
1018 H: ((Phe)) I think I've covered it really, the system sucks, the system is so broken and
1019 there are so many kids that are like E that have been failed (.) or been lost in this
1020 broken system (.) and (2) it just needs to stop and (2) we need our kids to be happy,
1021 they're going to be choosing our nursing homes.

1022 ((laughter))

1023 H: There we go

1024 M: Ok so (.) er I'll draw an end to the interview

1025 H: (((laughs)))

1026 M: [Thank you so much.

1027 H: You're welcome.

Appendix 10: LG analysis – Carol

<p><u>Colour Coding Key</u></p> <p>Listening for Plot Reflexive Listening Listening for Contapuntal/Polyphonic Voices Listening for the I – See I Poem Socio-cultural context</p> <p>M: Er ok so I (.) understand that Zane’s experienced exclusion from school (1) can you tell me about that?</p> <p>C: Yeah ((Intake of breath)) when Zane was three and went to nursery, I informed the school (.)</p> <p>M: {Mhm</p> <p>C: {as a whole that I felt Zane had (1) mm differences he was different to other children erm and we had taken him to the doctors he had been referred (.) to the hospital</p> <p>M: Right</p> <p>C: I asked the school to look out for (.) anything unusual at the side of his peers and to let me know so I could let the hospital know that they 'd noted differences</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: because I needed it from (.) everybody's point of view and not just my own</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: I also informed them that Zane could read (.) to which they told me he couldn't</p> <p>M: Right</p> <p>C: and I said mm he can and they wouldn't listen. Erm (2) in nursery it tended to go okay to begin with coz they're only in a couple of hours (1) and then I asked several times if they'd noticed anything and they said no and there was no difference to the other kids (.) and</p>	<p>Character – Zane (3) starts nursery Voice of sharing desire for collaboration</p> <p>Z is different to peers – C worried?</p> <p>Medical Institutions been referred to hospital</p> <p>C Seeks help from school and dialogue Seeks collaboration</p> <p>C point of view/ her voice holds no power on its own.</p> <p>C told by staff she is wrong. Her information given to school is rejected Confrontation is set up here. Not listened to or respected. Told wrong/ignored</p> <p>Nursery seemingly ok Unhelped C repeatedly seeking info from school. This is effortful C Stays behind and sees Z differences</p>
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then I happened to stay behind one day while Zane was in to discuss something to do with school ((intake of breath)) and noted (.) that Zane was visibly different to the other kids in his manner of play (.) in his (.) eye contact in (.) every aspect

M: {Mm

C: that I'd looked at so when I questioned the member of staff her response was he's always like that

M: Okay

C: I went right okay (.) so when I asked you if he was different you said he wasn't (1) but he very clearly is coz I can see it just being here five minutes

M: {Mm

C: Oh well we didn't realise that's the kind of differences you wanted (3) So I sort of went oh okay (1) Then the teacher came and said she felt he had a (.) speech impediment

M: Right

C: and (.) Zane's always had (2) not really, I don't class it as a speech impediment Zane's brain works quicker than his mouth

M: {Mm

C: {so he stumbles along his words and repeats sentences (.) because he can't get the words out fast enough

M: {Mm

C: {so it appears as a stammer

M: Mm

C: She wanted to refer him I allowed it to go ahead (.) Erm he had a couple of meltdowns in class they classed it as nothing major (1) He went to Speech and Language (.) who agreed with me (.) that there wasn't a speech impediment

M: {Ok

Autism discourse – developmentally different

Voice of knowledge of autism

Challenges member of staff

Dismissed by staff

Attempt to close conversation down

Seems effortful but C continues to question staff/disagreement with staff

Disbelief at School lack knowledge of her son?

Oh well – dismissive language

You wanted - as though C is seeking it, it is her

responsibility, not theirs, not mutual. Sense of resignation

from C with the Oh OK

Resignation

Character – The teacher suggests speech impediment.

Carol disagrees but lets referral go ahead.

A seeming voice of control.

Disagrees but goes ahead – attempt to keep on side?

Autism discourse

Zane becoming distressed in class. School not concerned.

Medical discourse

Voice of knowledge backed up by professional

C: {it was his brain working faster than his mouth ((laughs)) (1) Erm and there wasn't a really anything they could do with him in that sense and they disregarded anything from the school (1) Erm I spoke as at the end of the year (.) when he were gonna go into reception an full time (.) I spoke with the teacher (1) she was actually teaching his brother

M: {Mm

C: {and said look there's vast differences ((swallows)) I've noted things that you do (.) in reception that are not gonna work for Zane

M: {Mm

C: {in respect of if a child comes in on a morning and they go "I don't wanna do PE today" you go "Yeah it's fine you can miss one PE it's not a problem" (2) Can't do that with Zane because if he misses it once he'll never do (.)

M: {Mm

C: {it because that's how his brain works(.

M: {Mm

C: {And he can read "no he can't" (1) "He can read" "no he can't" (.) So I asked them repeatedly to test him (.) for reading

M: {Mm

C: {Eventually when I went in at the end of (1) nursery they said "Oh actually he can read"

M: {{{exhalation of breath}}

C: {Yes I know he can read (.) Have you given him a reading book? No I can't do that (2) Well why can't you give him a reading book? (.) Well we can't have him doing words because if he does words and he (.) exceeds the reception children (.) it's not fair on them (2) Right oh okay (1) So they held him back (1) For me that's mistake number one

Speech and Language disagree with school and discharge Zane

Character – Reception Teacher Informs teacher about Zane's needs. C Seeking dialogue and partnership to try to make things work. Teacher knows the family – I wonder if C believed this was a connection, that she would be heard?

Voice of knowledge

Medical/Autism discourse. I wonder whether C tries to use this language because she perceives it may be more powerful than her own Informs teacher about Zane's strengths. Not believed. Effortful to get things done Voice of the ignored and rejected School discourse Voice of frustration

Chasing an education. Voice of challenge Questions staff about provision. Told can't because not fair on others. Sense C is floundering under the weight of professional rules that seem to override common sense and awareness of an individual. Not fair on the other

<p>M: Mm</p> <p>C: because then he started getting bored (.) because they wouldn't allow him (1) to continue at the level he needed to (2) When we got in reception (1) things started to (2) take a turn (.) Zane didn't want to go to school (.) He didn't like being there all day (.) He would create (.) he would wander off (1) I was permanently pulled in because one thing or another had happened (1) Erm (1) but then when something had happened to Zane (1) that was also dismissed (.) I had to go in once Zane came out (.) at the end of the day (.) with red marks around his neck (1) where another child had had him by the throat (1) and they'd not noticed (2)</p> <p>M: Right</p> <p>C: Even though you could see the marks on his neck (.) They'd never questioned him they'd never asked him (.) Then you get the apology but it's sort of (1) an empty apology</p> <p>M: Mm</p> <p>C: ((clears throat)) From my point of view it's an empty apology they didn't seem to care ((intake of breath)) An I think (1) is it because he's a problem child I don't know (.) I can't comment I just know she was very dismissive</p> <p>M: Okay</p> <p>C: ((Intake of breath)) Erm (1) in the mornings he started to have a meltdown at having to go in (.) I would have (.) three members of staff watching while he's screaming hysterical (.) I had two other children with me his twin sister</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: and his (.) brother that's a year above (.) Couldn't get them into class coz I was too busy sorting him (1) It took other mums in the playground to help because</p>	<p>children – How was this fair on Z?</p> <p>Voice of blame</p> <p>Zane becoming disinterested in school. Behaviour becoming problematic. Carol “pulled” into school</p> <p>Voice of difficulty</p> <p>Lack of control. “Pulled” seems almost violent – not asked or invited.</p> <p>Voice of powerlessness -pulled in</p> <p>Sense a feeling of lack of fairness – C is challenged for Z behaviour and seemingly others go unchallenged</p> <p>Voice of inequity</p> <p>Voice of Ignored</p> <p>Incident Zane hurt. Not noticed/ignored. Reminiscent of nursery not noticing. Sense of a lack of care.</p> <p>School disingenuous</p> <p>Voice of dismissed – unworthy of apology, respect or sincerity</p> <p>Voice of sadness, loneliness and vulnerability here – C wondering why Z and/or C not treated fairly. One of the few questions C asks</p> <p>Repetition of word dismissed</p> <p>Teacher dismissive. Lack of care, compassion. Worthless.</p> <p>Zane continues to struggle.</p> <p>Staff inactive watching</p> <p>Voice of difficulty/struggle/not coping</p> <p>Character – Twin Sister</p> <p>Character Older Brother</p> <p>Other mums help, not staff.</p>
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the staff wouldn't they just stood (.) never helped never attempted to intervene. Erm (1) then he started to (2) get angry a lot (.) at school he was frustrated he would come home with words from school and because his pronunciation (.) wasn't brilliant (.) even though he was saying the word

M: {Mm

C: coz he couldn't pronounce it how they wanted him to (.) they said he couldn't read (.)

M: {Okay

C: {but when you said yeah but he is reading it's just that it's his pronunciation well he has to pronounce it right or he's not reading it (2) But it were silly things like chair instead of care coz he couldn't say (.) the ch properly (1) Erm and it were just silly things you knew what he were saying they just (1) they just didn't want to (.) listen

M: Mm

C: Erm (.) he wasn't read to very often in reception (1) he (.) was ignored from other children in reception (1) because he would play up (1) Erm (2) they (.) dismissed a lot with Zane (.) If I went in with concerns (.) it was always he's just a boy (.) he's just a boy (2) Erm (.) towards the end of reception he'd start to get (.) quite violent (3) I asked about (.) having an Educational Psychologist in (.)

M: {Mm

C: {to assess him because he was being assessed at the hospital (2) to which the teacher went he's on the list to be assessed by (1) a Educational Psychologist

M: {Mm

C: {that was actually a lie (1)

M: {Right

I find this image disturbing – someone struggling and school staff watching, not helping. It feels judgemental. It does not sit well with me as an ex teacher.

Zane becoming more frustrated with school

Voice of frustration

Carol speaks to school. Not listened to

This appears nonsensical to C “silly”. I wonder how many parents see this seeming nonsense in schools where the rules make no sense or where there is rigid application of rule at expense of child or knowledge of child’s world? Unheard/Resignation at being shut out. This is also a judgement of “them” by C she judges (as is she).

Voice of sadness

Zane ignored and isolated and dismissed. Word dismissed appears again
C concerns not heard
Voice of ignored and dismissed.
Gender expectations
End of reception behaviour violent. C asks about EP

Medical assess at hospital
No sense of partnership or information sharing.

Institutional discourse
Teacher lies about referral to EP.

Betrayed Voice

<p>C: {(Intake of breath I didn't know that at the time I just thought well let's see what happens</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: Reception finished he went into year one (.) and then the problems really started (2) And that's when he started to meltdown in class (.) They would take thirty children out of the classroom and leave him locked in the classroom while he (.) had a meltdown</p> <p>M: {(sigh)) Ok</p> <p>C: {including his sister</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {(.) They would (1) ring me and ask me to fetch him early (1) because he was misbehaving (2) When I asked with regards to well (.) when is the Educational Psychologist coming (.) she looked at me like I'd got two heads (.) so I asked to speak to the SENCO (.) coz I didn't even know that's what you did</p> <p>M: {Ok</p> <p>C: {then I discovered it from another parent (1) I met with the SENCO who had no idea about Zane or any of his difficulties (2) who had never been referred from his class teacher regarding Zane had never been asked to get an Educational Psychologist in for him even though I'd been told that she had (1) and said "he's now on my radar let's see how things go" (1)</p> <p>M: Ok</p> <p>C: {(Intake of breath)) A couple of months later (.) he (.) was having a meltdown they manoeuvred him out of classroom he had his book bag an he swung his book bag and it actually hit (.) the deputy head believe she was deputy head at that point ((intake of breath)) and they excluded him</p> <p>M: Right</p> <p>C: Even though it was an accident</p>	<p>Transfer to Y1. Zane Distress worsens. Zane unsupported and left alone. Other children moved</p> <p>Lack of care and compassion, isolation – Voice of sadness Autism discourse</p> <p>C called to school to take Z home – start of exclusions.</p> <p>Voice of desperation. Chases referral – two heads – monster, alien, other. Judged School discourse Lack of knowledge of school systems. Feeling of being kept in dark Parents are contrapuntal voice - supportive School systems not transparent. Parents have to find info or accidentally discover. Lack of partnership? Voice of despair/ disbelief Betrayal Seeks help from SENCO after finding info from a parent Zane not known to SENCO. Is this poor communication in school or that problem is seen by teacher as his behaviour and therefore choice not need so not a SENCO or EP issue? SENCO – monitoring situation Autism discourse Manoeuvred – not human but mechanical Position of authority Z excluded</p> <p>Voice of badly treated/unfairness</p>
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<p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {because they couldn't have that (1) So they excluded him for the rest of that day and I believe the following day (1) And Zane got what he wanted he got to be at home (1) So when he went back (1) he did it (.) where he was still aggressive and the following week he upped his game and actually (1) attempted to hurt (.) a member of staff</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {knowing he'd be sent home</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: ((Swallows)) and that kind of pattern (.) continued during year one ((intake of breath)) On his sixth birthday (.) I got a call to collect him from school because he was having a meltdown in the office (1) When I got there he'd actually trashed the office (.) completely pulled all the blinds down (1) and he there was four members of staff that had (2) had not locked him in (1) but they'd closed the door and held it so he couldn't get out (1) and it's got glass panels and he was smashing his head off of a glass panel with four members of staff watching him (1) and never ever intervened for his safety</p> <p>M: {Ok</p> <p>C: {until they saw me (1) and then they opened the door (.) and he collapsed in my arms in absolute (1) he was distraught in tears ((intake of breath)) and they all just stood and looked and went "I think you'd best take him home" (2) There was no sympathy no empathy (2) they just "I think you'd best take him home we'll have exclusion papers"</p> <p>M: {{{Huh}}</p> <p>C: {for you when you pick the others up (1) and sent him home (2) When he was (.) year two (2) he (.) his</p>	<p>Authority Vs Powerlessness</p> <p>Voice of disappointment Z wants to be at home not school – seeks exclusions</p> <p>Different choice of language here Z aggressive rather than meltdown and upping his game positions Z with power?</p> <p>Conflicted voice with the little boy seen below?</p> <p>Repeated incidents of aggression and exclusion</p> <p>A little boy and four members of staff - repeated phrase represents a body of authority. C is aware that behaviour is crossing lines of authority Z not coping and overwhelmed. C called to school Z distressed Staff watch but don't act Voice of sadness. Child not cared for.</p> <p>A painful story to tell and a painful story to hear</p> <p>Excluded Lack of care, lack of support</p> <p>Voice of dismissed School discourse</p> <p>My disbelief is evident here such callous disregard</p> <p>Y2 Limited part time timetable</p>
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<p>timetable was reduced to one hour a day (3) He would make twenty minutes (2) and they'd ring me (2) And the pattern of excluding or sending home early without exclusion papers continued and continued ((Intake of breath)) And then I spoke to (.) Parent Partnership which is now XXXXX I believe</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {(1) and had a wonderful lady who came and saw me (1) I cried a lot ((laugh))</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {I (.) got angry (2) And then she came to school with me (.) and had a meeting (.) and asked why things weren't being done (.) And asked why they were doing illegal exclusions (.) because I wasn't aware (.) that they were (2) ((Intake of breath)) And school promised that they would (1) try (2) and (1) for about a week (.) things started to improve (2) and then Zane had a meltdown (1) and he was sent home again (3) And then we had a new head an executive head (2) and that's where things (.) really went wrong</p> <p>M: Ok</p> <p>C: Him they assigned him a TA (1) wonderful woman (1) worked brilliant with Zane (1) She understood Zane (.) She understood when to leave him to just have a minute</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {and when to intervene (1) She understood that (.) if you told him (.) he was going to do computers for twenty minutes he had to have twenty minutes</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {because anything else then was a break of that promise and that's not what you said (2) She got that (2) Erm they had the Educational psychologist in (.) they had Behaviour Support in (.) He'd got his diagnosis</p>	<p>C called – pattern of excluding and sending home</p> <p>Voice of resignation Unofficial exclusions Institutional discourse C speaks to Parent Partnership</p> <p>Sense of warmth here. C seems to feel heard and held Supported Voice Voice of sadness (despite the laugh) Voice of anger Parent Partnership challenge school Supported Voice</p> <p>Lack of knowledge of system Sadly, something I recognise School promise but short lived</p> <p>Autism discourse Character – Executive Head. Events go “really wrong” School discourse</p> <p>Voice of appreciation</p> <p>Character – TA. Assigned to Z. Understands Z. Voice of relief</p> <p>Being understood</p> <p>Ed Psych and Behaviour Support plus others - Institutions/Systems</p>
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at this point so they had others in (2) and (1) then the executive head would start doing things like erm he would go in the classroom ten minutes into the day and take his TA away from him (2) which would trigger a meltdown (1) Or he would go in and say (.) he can't do computers he's got to do that (1) Well he's been given twenty minutes on computers yes well he's not now he's got to do that instead and would change what he was doing which would again (.) trigger a meltdown (2) And I feel it was a (.) a battle of wills (.) if you like (.) Erm it had academised the school (.) he didn't want (.) troublesome kids in his school (.) and he was (.) making it difficult for troublesome kids

M: Okay

C: He was excluded (1) again (2) Erm (1) for (.) three days (2) ((Intake of breath)) He went back in the May (2) and I was at my mum's (2) and I'd told school I'm a I'm not around today (2) Erm so can we please have things (.) sort of on an even keel let him just (.) let him just chill with his day don't um try not to upset too much I'm not in the area I'm actually away from the area (1) so I won't be able to come to school

M: {Mm

C: {and fetch him (2) That's not a problem (2) Erm (2) that was the night before for that day (1) I went to me mum's the night before (1) on that morning my husband took the kids to school (1) he'd not even got home from school with his ten minute walk ((intake of breath)) he'd not even got in from school when he got a phone call when I got the phone call telling me to come and fetch him (2) When I asked why (.) he said he was kicking off inside the classroom (.) and smashing the classroom and threatening the children (3) So my

Executive Head deliberately unsupportive, unhelpful actions lead to extreme distress for Z

Autism discourse

Voice of warrior

Socio- Cultural discourse

Z viewed as a problem

Excluded 3 days

Lack of power – done to “Again” sense that this is unremitting

Voice of difficulty

Seeks help from school so can visit mum and won't be able to collect Z if things go badly.

Prepares school for her absence

Trying to collaborate – seeking help

Husband takes children to school

Immediately a problem

Voice of frustration

C called to collect Z not

husband Voice of burden and responsibility.

School have power to “tell” C has no agency

Husband angry collects all the children

<p>husband very angrily went and fetched him (2) and but fetched the other two</p> <p>M: Mm</p> <p>C: {because he was annoyed so all three came home</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {this is a we're done we we can't have this (1)</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {fetched all three home (2) ((Swallows))He then rang me the head the executive head to try (.) and have a go at me (3) because we'd took the other two children out of the school ((Intake of breath)) An I says but you've taken Zane out and when my husband got there Zane was sat calmly reading a book (.) Now he'd not even got home which means when he's ringing me telling me he's in an extreme meltdown</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {it took my husband five minutes to get back (2)</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {Yet he was sat reading a book (2) A child like Zane doesn't come out of an extreme meltdown (.) and sit reading a book calmly within five minutes that's just not how they work</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {certainly not how Zane works (2) So (1) I did argue with him and say that I thought he were being (2) too much with Zane I thought he was being too hard (2) And then (.) I because I'd been part of that school for seventeen years (1) I asked the parents in that class to ask if anything had happened in that sc morning with Zane (1) because I wanted to know from the kids point of view</p> <p>M: {Mm</p>	<p>Husband allowed to be angry – no real sign of C's anger</p> <p>Voice of husband – frustration, anger at end of road</p> <p>Exec Head calls C not husband to "have a go" confronts C Bullied?</p> <p>Socio-Cultural context C defends actions and claims husband as support?</p> <p>Bullied, held accountable, the one who is responsible Autism discourse used by school</p> <p>Voice of disbelief/Lack of trust School story not making sense to C. Professional Vs Personal experience</p> <p>This sounds almost apologetic to me – that it's not ok to disagree with – contrasts with being acceptable for husband to be angry. The voice of advocate</p> <p>Conflict C challenges Exec head and his treatment of Z C seeks information from other parents and children Voice of belonging/collaboration with parents</p>
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<p>C: {because this didn't seem to add up to me (1) He'd been excluded yet again (1) and I don't feel that it wasn't correct (.)</p>	<p>Voice of distrust Voice of frustration -Excluded "yet again" Voice of wronged</p>
<p>M: {Mm</p>	
<p>C: {I had five parents telling me that their kids said all he did was shove his paper and tell em he sort a he weren't doing the work (.) An when he was told he had to do the work he walked out and slammed the door (.) That's all he did (.) He slammed a door an he we was excluded for it (2) So when I (2) spoke to school and told them that I knew this is what had happened</p>	<p>Collective contrapuntal voice of parent and child community. Voice of despair Can't believe Z excluded for slamming door and challenges school Voice of advocate</p>
<p>M: {Mm</p>	
<p>C: {they went don't worry we'll not put it down as an exclusion (2) Exactly (.) that was the response I got it's not gonna go down as an exclusion (2) His timetable was still reduced it always had been (1) and then (.) he went one day an I was he was doing the afternoon (.) an I was walking up to school and had parents saying you better get up there quick (1) When I got up there (.) Zane had scaled a six foot fence with spikes on it (2) With four members of staff watching including the executive head (1) Nobody intervened (1) Nobody tried to stop him (2) When I got up there (.) Zane (.) had come straight to me and I said go and get your things we're going home ((Intake of breath)) The executive head said " don't think you should bring him in tomorrow we can't have this" (.) I went "right ok (.) why did you let him (.) jump the fence?" "Well what were we supposed to do?" "Stop him it's a six-foot fence with spikes on if he had slipped he would have impaled himself in front of all them parents then what would you have done cos this situation could've been a lot worse" (2) "Well (.) we stuck to his IEP" (1) "Did ya?" (1) "We did what the IEP said an that said (.) to</p>	<p>School response – no apology Z timetable still reduced Voice of disbelief Voice of loss Parents warn C she needs to get to school. Contrapuntal supportive voices. Staff watching/Inaction Voice of sadness – lack of care for son Voice of agency and control Exec Head response to exclude. Lack of compassion. Conflict again here but appears to be increasing tone of anger from C towards School C challenges lack of action Voice of anger Exec Head defends position.</p>

give him space" I went "Yeah but there's giving him space and there's allowing himself allowing him to put himself in danger and you've allowed him to be in danger" (.) "We can't intervene we can't touch him (.) we can't touch him" (.) Not strictly true (.) Yes you can (.) if he's a danger to himself or others

M: {Mm

C: {He clearly was jumping a six-foot fence (1) Well we didn't think he'd be able to jump it (1) Well kinda proved you wrong on that point (2) The following morning I took the other two to school and was handed exclusion papers and told it was gonna be permanent

M: {Ok

C: (1) Because he'd run out of days basically (2) At that point (.) in all honesty I sighed with relief

M: Okay

C: because I thought thank God he's out (.) Thank God he's out (2) because it was just going from bad to worse (.) He didn't see he'd done anything wrong (.) he didn't feel he'd tret Zane badly (.)

M: {Mm

C: {he didn't feel he'd tret him unfairly (.) ((Intake of breath)) Then they wanted the governor's meeting (.) which (.) I was told not many parents really attend (.) Apparently when it comes to exclusions they don't really (.) they're not bothered or (.) they just know that the end of the line's come

M: {Mm

C: I didn't feel like that (1) I felt I needed to go there (.) I felt I needed to say my piece (1) an (1) not fight Zane's corner cos I didn't want him to go back in to the school (2) but I wanted to fight his corner in the sense of how he'd been treated by the school (1). ((Intake of

Exec head appears to be using rules and procedures to retain the power in this engagement. Appears very much like school Vs C here

C challenges again
Voice of knowledge
Legal Discourse
Voice of anger

Voice of
powerlessness/dismissed
Permanent exclusion

This again seems rather callous and dismissive to me. It speaks of the lack of relationship and absence of care and responsibility for C and Z. No opportunity to discuss or to talk through what might happen next.

Cultural legal discourse - So many fixed term exclusions result in automatic perm ex

Voice of relief
Voice of exhaustion
Voice of despair at unfairness and injustice

Institutional discourse

This is something that resonates with me. In my previous career I had conversations with parents who felt there was no point appealing and that they did not want their child to return to the school.

Voice of advocate/champion

Voice of injustice, sense of grievance about lack of care

<p>breath)) But then I was conflicted because the TA that had been working with him (1) had been excellent</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {an a lot of the things that had happened had happened when she wasn't there</p> <p>M: {ok</p> <p>C: {when she'd been removed from (1) looking after Zane (.). So then I felt it weren't fair on her either (2) ((Swallows)) So I went to the governor's meeting (2) Erm several governors (1) One was a parent governor (1) which (.). she was so far up the teacher's arse she may as well have been a teacher governor to be honest ((quiet laughter)) Cos that's how she were (.). Erm one was (.). erm I believe she was married to (.). the deputy head of another school (1) so she had a teacher head on her (1) There was the executive head (.). the head (1) and then Zane's TA</p> <p>M: Ok</p> <p>C: So they outlined Zane's difficulties I agreed with them all</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {they are his difficulties I can't deny them (.). and then asked me what I thought (1) An I said I feel you've tret him unfairly (.). You've given erm illegal exclusions (1) The exclusion that you had said you weren't gonna put on his permanent record is on his permanent record and yet I've never received even to this day the paperwork for that (1) ever (2) You have (1) misspelt his name (.). You have put wrong dates in (.). You have actually (.). put another child in here (2) And in the in his class there was a child called Cane as well as Zane (.). Cane was very aggressive (1) Didn't last long in the school (.). He'd come from a special needs school to our school to try and inte integrate</p>	<p>C conflicted about meeting – wants to put Z's story, represent Z contradicts with appreciation of TA who seen by C as doing good job</p> <p>Voice of appreciation</p> <p>Voice of blame towards Exec Head and decisions made Conflicted Voice</p> <p>Institutional discourse</p> <p>Governor's not representative /supportive of parent – no real parent representation on panel</p> <p>Voice of isolation and unsupported</p> <p>Acceptance of Z's difficulties</p> <p>Voice of fairness and balance</p> <p>Legal discourse</p> <p>Voice of ambivalence</p> <p>Voice of challenge</p> <p>Uses our here – this is unusual it suggests belonging, a sense of community. Rare moment. A reminder perhaps that she has been part of this school community for 17 years</p>
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<p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {It hadn't worked and he'd gone back (2) And (.) a lot of the incidents in the report were Cane's (.) incidents not Zane's (1) and when I pulled that up (1) they assured me it was just a spelling error.</p> <p>M: {Right</p> <p>C: {They'd put a C instead of a Z (.) I went no these are not Zane's incidents because Zane weren't in school some of these times</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {he wasn't here (.) He was excluded so you can't have him excluded ((intake of breath)) and then say it's it's a spelling error (1) An a spelling error is one there's about six in here where you have mixed up the children and I still believe they've mixed up the children</p> <p>M: Mm</p> <p>C: The reports had got mum jumbled because the names were so similar because they had similar backgrounds in the sense of their behaviour (1) I believe the incidents had got jumbled.</p> <p>M: {ok</p> <p>C: I also believe he probably put some of Cane's incidents in (1) to make Zane's behaviour seem worse (2) Because (.) Zane can be aggressive</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {but (.) some of the incidents (.) I knew were not (.) Zane's</p> <p>M: {Right</p> <p>C: {but it made him look worse (3) So then he came home (2) The exclusion stood that were fine</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {that were perfectly fine I still had two children in the school I still had to be polite (1) That was in first</p>	<p>Voice of dismissed</p> <p>Voice of advocate. Voice of challenge</p> <p>Voice of injustice</p> <p>C believes school lying to make it easier to exclude Z Lack of trust Voice of betrayed The odds seemed stacked against C here. The voice of authority, the voice of the school always the strongest and no advocate for C in this. Lack of trust Voice of betrayed</p> <p>The exclusion upheld by governor's Voice of resignation</p> <p>C has to maintain relationship with school because of other children who attend there</p>
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<p>week of June (2) Erm I wasn't contacted until (2) nearly the end of July from Integration Team (2) Who were then gonna take over with Zane (1) but obviously then we're going in to summer holidays</p> <p>M: {Yep</p> <p>C: {So they promised er they'd teach him Makaton (.) they'd have a centre for him to go to (.) They do days out they do this they do that (.) And we'll be in touch in September (1) And they were in touch in September and (.) they came and took him out (2) two hours a day roughly</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {and he went through (3) in the first month I think he went through three different (.) members of staff that looked after him (2) Which was not good</p> <p>M: {No</p> <p>C: He thought he was having one worker an then all of a sudden one morning somebody new would turn up (1) with no warning for Zane (1) who has autism</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: so not very good (3) Erm (2) by (.) November we were on I think number four (3) and they was taking him to erm a centre in XXXXarea (2) with another child who was also aggressive (2) An we believe Zane has PDA although it's not unrecognised in XXXXshire (1) So Zane can be (.) quite volatile (2) And this is an individual programme which my belief is an individual programme (.) is individual to Zane (.) and his condition (3) That's what I was led to believe</p> <p>M: Mm</p> <p>C: Erm I didn't drive at the time (2) and more than once I got a phone call asking me to go all the way to XXXXarea to fetch Zane (1) because he was upset (2) And I had to get lifts and things (.) all the way up to</p>	<p>Voice of negotiator. The public face that has to be polite. Voice of ignored Not consulted Institutional discourse Month of no contact re Z education then Integration Team call</p> <p>Integration Team promise education package for September</p> <p>Education provided is part time</p> <p>Frequent changes in staff</p> <p>Voice of disappointment Let down – still a battle</p> <p>Not knowing who going to turn up</p> <p>Autism discourse</p> <p>Medical discourse Z has autism and PDA but PDA not recognised. Has needs believes Z was going to receive a curriculum that met his needs Systems not transparent</p> <p>Voice of betrayed C called to fetch Z from a distance away from home – difficult for C - Exclusions continue Weary voice Voice of difficulty</p>
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<p>XXXXarea cos I couldn't (.) drive to fetch him (1) An he was upset</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {an it were (1) either he'd just got upset over something silly or he'd got upset cos one of the other children were (.) misbehaving it was along them lines</p> <p>M: Mm</p> <p>C: In (1) at the end of November (.) the person that had him (2) rang me and said after an hour I'm bringing him home he's not doing great (2) So she brought him home (.) and stood in front of Zane and went (1) "I could've probably kept him but (.) I don't feel very well to be honest I couldn't be arsed" (2) An that were from a professional or so called professional (2) That was the attitude I got (.) An when I said "you do understand (2) Zane's behaviour" She went "No" (2) "So you do know Zane's got autism" (1) "No, nobody's told me" (2) "Sorry what" (.) "No I don't know anything (1) they've just told me to come and look after him" (.) ((Intake of breath)) That got me angry (.) really angry because what's individual about that then (.) She didn't even know what his condition is (1) So I rang the Integration Team and (1) rollicked em (.) Said this is not an individual programme this is not what you told me this is definitely not what it says on the tin</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {What on earth is going on (.)</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {An they were honest (.) They were honest and said we're under staffed (1) Our staff work on a zero-hour contract (.) If your kid don't come they don't work they don't get paid (2) So we struggle with staff (.) we can't keep hold of staff (1) They come and go</p> <p>M: Ok</p>	<p>Voice of frustration and difficulty</p> <p>Weariness</p> <p>Staff bring Z home - exclusions continue</p> <p>Lack of professionalism from staff</p> <p>Poor attitude</p> <p>Voice of disrespected</p> <p>Staff have no understanding/knowledge of Z needs</p> <p>Voice of Advocate</p> <p>Interesting phrase – look after implies care which to me seems lacking. Also seems to suggest care rather than education.</p> <p>C angry and challenges Integration Team</p> <p>Voice of anger and frustration</p> <p>Voice of challenge</p> <p>Integration team have problems with staffing levels</p> <p>This resonates with my experience, knowledge, and understanding of how provision for excluded children is sometimes part time, inappropriate, a distance from home and provided by people on zero hours contracts</p>
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<p>C: So unfortunately (.) what you see on paper is what we want (1) but in reality it's not what we can provide</p> <p>(1) Right we need to get him in a school now because this can't continue this is (.) we've already damaged him in the two years he's been at school</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {we're now damaging him further (.) and he's been out of school since June (.) we're now going into December</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {Ok choose a school (4) So (.) I chose U Junior school which is (.) a very small school (.) has two classes he would he was child number 43 I believe in the whole school</p> <p>M: {Ok</p> <p>C: {which is a vast amount smaller than his previous (2) We went and visited the school (.) They was fully aware of all Zane's problems all his background with his previous school (.) and they agreed to take him</p> <p>M: Ok</p> <p>C: In January (.) after being excluded in June (1) he finally saw the inside of a classroom it was the first time (2) And they did a integration (.) so Integration Team stayed with him (1) while he was there (.) for the first couple of months</p> <p>M: Ok</p> <p>C: Erm So he had their TA sort of thing</p> <p>M: Yeah</p> <p>C: An he was only doing a couple of hours a day (2) I mean to be fair it's a good job I didn't work (.) cos he was home ninety percent of the time ((quiet laughter))</p> <p>Erm an it went smooth (.) He fitted in well (.) It was a smaller classroom they did things like made a safe space he had his own work station he had a visual</p>	<p>Integration Team can't provide suitable provision</p> <p>Voice of insistence/advocate Voice of sadness and loss C demands school place not wanting damage to continue. Been out of education long time</p> <p>Voice of concern and worry</p> <p>C chooses small school Rare moment of parental choice here</p> <p>School know history and agree to Z attending</p> <p>Finally – Relief? Frustration</p> <p>Supported Voice</p> <p>Reintegration supported by Integration Team and TA</p> <p>Part-time C not working but would have been unable to anyway Voice of loss The laugh here maybe to hide the real feeling Voice of relief – Z looked after and needs met</p>
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<p>timetable (.) he got on with his peers he liked the staff</p> <p>(1) And the staff worked really well with me</p> <p>M: {Fantastic</p> <p>C: {We had six er meetings every six week</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {to discuss what we should do next (.) Behaviour Support, Autism Outreach and er the erm (.) Educational Psychologist when available (.) all attended</p> <p>(1) And things went well (2) So Integration Team (.) pulled out (1) an (.) I were left on my own (1) Which was (.) like ahh I hadn't done this before</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {But the school were fantastic they agreed to stick to the meetings every six weeks for updates on Zane (.) We increased his time (.) Quite a lot of the time (.) in them meetings (.) and we got him to (.) half a day Monday (1) Tuesday Wednesday Thursday all day (.) and half a day Friday (1) It was fantastic (2) He wouldn't do swimming</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {cos he's frightened of water which (.) it was fine</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {that was Friday afternoon so I just picked him up an he didn't do Friday afternoons (1) He got on well with the teacher (.) He did have episodes (1) they were (1) still regular (.) Erm we took him back to the hospital he was diagnosed with ADHD and he was medicated</p> <p>M: Ok</p> <p>C: And that helped (.) in school (2) So it brought him down a couple of pegs (.) They did everything to stop to make Zane safe (1) with regards to locking gates (.) and things like that (2) So things went really well (3) And then we went into year 5 (2) and he had a different teacher</p>	<p>Reintegration successful. School make adjustments to include Z. Good relationships with staff</p> <p>This was good to hear</p> <p>Regular communication and planning between C and other agencies</p> <p>Voice of Inclusion/Partnership Integration Team withdraw C worried that on own and lack of experience</p> <p>Voice of trepidation</p> <p>Meetings and good relationship with school continue</p> <p>Appreciation</p> <p>Timetable increases</p> <p>Voice of pride</p> <p>Voice of partnership</p> <p>School understanding of Z needs. Z good relationship with teacher. C and school working together</p> <p>This sounds ok but use of word fine is interesting as used this earlier when Z was perm ex and had to be polite because other children at school – and really not fine?</p> <p>Further diagnosis and medication</p> <p>Medical discourse</p> <p>Voice of appreciation</p> <p>School care for Z and keep him safe. Things are good</p> <p>Voice of relief and pride</p> <p>Know it's all going to go wrong here</p>
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<p>M: Right</p> <p>C: And but the teacher knew him (.) all the staff knew him it's a small school there's only about (.) ten staff if that</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {so they all know each other (.) They all knew Zane they'd all come across Zane's behaviour</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {and we were still having the meetings every six weeks</p> <p>M: Okay</p> <p>C: ((Swallows)) When he started in the September of Year 5 so las this time last year he (1) seemed okay (2) erm unsure (.) didn't know the teacher (.) She was strict (.) which I thought would be really good for Zane</p> <p>M: Mm</p> <p>C: because then he'd know where he stood (3) and then things started to break (.) very quickly (2) He would go into class (1) Tuesday morning and she would say "You're not sitting there today Zane you're moving over there on to that table" and this but for Zane that was his that was his chair</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {so he wouldn't move (1) and she'd shout at him (.) an he still wouldn't move (1) and then he'd shout (.) because she kept shouting at him (2) I would go and collect him (1) to her saying (1) "I've had to move thirty children around him cos he's refused to move" (2)</p> <p>Right "But did you tell him the day before you were going to move him" "No why do I need to" (2)</p> <p>"Because he has autism</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {and you can't just spring something like that on him he's gonna panic this that is his seat in his eyes</p>	<p>Year 5 different teacher. Teacher knows Z, still having meetings, teacher was strict but C thought would be good.</p> <p>Voice of worry</p> <p>Things deteriorate quickly</p> <p>Teacher no consideration for Z's needs leads to class confrontations between teacher and Z and poor relationship</p> <p>Voice of advocate</p> <p>Z seen as problem to teacher and not someone she has any responsibility to or for</p> <p>Voice of blamed</p> <p>C challenges teacher's actions in the context of Z's needs</p> <p>Voice of advocate</p> <p>Voice of knowledge</p>
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<p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {you have to pre-warn him" "That's just ridiculous (.) I've taug taught children with autism before that's not how it works" (3) And that was the kind of (.) attitude I got from her (2) ((Intake of breath)) I thought Okay I can see how this year's gonna go (2) So I beared with it (1) and there were incidents increased and his violence increased (2) and then I went in one day (.) and (1) I can't even remember what he'd done (.) He'd done something really silly (.) he he'd got aggressive but it were over something really silly</p>	<p>Teacher dismisses "ridiculous" Teacher knows better</p> <p>Voice of disrespected</p> <p>Fears going to be difficult year but tries to get on with it</p> <p>Voice of resignation Incidents escalate</p> <p>Voice of frustration</p>
<p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: and I went "well are you sure it's not because there was something else that had happened that had triggered him" (1) To which she went (.) "Do you always make excuses for his behaviour" (2) and she wen I wen I said "I'm sorry I don't understand what you mean" (1) "Well do you always make excuses (.) because are you gonna make an excuse tomorrow when he's naughty" (1) I went "Hold on a minute It's not an excuse I'm asking (.) if there's something in that has triggered him" (.) "But you know you're just looking for excuses" (2) I went "Right okay Just get Zane" because at this point I was upset I thought</p>	<p>Seeking information trying to make sense of what is happening for Z. Attempting to get teacher to look for reason behind behaviour</p> <p>Voice of advocate Mother blame Teacher accuses C of making excuses for naughty child</p> <p>C challenges teacher</p> <p>Voice of anger Teacher continues to accuse C of looking for excuses. Mother blame Voice of defence</p> <p>C gives up the battle. She is upset. Voice of resignation Reflects on how been treated by teacher. Feels judged?</p>
<p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {hang on a minute she's questioning my parenting</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {So I went away (.) Got really upset which I'd not done for quite a while (2) and then the following morning I thought (.) I can't have this I can't keep doing this (1) so I asked to see the head</p>	<p>Voice of upset and anger?</p> <p>Sense of despair. But takes control and speaks to head Voice of control</p>
<p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {and cried on her and said "I've got five children Zane's the youngest of five (.) Yes, he's the only one</p>	<p>Voice of upset C defends self - not bad mother - other children prove this</p>

<p>you've come across so he's the only one you know (1) but I'm not here to have my parenting questioned and that's what she did</p> <p>M: Mm</p> <p>C: Would she like it if I questioned her teaching" (.) And the Head was sympathetic (1) and said "I'll have a word"</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: On leaving (1) another parent pulled me to one side and I didn't know many cos (.) I er (.) Zane started later than them (.) finished earlier than the rest of the kids</p> <p>M: {Yeah</p> <p>C: {so I never interacted with the parents</p> <p>M: Okay</p> <p>C: And she pulled me to one side (1) to say that (.) she'd had to complain about the teacher (.) and her aggressiveness towards the children (1) her attitude (2) and the fact that everything's the kids' fault and not the staffs'</p> <p>M: Mm</p> <p>C: And I'm not saying the kids are blameless or that or that the staff are not none are ever blameless</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {but that er was interesting for me (.) And then a week later we found out she were leaving because she were taking a headteacher's position and it were like oh okay this is now this is now starting to make sense</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {and then her behaviour towards the kids and her (.) I can't be bothered attitude came in (.) If she was in class (.) she was constantly shouting and she was she was losing her (.) respect with the kids (.) in a way</p> <p>M: {Mm</p>	<p>Voice of defence</p> <p>Seeking mutual respect C feels heard by head. Contrast with previous school</p> <p>Parent support despite not knowing them because of Z part time timetable</p> <p>Voice of loneliness and isolation</p> <p>Contrapuntal voice of other parents and support here</p> <p>Voice of fairness Seeking fair play/justice</p> <p>Trying to make sense of teacher's behaviour.</p> <p>C tells story here of teacher who is not coping? Emotional? Losing control? Other kids not just Z being targeted – Is this C trying to explain things and make sense of the situation</p>
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C: The kids were starting to (1) not do everything she said the instant she said it (.) She were never there so they tended not to listen as much

M: {Right

C: {But then she just got angrier with the kids (1) and she left (.) in the October half-term

M: {Right

C: {An he got a new member of staff an she'd been a SENCO at previous school (.) Lovely woman (.) great teacher (2) but the damage had already been done

M: Right

C: So (.) he went back and (.) he just escalated an escalated (1) and they changed things (2) They he they would (1) Zane would be in class (.) and as soon as he went "That's it I've had enough" and he'd storm out they would quickly shut and lock the door (2) and lock him out (1) so to speak (.) because they was frightened I get it they were frightened that (.) he would walk back in and be aggressive to the kids (.) Now he'd never ever (.) touched a child

M: {Mm

C: {he'd never been (.) aggressive in that way to other kids (1) but there's always the element of danger there that he may do one day

M: {Okay

C: {so I get that (2) but the room they locked him in was very small (.) and he was with a member of staff, he wasn't on is own (2) so as soon as he that door closed behind him he panicked

M: {Mm

C: {and that escalated the situation (3) So at the six-week meeting (.) I aired my concerns that (.) "I understand why you're doing it (.) however (1) I don't agree with you doing it"

New teacher experienced SENCO, lovely – too late

Voice of resignation and despair

Behaviour escalates

Voice of despair

Change in language here from we to they – no longer partnership. Decisions made by authority.

School change way manage

Voice of isolation and exclusion

I wonder whether the focus on other children here is because it is easier to talk about them rather than focus on what is happening with Z. Or whether what is being said is what has been said by school staff to C – an institutionalised voice maybe?

Voice of worry and concern

Voice of advocate

Airs concerns at meeting.

Public speak. Politeness, measured response

Assertive voice

<p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {purely because (1) I feel that (.) that's becoming a trigger point for him</p> <p>M: Mm</p> <p>C: And they took that on board (.) I was approached again by another parent (2) that also had concerns cos their child was in that class and their child was being frigh frightened by the fact that the door was being closed behind them so and sort of they were locked in</p> <p>M: {Right</p> <p>C: {and I don't think they were locked in locked in there was another exit</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {but to the kids (1) that door closes they can't get out</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {so they would then panic that if there's a fire (.) or if anything else happens and they can hear Zane on the other side</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {and they can hear him shouting and crying and throwing things (.) and not knowing what was happening on the other side was</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: also frightening for them kids (2) An I raised this point again "Look I, I" an and they agreed they'd had complaints that this was happening</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {"so find an alternative because you need to</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: because this is not working" (3) So they were trying to manoeuvre him in to the hall where the kids eat their dinner</p> <p>M: {Mm</p>	<p>Voice of advocate</p> <p>C thinks was listened to but... Approached by another parent who has concerns about school actions Contrapuntal voice of support from another parent</p> <p>Other children frightened</p> <p>Again focus on other children because hard to think of Zane's distress or institutionalised voice?</p> <p>Z distressed</p> <p>Voice of advocate</p> <p>Assertive voice/ Challenge</p> <p>Interesting word like he's not human. Alternative space is the dining hall – not suitable</p>
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<p>C: ((intake of breath)) but that's where all the benches are</p> <p>M: {Ok right</p> <p>C: (((coughs)) and that's where all the books are (2) and (.) so then he'd throw books he'd climb he'd chuck benches (.) And he took a teddy with him to school (1) Something else that they agreed to that</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {I allowed but it wasn't (1)It concerned me that he was getting older and he was having a teddy bear in class and that would make him stand out (2) and the incidents become (.) more regular erm an then I was called (.) several times to come in and calm him down because they couldn't (1) He'd just gone beyond the point of (.) being able to turn them to be able to turn him round</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {We (.) reduced his time (2) but it didn't (1) not a lot just (.) half an hour</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {so that he thought he wasn't doing the full day (.) but he was more or less doing a full day (.) We didn't want him to think he was winning and getting his own way (1) Erm (3) and then (2) the incidents became more he got excluded (.) He had internal I mean they did they did everything right</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {He had internal exclusions first (.) and his internal exclusions had to be in another school in the infant's school.</p> <p>M: {Okay</p> <p>C: {because the juniors wasn't big enough to do an internal exclusion (.) His behaviour in there (.) was excellent (.) He would always be great (.) He actually</p>	<p>Things out of control</p> <p>Sense of no voice here – states I allowed but feels like C had no power here - resonates with the “I allowed” referral to sp and lang in nursery</p> <p>Concern that Z is visibly different to others – Voice of worry</p> <p>Incidents increase</p> <p>C called to school to</p> <p>Voice of responsibility</p> <p>Part-time timetable</p> <p>Sounds like the battle now between school and C Vs Z. I wonder if this is C voice or school.</p> <p>Voice of despair</p> <p>Fairness acknowledged but contrasts with statement below about school not making Z do things below.</p> <p>School following exclusion protocols. Does this make exclusion ok?</p> <p>Exclusions</p>
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<p>enjoyed the punishment ((laughs)) and it were like I had to explain to him "You do realise it's a punishment" (1) An that didn't work (1) Erm he never ever went on a school trip ever in the two years he was there they didn't want him to go on because they didn't feel they could cope with him</p> <p>M: {Ok</p> <p>C: {Erm they didn't think he'd be able to manage (.) that amount of time (1) So he missed out (2) Erm (1) on everything (2) He did Sports Day (1) but that's cos I was there</p> <p>M: Mm</p> <p>C: Er they do Church the last day of term every half-term (.) I think he did it twice</p> <p>M: Right</p> <p>C: Because he said he didn't want to do it so they didn't make him do it (3) An and that's been a thing for me Zane didn't want to do it so let's not do it (.) because he might kick off if we say he has to so it's easier to just not make him do it</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: So he never did any work (.) It's very rare unless (.) he was in a good frame of mind</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {There were (.) weeks where he'd be there the full three days and the two half days ((intake of breath)) and he'd wrote four words (1) in that entire week (1) because he didn't want to</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {so he could sit and do dot to dot (.) he could sit and colour something in (.) he could sit and do nothing (2) if that's what he wanted to do (1) but he were in school</p> <p>M: Okay</p>	<p>Excluded from school trips</p> <p>Voice of sadness/resignation</p> <p>Z misses out unless C supports</p> <p>Voice of sadness</p> <p>Z not accessing curriculum because easier for school not to have the battle</p> <p>Does C want challenge and boundaries. Hopes and dreams of an education for Z gone because of lack of challenge?</p> <p>Voice of loss of education</p> <p>Z not completing work</p> <p>Z being contained Being in school the best you can hope for?</p>
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<p>C: I'm a big believer in education (1) so that again didn't sit well with me</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {I want him to do SATs I want him to have an education (2) but they felt that they couldn't apply the pressure cause they couldn't couldn't even get him to stay in school (3) Erm (.) and then (2) he'd had a couple of exclusions in there (1) things were getting desperate (1) We'd applied for an EHCP (2) well we were awaiting for one (1) and then he went (.) one day (2) errrrm round about probably May time (.) and he had his teddy with him it's a Mickey Mouse teddy</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {He's obsessed with Mickey (1) and (2) he'd got up and walked out of class which was fine (.) He'd got up and walked in the Hall cause he knew that's where they were going to steer him anyway (.) which was fine (.) He'd put his Mickey on the bench (2) erm that's where (1) it went wrong (2) In the sense that erm (.) the staff did what would they had been taught to do (.) They had been told if Zane starts to create (.) move all furniture out of his way (1) so that he can't pick it up he can't throw it at you</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {there's nothing there and I get that</p> <p>M: Mm</p> <p>C: But in their haste to move the furniture (.) they moved the bench with Mickey Mouse on it</p> <p>M: Okay</p> <p>C: And Mickey Mouse fell off (.) and the member of staff kicked it across the room (.) and Zane lost it completely lost it (1) and attempted to attack the member of staff</p> <p>M: Right</p>	<p>Voice of disappointed aspirations</p> <p>C wants Z to have education</p> <p>Voice of aspiration</p> <p>Voice of disappointment Exclusions, deterioration, desperation Rare use of an emotional word Waiting for EHCP Voice of desperation and frustration</p> <p>Reminds how young Z is</p> <p>Repetition of "fine" incongruous with the event that follows</p> <p>Event leading to exclusion</p> <p>Indicates Z is somehow in control. Does not acknowledge the emotional trauma or use the previously used word meltdown – possible institutionalised voice - staff see Z creating</p> <p>Voice of fairness</p> <p>Z tries to attack member of staff when in distress. Carol stops Z.</p>
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<p>C: They'd already rang me before that I actually walked in (.) as he had attempted to hurt the member of staff and I stopped him</p>	
<p>M: {Mm</p>	
<p>C: {I only spoke (.) but my voice stopped him in his tracks he turned ((intake of breath)) it's the first time I've ever seen that amount of aggression in his expressions</p>	<p>Voice of control and authority</p> <p>C emotionally distressed and shocked here</p>
<p>M: {Mm</p>	
<p>C: {He was physically shaking (.) I could see it in his face and I had to pull him away from the member of staff</p>	<p>Voice of distress</p>
<p>M: {Mm</p>	
<p>C: ((Sigh)) and then he was heartbroken (1) ((coughs)) And obviously I knew (.) he was gonna be excluded</p>	<p>Z distressed and distraught</p> <p>Voice of sadness</p>
<p>M: Mm</p>	
<p>C: What the Head is said is she asked me to wait (.) with him (.) for ten minutes because what she'd had work out is if it would be a fixed term or if it was gonna be permanent at this point (2) And rightfully so it should have been permanent I don't disagree (1) he had attacked a member of staff he'd (.) punishment is punishment it doesn't matter (2) Erm (1) but we waited for quite a while and she asked if she could (.) ring me later</p>	<p>Head considers whether exclusion will be permanent</p> <p>Voice of balance/Fairness/justice</p>
<p>M: {Mm</p>	
<p>C: {so we went away (1) He came home and within twenty minutes he was back to being Zane (2) because he wasn't in the school environment</p>	<p>Zane ok at home school difficult for him. Contrasts with first time C seen Z in distress at school</p>
<p>M: Mm</p>	
<p>C: School rang (.) We discussed it (.) Erm she did say it'll be fixed term (2) erm because of the EHCP (2) to which I answered "if we If we had not been having the EHCP this would be permanent" and she went "Yeah (1) We</p>	<p>Voice of partnership</p> <p>Waiting for EHC means exclusion not permanent</p> <p>Institutional discourse</p>

just want the EHC (.) Let's get you that (.) and get him another school"

M: Okay

C: ((Intake of breath)) Erm he went back in I think we reduced his timetable again he couldn't go in full time (1) He hadn't done full-time since the first half of Year One

M: {Mm

C: {and he's now end of Year 5 (2) Erm (1) he tried (2) We managed to muddle him through till the end of Year 5 (2) and then (.) the first week of the summer holidays (.) I was informed he'd got a place at a Specialist Provision School and he wasn't allowed to go back to U Juniors anyway

M: Ok

C: And then that's where we are now he's now at the Specialist Provision (3) and doing well (3) and full time ((breath))

M: So (.) it sounds like (.) there's been (.) periods of (1) loneliness periods of despair (.) glittered with amazing people at times

C: {Oh definitely

M: {and (2) and now he's (.) in the special school so (3) if you could summarise (1) kind of (.) how would you summarise how it's like (3) what's made the difference because he's now and he's in full time can you what sense do you make of that?

C: ((Breathes in)) It's it's a more relaxed atmosphere erm in a specialist provision they're in the in the one he's in their classes are small

M: {Mm

C: I think there's only six or eight in there and the amount of time they do on say maths (.) is shorter (1) so when you go to a norm when you go to a

Reduced timetable

Voice of disappointment

Voice of loss

Sense of this being difficult – just hanging in there
Manage to get through to end of year 5 and then gets place at Specialist provision

Voice of relief and pride

I'm trying to reflect back some of what I have heard here and noticing real difference between previous description and current circumstance. I was interested to understand what C thought about that

Special provision relaxed, small, curriculum appropriate

C stops self from saying normal school, stops self from "othering" is aware of language that does this. Possibly being

<p>mainstream school and they do spellings they may do thirty minutes</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: In the school he's in it's ten.</p> <p>M: Ok</p> <p>C: When they do maths (.) it may be an hour and a half at the Specialist Provision it's twenty minutes (.) and its each lesson it's a twenty-minute short (.) but serious burst</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: and then there's a lot of (.) down time (1) So he goes to school on a Monday (1) for nine o for ten to nine</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: and at eleven o'clock they go swimming</p> <p>M: Mm</p> <p>C: and their day finishes at half past two (1) In an afternoon they do more of the (1) creative side so it's art technology ((coughs)(.) music erm (.) more that type of thing</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {so that the kids are more relaxed</p> <p>M: Mm</p> <p>C: There's a lot of staff (1) erm (1) but they're a lot calmer (.) so they're a lot better trained (1) they're fully aware they know how to deal with the situation they have more space so if a child is creating that child can be removed and put into a safe space that's not affecting the rest of the class cause they can't hear it (1) They're more (2) accepting (1) They (2) start each day as a new there's no grudge</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {there's no (.) "Oh God here comes naughty kid" They're all on that level peggin (1) In mainstream (2) even with even with a label (1) they're labelled</p>	<p>careful because C is considering my position</p> <p>Curriculum works</p> <p>Z is swimming</p> <p>Creative curriculum in afternoons</p> <p>Kids relaxed</p> <p>More staff, qualified, calm and accepting, buildings better, safe</p> <p>Use of word creating again here</p> <p>Each day a new day More hopeful? Voice of relief and acceptance</p> <p>Child not seen as problem</p> <p>Label not a protection in mainstream – behaviour is seen as naughty not need</p>
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<p>naughty and whether that's because (2) staff (1) don't (.) agree with their diagnosis (.) I mean a lot of people don't agree with ADHD they don't think it's a real thing (2) Erm they are taught in mainstream that this is what autism is this is how the kids will behave and then they're not taught that actually autism is a giant umbrella and you can have a child that's introverted (.) and that will do as he's told and barely speak a word to you to a child that is majorly aggressive and will have complete meltdowns in front of you</p> <p>M: {Mm Mm</p> <p>C: {without a care in the world (.) They've not been taught that there's massive opposite scales (.) and that (.) a child can come in at any side of that scale they don't realise that (.) They are taught that (.) autism is no eye contact no social interaction (.) all these things (.) and that is it</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: So when a child acts in a way like Zane with the violence it's because he's naughty it's not cos he's got autism it's cos he's being a little shit (2) and that is their</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {in mainstream that is what they're taught in that sense when they do all this teacher training (1) So (.) they do all the they try not to hold a grudge but they do</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {and they do have it where I know that Zane's gone into school and you can see the look of dread on that member of staff's face because he's there</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {it's that "Uhh What's he gonna do today" (1) I know (intake of breath)) that when he's triggered they've</p>	<p>Medical discourse</p> <p>Mainstream limited knowledge of autism. Autism seen through a limited lens</p> <p>Autism discourse Voice of knowledge</p> <p>Voice of frustration</p> <p>Autism discourse</p> <p>Voice of disappointment in lack of understanding of Z needs Behaviour seen as naughty, a choice, a problem not an unmet need</p> <p>Disappointment in training School discourse</p> <p>Disappointment in treatment of Z</p> <p>This must be a terrible thing to see as a mother Zane a problem for school staff Voice of sadness</p> <p>Autism discourse</p>
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<p> tret him like they did at the height (.) of his meltdown the time before instead of treating it as a new meltdown as a new situation they haven't (.) They've gone straight (.) to the extreme instead of trying to talk him round M: Yeah Okay C: And that for me is where it goes wrong (.) They don't (1) they talk at them instead of with them (2) And it's all about getting down to their level being calm showing you're calm showing that he's not you're not upset (1) that you're not anxious (.) That you're not aggressive (1) It's being dismissive when you need to be dismissive with him M: {Mm C: {When he's going "Yeah but they've done such and such" "Yeh you'll be alright just ignore em (.) don't worry about it" (1) They don't they'd make a big deal (1) ((coughs)) That's the difference (.) in special needs schools they know (1) that just because (.) Monday (.) he was kicking ten bells of crap out of a wall (1) and swearing Zane's never sworn but I do know some do (.) Swearing and shouting and punching (.) that doesn't mean that on Tuesday (.) when he starts going " For God's sake" (.) he's gonna do the same thing M: {Mm C: {that's when you go "Why what's the matter mate come on what's up with yer" (2) An in mainstream they don't (.) They tend to instantly go for the kill (.) sort of thing M: {Mm C: {And that's the difference (1) That he can start each day M: {Mm C: {as a new no matter what he's done the day before </p>	<p> Voice of frustration Poor management of distress Lack of modelling behaviour and language Voice of knowledge C expertise comes through here. Appreciation of Specialist. fair play, new chances, new beginnings, not holding things against Z feel like important themes for C Voice of appreciation Contrasts mainstream and special. Battle and violence of it. No attempt at de-escalation Voice of disappointment Z is happy in school feels welcome, not judged </p>
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<p>M: Mm</p> <p>C: No matter how bad things have got</p> <p>M: Mm</p> <p>C: And he knows that</p> <p>M: Mm</p> <p>C: He knows that he can walk in and everybody's "Hi Zane," and happy to see him (2) An I think that makes a difference so it makes him happy to go in to school (.) because he knows he's wanted in school he knows he's welcome in school (1) He knows they won't get upset with him (.) or judge him an I suppose that creates a massive difference</p> <p>M: Mm Mm (.) And how about for you how's it (.) different for you?</p> <p>C: It's a relief (2) Currently</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: It's a I've spent the last (2) four five year (1) in hell (.) It's been a living hell I've had I've got five children</p> <p>M: Mm</p> <p>C: I've got his twin sister and (.) his cha his brother that's a year older and I've had to deal with all of em</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {All schools in all aspects (.) I've had to deal with his twin sister being judged on him</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {I've had to deal with his (1) twin sister being pulled out of class to deal with him when he was at the first school (2) because they didn't know what to do (1) I've had to deal with them doing that to his brother who's a year older (2) pulling him out of class expecting him to deal with it and then they're upset (1) I've had to deal with having Zane at home and not being able to work</p> <p>M: {Mm</p>	<p>Voice of appreciation</p> <p>Voice of acceptance</p> <p>Voice of relief</p> <p>I was struck by the difference for Z and by the way in which C was talking and wondered what difference it had made for her. Before it had sounded such a struggle Use of word currently fears relief won't last. Voice of trepidation Repetition of hell</p> <p>Nowhere else does C speak so freely of her emotions</p> <p>Voice of loss, see anger, judged, ignored, how hard it's all been, how hard to hold it all together, loss of being able to have a job.</p> <p>Being pulled in and out – lack of agency and power – done to. No dialogue, no collaboration</p>
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<p>C: I've had to deal with (.) judgemental (.) professionals who (.) believe they know what's best for my son (.) when they don't even know him (2) And then (1) finally there's a lu tiny little light at the end of the tunnel (1) However (.) I know I'm also gearing up for another fight (3) ((coughs)) Because with an EHPC (2) you have (.) a review every year (1) and I know that in the past people with an EHCP and a place in a specialist provision or school (.) has a had that taken away because the child is doing well</p>	<p>Voice of judged and damned Voice of Injustice Voice of relief Voice of warrior Institutional discourse Waiting for the next battle. Still no sense of safety of being able to relax. Fear it will be taken away Voice of fear Lack of control</p>
<p>M: Okay C: Without the realisation that the only reason that child is doing well is because they are in a specialist provision (3) So my only concern now (.) is that when it comes to that review they'll take the prov they'll take the place at the school away from him (2) So it's (1) you're never off your guard when it comes to education (2) because that concern that (.) I'm gonna have to appeal I'm gonna have to fight for his place I'm gonna have to do everything to keep him his specialist provision is always at the back of your mind (2) So even though I know he's doing great (2) it's keeping hold of that place</p>	<p>Voice of despair at ignorance of those that make decisions Lack of control Voice of Fear Voice of Trepidation Voice of Warrior "Even though I know" – C has the knowledge but fears will be ignored again</p>
<p>M: {Mm C: {that's then gonna be the difficulty (1) Fingers crossed I don't have that</p>	<p>Always alert waiting for the next battle – the difficulty will return.</p>
<p>M: No. C: But I know it's happened in the past I know specialist provision schools are (.) especially Local Authority</p>	<p>Institutional discourse</p>
<p>M: {Mm C: {are rare (.) I'm very lucky to have one in the village I live</p>	<p>Voice of appreciation</p>
<p>M: {Mm</p>	

<p>C: {and I know there's waiting lists for em (2) And I know that's probably why people in offices that've never met these kids made those decisions (3) but that don't help me (4)</p> <p>M: {(Sighs)} So (3) You've been through all of that and (3) and yunno I find that hard to hear as a professional I find that some of the things you say hard to hear but I think it's important that we hear them and obviously (.) one of the things I'm hoping to come from this is that er we can inform policy and practice somehow so (.) what is it that you think needs to change?</p> <p>C: I think (.) mainstream (1) is in dire need of change (3) I think that (1) it needs to be told to staff all staff that while you are professional when it comes to special needs you're not</p> <p>M: Mm</p> <p>C: Absolutely not (.) Not in Mainstream you're not (1) First of all there's too many needs for them to be professional at them all and secondly (2) they they are taught minimal what once a term maybe (.) Even if they do it in their career for twenty year and they're taught once a term it's one day</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {I live it every day (2) and I have done for the last ten year (2) Every day (1) And they treat me like I don't know my own son (1) and they know better than me because they are professional (.) and they don't know better than me (.) If they'd listened to me from day one</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {he'd still be at his original school (.) We could've got him through</p> <p>M: {Mm</p>	<p>Faceless bureaucrats that make decisions that don't help</p> <p>Voice of sadness and frustration</p> <p>I was upset by C's story. I felt that she and Z had been thoroughly let down and poorly treated</p> <p>Voice of power</p> <p>Voice of anger and frustration</p> <p>Voice of incredulity</p> <p>Key themes – professional expertise Vs personal knowledge and experience</p> <p>Voice of anger</p> <p>Not listened to from start</p> <p>Voice of sadness and loss</p> <p>If had been listened to it would have worked instead ignored and failed</p>
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<p>C: {that (.) But they chose to ignore me because they were professional and they knew better than I did so when I told them ((swallows)) that certain things wouldn't work with Zane (.) I was ignored and overridden and they did 'em and then it failed and that failed Zane</p>	<p>Voice of ignored</p> <p>Voice of sadness and loss</p>
<p>M: Mm</p> <p>C: I think that Mainstream need to accept when they fail these kids and acknowledge that they've failed these kids because as a parent it's important to me to know that they realise they went wrong</p>	<p>Desire for acknowledgement of their failure</p> <p>Voice of Justice</p>
<p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {Because (1) they don't (.) they continue the pattern (.) My other two children were still in the school I knew they continued the pattern I watched them continue the pattern with another parent</p>	<p>Voice of anger</p> <p>Instead failure repeated</p>
<p>M: Right</p> <p>C: ((Coughs)) I think they need to (3) be a bit more transparent when it comes to the SENCO side of things (.) I didn't know I could speak to a SENCO I didn't know what a SENCO was (.) When Zane first started there (2) I was lied to (2) I was ignored (3) and (2) I was only listened to when (1) this situation got extreme (1) and that was too little too late (.) from from a parent point of view</p>	<p>Need for transparency of system, policies, procedures</p> <p>Voice of confused/ Voice of betrayed</p> <p>Sense that she knows things now through bitter experience</p> <p>Voice of loss</p> <p>Ignored till too late – damage done</p>
<p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: I think (1) Integration Team is an absolute nightmare (2) And that's not their fault (2) That is (.) I suppose it's the Government's fault for funding</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {It needs more funding it needs more permanent staff (1) Staff are loyal because they love what they do (2) But they can't pay bills on fresh air</p>	<p>Institutional discourse</p> <p>Provision for excluded kids a "nightmare"</p> <p>Voice of extreme frustration</p> <p>Voice of fairness</p> <p>System blame</p> <p>Inadequate funding</p> <p>Theme of fairness here again – recognition of staff in broken system</p>
<p>M: {No</p>	

<p>C: So then they are going to move on (1) and that makes that side of things completely broken</p> <p>M: Mm</p> <p>C: They've got nowhere to house (2) their kids (2) because they're having to go to Community Centres and beg (.) for space to teach these kids</p> <p>M: Right</p> <p>C: An as a parent I don't want my child in a PRU</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {That's I don't want that (.) Integration Team is a sort of a step in between</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {And that was fine (.) And they've got some great staff that do work there (3) But they need more permanent (.) buildings (1) They had one here they had one in town they called it XXXXX I don't know what it's called</p> <p>M: Mm</p> <p>C: and they've taken it away</p> <p>M: Right</p> <p>C: The they they're having to move out because it can't be paid for</p> <p>M: Right</p> <p>C: So (.) there's so many things like Lottery funding and things like that that can be app applied and (.) attempted at least attempted for (1) but it's not done (2) The (2) the Mainstream side (2) you can't ((sigh)) (.) You could train em till the cows come home (1) but they're not professional in special needs they never will be and that needs to be (.) ingrained in them and if you want to do the special needs side then you go to the special needs schools not Mainstream and pretend that you know what you're doing cos you don't (2) An it it's very they need to know (1) that we know better</p>	<p>Voice of sadness</p> <p>Poor provision for excluded children</p> <p>Voice of control/certainty PRU seen as negative option</p> <p>Institutional discourse</p> <p>Voice of appreciation</p> <p>Good staff, poor facilities</p> <p>Voice of loss</p> <p>Socio-cultural discourse C has clarity on systemic and institutional failings Voice of frustration</p> <p>Voice of anger and bitter experience</p> <p>Institutional discourse</p> <p>Voice of anger</p>
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<p>than they do when it comes to our children and their needs (2) That absolutely has to be instilled in them from the day they start their training (.) parent knows better (.) You may know how to teach them (.) in a class classroom (1) I know how to get him to sit in that classroom and be taught that's what they need to understand (2) They need to work with parents not against them (1) just because they're an Academy and they can pick and choose the kids (1) doesn't give them the right to exclude the special needs side of things (1) And I'm not saying it should get more</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {Cos it shouldn't (1) All kids deserve the same (1) but they all deserve the same (3) They don't need to be dismissed (2) In the special needs side (1) you kind of haven't got a problem with the special needs they've been great</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: They have been fantastic (.) Special Needs Schools can always do with more (1) They always need more funding (.) They do so many great things Zane went to Alton Towers Wednesday (1) as a treat because he'd done so well this term (2) and didn't pay for anything the school paid for all that (2) And they've got their own buses and now they they do it all</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {And they do it all (2) with (2) I'm the only parent that goes I think I think maybe two or three</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {because they all come from out of town (2) so they get no gratification from parents (3) Mainstream have ((coughs)) parents' evening (2) every term or every other term (1) and have parents thanking em and they get the end of year (.) erm thank you gifts</p>	<p>Professional expertise Vs Personal Knowledge and Experience</p> <p>Voice of experience</p> <p>Desire for collaboration</p> <p>Desire for partnership and anger that this hasn't happened</p> <p>Academies exclude special needs children</p> <p>Voice of anger</p> <p>Voice of fairness</p> <p>Voice of sadness</p> <p>Desire for equity/justice</p> <p>Contrast Academy?</p> <p>Mainstream Vs Special</p> <p>Recognition and appreciation of special schools</p> <p>Voice of appreciation</p> <p>Voice of appreciation</p> <p>Socio-cultural discourse</p> <p>C can finally be proud – Z's done well. I was aware of my own emotion here when I heard this. It was a rare point when C looked happy to me. I wanted to cry.</p> <p>Voice of pride</p>
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M: {Mm

C: {Special Needs don't (1) they get nothing (.) because none of the parents go to the school it's all taxis

M: {Right

C: {They get zero recognition (1) in that sense of the word and that needs recognising they need recognising for the work they do (2) They're the ones that actually (1) are fighting a battle way worse than any mainstream because they're the ones being (.) physically attacked emotionally attacked (1) verbally abused constantly on a daily basis (1) from an it's not always one child but it

M: {Mm

C: because they're so there may be forty kids in that school (.) and at each point of one one day there'll be one of each kid (.) will at some point have that

meltdown

M: {Mm

C: ((intake of breath)) and yet they still come to school the following day with a smile on their face and treat that child like he's an angel (2) And get zero recognition (1) And then they do XXXXshire do like

teacher awards

M: {Mm

C: {Where's the Special Needs ones (2) Where's their recognition

M: {Mm

C: They have (1) no real (.) Educational Psychologist go in coz they can't afford one (1) So unless it's (.) a major deal (.) they don't afford one (.) Mainstream do (1) Mainstream can afford to pull one in (1) And I think (.) Local Authority schools should have one (.) as standard (3) that's spent not all their time there but one day a week in that school

Although C is clearly talking about Special Provision here – I wonder whether it is also possible to see this as I Voice of gratitude

Autism discourse

Voice of appreciations

Angel Vs Demon

Heaven Vs Hell

I wonder whether he is simply treated as a human with a face and a name, with fairness, hope and sense of new beginnings but given the battle beforehand it now feels like heaven?

Socio-cultural discourse

Institutional discourse

Voice of injustice

<p>M: An EP</p> <p>C: Yeah</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {I think (.) because that would be invaluable</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {to a school (1) They can't buy in Behaviour Support (.) They can't buy in Autism Outreach they can't afford it (2) because all their money goes on them kids it goes on them kids on making sure them kids feel welcome feel relaxed feel that (.) it's not that regimental (2) in there</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {So they can have that freedom</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {That's where all their money goes (3) But they need to buy in s (.) they may need to buy in some services and they can't.</p> <p>M: Okay</p> <p>C: Private Special Needs schools they have their own (1) Educational Psychologists</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {But Local Authority don't and I think they need em</p> <p>M: Okay</p> <p>C: That's my personal view</p> <p>M: and it's very welcome Is there anything else that you haven't said about any of any of it that you think (.) you want to say that's important that</p> <p>C: It's important to remember the kids are not naughty (1) They have needs (2) and that's (.) the most important thing is that these kids are not naughty (2) They are just (1) in a different world</p> <p>M: {Mm</p>	<p>Inequity in the system</p> <p>Voice of appreciation</p> <p>Not excluded</p> <p>Socio-cultural discourse</p> <p>Inequity in the system</p> <p>Institutional discourse</p> <p>Story ends with a plea and on a note of hope</p> <p>Pleading from a place of experience</p> <p>Voice of desire/advocacy</p>
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<p>C: {And at times can't express that (1) so they do it with aggression (2) Which okay is not the greatest way to do things but it's the only way they know how</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>C: {And it's important to know that (2) today may be a bad day but tomorrow might not (3) An I think that's it</p> <p>M: Ok (.) thank you so much</p> <p>C: You're welcome</p>	<p>Voice of hope</p>
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Appendix 11: LG analysis – Jenny

<p><u>Colour Coding Key</u></p> <p>Listening for Plot Reflexive Listening Listening for Contrapuntal/Polyphonic Voices Listening for the I – See I Poem Socio-cultural context</p> <p>M: Ok so I understand that Alex has experienced exclusion from school (.) can you tell me about that?</p> <p>J: I can tell you everything you want to know about it (.) but first (.) I want to say that I (.) as an educated person who is keen to get involved in academia and support schools and everything like that I (.) still feel (1) two years later (.) ignorant of the system, the potential diagnoses, what that means, what that means for the future, the potential things ways Alex could be taught, not taught an I'm reading a lot of things I read a book I pick up a book so I've got Neurotribes erm the blue book and the green book to do with autism, raising gifted children and I read the first few chapters and then I sort of I might get another book and start reading that so I'm not (.) fully reading them but I'm not grasping a body of work that is (1) leading me in an informed way and what I think definitely should happen one definite thing that should happen is that sch teachers (.) at a very early age when they're (.) introducing you to school saying we will be doing swimming lessons this is how we do maths erm our expectation of homework is this or we don't do homework or anything like that well is we are all looking for looking out for when children have problems with x y z ((swallows)) we help them through issues with family bereavement and whatever</p>	<p>Socio-cultural discourse Disbelief at struggle/difficulty bafflement Educated person still two years on trying to make sense of system and situation Medical discourse Feelings of powerlessness, confusion, not in control, no answers Researching – looking for answers</p> <p>Medical/Sociocultural discourse</p> <p>Voice of confusion – no certainty</p> <p>Confident voice about what thinks would help</p> <p>School</p> <p>Desire for schools to be more inclusive. Provider a broader education. Help.</p>
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<p>(.) and one of those things that is mentioned at an early age is just get it into the brains of the parents neuro di neurodiversity might be something that comes up (.) sometime in the next ten years (.) and if that comes up (.) like with anything like there's bullying cos there's bullying policies and all that sort of stuff, it's just you're just not prepared for it in any way so I want (.) it to be mentioned er a good change for the future is to be mentioned as a general thing because it's not just me as an individual Jenny X whose son has had issues (1) but (.) the parents who I'm mixing with they have no idea either and they don't know how to speak to me and you (.) because this builds up where I'm going to next which is you feel so lonely</p> <p>M: {Ok</p> <p>J: {Feel really lonely and that loneliness is and t the teachers can't help you or aren't helping you and I think they should be able to help you because even to tell you where to go to tell you (.) what's th and even the MAT workers they haven't helped either (.) so you feel (.) what helps is meeting another parent whose gone through the same thing</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>J: {so to that end (1) another thing that could help is having a body of parents like me who've been through a situation even though somebody else who goes through a situation like me will be unique so it's not like me (.) but just (2) I ended up ringing up erm Gifted Futures (.) which is an organi an organisation which used to be called the gifted and talent the gifted and talented children or something like</p> <p>M: {Mm</p>	<p>Would like schools to educate people in neurodiversity – treat in way that is normal/usual/everyday school type policy Autism discourse</p> <p>School discourse Lonely/out of depth</p> <p>Not understood</p> <p>Assertive/confident. Speaks as a collective Contrasts with Voice of loneliness and isolation</p> <p>Loneliness/distress</p> <p>Loneliness/isolation Agencies no help Let down</p> <p>Misplaced trust in authorities</p> <p>Sociocultural discourse</p> <p>Voice of desire for similar community Wants parental support – similar situations. Seeking advice /help</p> <p>Sociocultural discourse Voice of difficulty – ended up suggests tried everything, last resort. No help coming from elsewhere</p>
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J: {that and it's there I don't know if It's there more for the parents or more for the children I think it's there more for the parents and just having somebody on the phone who says yes that's normal yes that is typical erm (2) that word that means er (3) shape of a child and the pattern of what's going through their daily life or their monthly life or their year at school erm typical (.)pattern

M: {ok

J: {typical pattern (.) erm it's just nice to hear and an obviously now I've got forums on the web

M: {Mm

J: {and stuff like that which you can find anything you want to find on the web so it's not that helpful but it's helpful finding people who have gone through the same thing because they're not on my doorstep

M: {Ok

J: {And I'm made to feel like (2) some form of a monster, inadequate parent, have you seen the doctor, pitying looks (.) that sort of stuff and that adds to stress at home (.) stress at work (1) Ultimately I've given up my job so you've got stress of money as well and all of that is not good (1) situation to be parenting a child especially two years on when then the social workers start saying to you yeah sorry yeah there is no case to answer you are absolutely right you're a great parent and then yeah he's so lucky he's got a parent like you who's pushed and pushed and pushed and pushed so what about people who aren't like me (.) who don't have that confidence and also I'm errrm maybe I've got traits myself I'm not that bothered about (1) what people think about me and yet clearly I am a bit bothered so if me who's not that bothered (.)

Voice of relief.
 Gifted futures supportive and reassuring
 Seeking reassurance. Theme need for support and sharing.
 She is lonely and isolated

Voice of appreciation of support

Sociocultural discourse

Voice of relief – to find support from others who have gone through similar
 Contrasts with isolation in village, different, othered, horrifying, scary, condemned

Voice of judged
 Sociocultural discourse
 Medical discourse

Voice of loss and anxiety

Been wrongly blamed, judged, lots of stress
 Sociocultural discourse

Voice of anger – J has been through this blame, judgement – now feels vindicated but unspoken distress at having it happen

Voice of anger on behalf of collective
 Pride, angry, disbelieving, distressed

is a bit bothered (.) what about people who really are bothered

M: {Mm

J: {It's absolute soul destroying and (.) you feel like there's nobody who can help you so when he got his diagnosis they did send some leaflets through with the diagnosis which I didn't read and I've read I keep look keep going back to them thinking oh (.) they probably wrote something in there and they it still hasn't gelled with me what (.) could help an erm I've gone to parenting additional needs meetings and an they're telling me yunno other mums are saying oh yes so and so has trashed the house (.) erm they're hurting their own sibling yunno I haven't experienced any of this so we've got (3) almost a better a good situation (1) but so there's nothing that's fitting (.) fitting the mould to help us and that is so (1) missing (.) So that is ((talking into dictaphone)) my number one (.) advice for the future (.)

M: {{{(laughter)}}

J: {Ok so now going back to the original question

M: {Ok

J: {what has life been like what was it like

M: {What have you obviously Alex has experienced exclusion

J: {Mm

M: {so tell me about

J: {tell you

M: {that

J: {Tell you about it ok

M: {tell me about your story

J: ((Intake of breath)) So er Alex's first exclusion was in year 3 (.) and it was because he (.) in one day he trod on one boys toes kicked another boy's hand and

Voice of judged and isolated
J surprised at how she's been bothered by judgement

Been upsetting
Distress /Lonely/let down
Lonely/isolated
Medical discourse
Voice of confusion – seeking answers

Sociocultural discourse
Even when goes to meeting with other parents – J experience not the same. She is lost, alone, outsider – does she think she should be grateful because her situation better?
Voice of lost
Trying to find answers – none coming

Event Y3 first exclusion

School discourse

wrestled another child to the ground (.) and erm (1) at the time the teachers the headteacher said can you come in please can you take him to the GP for a second opinion we're not sure has anything changed at home (.) Er we're not sure things (.) he might be his brain growing wrong (.) or it might be a phase (2) Went to the GP GP said (.) I think he's entirely normal erm I'd expect him to be lying at this age Is he being bullied, I knew something had gone on. So this was May in Year 3 December Year 3 there were issues in the village tiny village tiny village school erm so I knew that some bullying had happened (.) but I didn't realise until (2) this time last year that it had gone on for a year or something and I don't know whether bullying's the right word, I still can't (.) quite work out (.) what was going on certainly Alex and two other boys were not encouraged were not allowed to (.) join in with the other boys playing in the playground this is a school where there's only about eighty children and (.) erm I at one point I thought I wanted to train to be a teacher and I did some only a couple of weeks experience in a much bigger school and I did think O my goodness two thirty (.) strong classrooms with one year oh they can do Hamlet they can do all whereas a class of (.) twenty five to thirty across three year groups (.) they're not going to be able to do that but people said yes but these small schools are great for family (.) atmosphere they work like a family all the kids know each other and with we only having one son only child and my family my family is in XAREA or XAREA

M: {Mm

J: {this oh well okay that's going to work it's going to be like siblings but in actual fact it's it's it's backfired completely it's been the absolute opposite and I (.) at

Voice of judged. Told what to do by authorities – none of whom agree
 Insecurity/confusion – J trying to process it all
 Problem within child or Home

Medical discourse

Voice of outsider
 Confusion/disbelief/isolation/distress – trying to piece things together but can't – things not making sense

Confusion. Struggling

Alex bullied at school

Family/Village Vs Outsider – You are either in or out, excluded, judged, victimised

Voice of outsider. Lonely. She is outside and so is A.

Voice of desire – wants A and self to be part of community

one stage when I said to the teacher I think something's going on between Alex and the Year 4 boys (.) she said er I think I know what it is and I think she was referring to the fact that Alex because she told me this once before that Alex was trying to take on the mantle of Alpha male in the classroom from a boy who is a year older this was Alex was in a mixed age class two year groups and he was (.) I think this is partly (.) Alex's problem the fact that (1) when he was in reception he was in a class of reception Year 1 then he went to Year 1 in the same class so he was (.) the underdog and then the (.) older year and then when he was in Year 2 he went in to a class of Year 2 Year 3 but then when he was Year 3 (.) the whole class and the teacher moved into a different classroom so he was the (.) underdog if I can phrase it like that you know what I mean

M: {{Yeah yeah

J: for a second year running (.) without that opportunity to oh well I can put up for with it for a year now now I'm the kingpin or whatever erm an it was I think that's part of his problem (.) or the problem that he experienced (.) anyway these erm older boys so this is this is when he's in Year 3 so the underdog for a second year (.) the Year 4 boys and older were saying he couldn't join in with the playground games and they did the same for two other boys in Alex's year

M: {Mm

J: {but two other boys in Alex's year (.) were allowed because outside the school there was a (.) erm (.) clique I will say some parents were friendly with each other to up the point that they all go caravanning together and (.) one of the boys that was allowed to

Sadness – remains outsider

Sociocultural discourse

Lots of detail given here – J needs me to have all the detail so I can understand? Or still trying to process herself?

Alex excluded from playground games

Voice of outsider/excluded/Lonely

Parent groups cliquy. Village close-knit community

Sociocultural discourse

join in that was in Alex's year (.) was the son of one of these families that mixed together and the other boy is a very close friend of that boy

M: {Ok

J: {erm they're born close so he sort of assimilated into that group so Alex and two others weren't and they were **constantly not allowed to join in** and the other two boys left when and so after this bad Year 3 (.) Alex moved school our choice to C school but the other two boys also left P School **anonymising**
{((Laughter))}

J: {and went to a different school they went to S School which when Alex failed at C School then we moved to S chose C school because of football team because at the time **Alex was very active at this football team which also could've been part of the problem of why he was being bullied an and not being not allowed to join bullied by exclusion** **I hasten** to add there's no (.) **I don't think** there was any name calling or hitting (.) or anything like that this is bullying by exclusion ((intake of breath)) and erm (.) **I think** Alex was bullied by exclusion partly (.) because he was erm (.) ((tuts)) one of the bullies was concern **I believe** was concerned that he was going to lose his alpha male friend to Alex because (.) the alpha male was in the same football team as Alex (.) partly because **Alex was erm well ahead of them** so in the when they started Year 3 Alex when Alex started Year 3 they were in Year 4 but **Alex was already book number 40 of a book series called Beast Quest**

M: {Mm

J: {that goes up to at least 120 (.) erm and the teacher was encouraging the Year 4 boys to start reading it so Alex was 40 books ahead

Voice of sadness and exclusion

J aware this is an interview being recorded

Seeking answers to why bullied/excluded/outsider

Difference/Outsider – more able

Alex bright and further ahead on reading books. Searching for reasons why Alex bullied

M: {Ok

J: {so that could have been an (2) insult (1) rubs some people and why else well when he (2) so the boy whose toes he trod on that day was a Year 6 boy (1) They were playing football or something like that Alex said can I join in the answer was no so Alex trod on his toes I don't think that would particularly help I did say to Alex do you think that's going to make him say yes next time (.) But then he (.) er he kicked a boy's hand so the Years (.) the Year 4 boys that Alex had difficulty with there was one alpha male boy that Alex liked another one (1) who was ostensibly an older child cause his sister's aged sixteen or something like that everybody liked him (.) so they're all right that's Henry and Charlie anyomise and then there's erm the other two are both called Casper one of which lives in the village very friendly with Henry but Henry's busy cyc erm swimming and football Casper doesn't do anything and the other Casper his mum had died so the mums took turns in looking after Casper erm an erm (.) but Casper and Casper were quite unpleasant to me on one occasion so I believe that they were quite unpleasant to Alex an it was Casper R

M: {Mm

J: {the one whose mother died erm whose hand Alex kicked but I believe that Alex was going to kick this ball and Casper went for the ball went to pick it up with his hands and the two co-coincided I don't think that was an intentional kick of Casper R's hand Alex maintains he was playing with the ball (.) before so (.) but Alex doesn't seem to be too erm (2) annoyed with Casper R about that so I think it was a genuine

M: {Ok

Trying to make sense. Confused by what has happened

Voice of fairness – two sides

J working way through it all, hasn't yet processed it – still looking for answers, for things to make sense. Lots of detail so I can make sense of it?

Sensemaking/processing voice.

Sensemaking/processing voice
Lots of I believe, I think, detail of event. Sense that J has gone over this a lot trying to work it out.

J: {mistake erm (1) The other child who got wrestled to the ground Alex kicked a ball (.) you'd think from all this kicking he would be really good at kicking balls
M:((laughs))

J: {He's not brilliant at kicking balls he kicked a ball it hit a girl (.) in Alex's year on the thigh and everybody who saw it agreed it would hurt including Alex (.) She (.) has had issues with Alex in the past. She's a very clever girl and one thing that happened in the past er they have monitor jobs that change every week and one of Alex's monitor jobs one nice job is to be at the front of the line at the end of playtime (.) And she would stand very close to the line where they would line up just before the less less the bell was rung and Alex sort of (.) said can you move please because I'm meant to be standing there and she wouldn't and he (1) pushed her to some degree

M: {Mm

J: {Now I don't know if it was a light push or a massive sh I don't think it was a massive shove I would've been told about that

M: {Mm

J: {but she wouldn't move and (.) the same er that happened on Wednesday or something and the same thing happened on the Friday And I was a little bit annoyed with school why school didn't (2) stop these things happening it's only a week

M: {Mm

J: {and then teacher is looking to me and she looks on the monitor list an she says well that girl is the monitor (.) next week and I said to Alex and the teachers so we both looked to Alex and said don't do to her what she's done to you (1) and (.) interesting we were saying that to him but nobody had said it to her on the

Humour to hide distress

School discourse
Incident with girl and monitor job

Again detailed event here – seeking understanding?

Voice of uncertainty. Processing voice. Seeking clarification/bewilderment

Critical voice – school let them down

School discourse

Voice of injustice and grievance

Friday so anyway he had background issues with that girl

M: {Mm

J: { ((swallows)) so you'd think if he had really hurt her on the thigh and there was issues that she would be tell tailing and tittle tattling and all yunno causing problem for Alex but no nothing at all at all from her family y nothin

M: {Mm

J: {erm but (.) another girl who was further away said to Alex (.) erm you have to apologise for that cos that hurt or something (.) that means that

M: {Mm

J: {and erm (.) he wrestled her to the ground because he maintains he had apologised and it wasn't to her he had to be answerable to it was to the person who he'd hurt and unfortunately the girl who said that to him was the headteacher's daughter and from that moment on the headtea and the headteacher saw this erm the head tea the headteacher allegedly according to other people (.) and us was er looking for Alex's behaviour and looking to catch it (1) and so to in one respect he was being tau treated differently to others added to which her own husband was running partner of the Casper in the village not the Casper who mum died but er the Casper's dad

M: {Mm

J: {So there's (1) it was a welded mesh of (2) social (3) cliquy cohesiveness an we were outside it an we were happily outside it it was irrelevant to us until (1) he can't join in the playground games (.) erm and when I said to the teacher I think something's going on between Alex and the year 4 boys she said yes I think you're right and I think i know what it is erm and I

Processing voice – expecting A to be judged and blamed?

Another girl (headteachers daughter) gets involved. Alex wrestles to ground

School discourse
Headteacher seen to treat Alex differently/unfairly
Voice of injustice and victimisation

Lots of complex village dynamics

Voice of outsider
Small village, small school, cliquy - Excluded
Voice of sadness at impact on A
School discourse

think she was referring to this (.) taking on this alpha male or trying to

M: {Mm

J: {take on the alpha male role and a few weeks later she said no a week later she said you're right there is something going on but it's self-policing I don't have to get involved he's learnt to stay away from them.

Which at the time I thought ok this is alright then

M: {Mm

J: {but now with reference to small fam small schools meant to be like a family nobody should be staying away from anybody (1) in a small school

M: {Mm

J: {that's why I say it backfired. So erm (.) I think Alex (2) didn't have any other experience I think he was (2) more aware perhaps than other children and trying to make sense of this world where that's allowed. He said to me much later that erm because I said "oh be careful Alex" even this Christmas erm he went to a Christmas party organised by an employer where the (.) two Casper's were there at the party and (.) amongst other people and we said "oh how was the party?" and cos he parents aren't allowed to go (.) Erm "I'm definitely going next year" and we thought Oh Phew it wasn't a disaster bearing in mind he hadn't been mixing in kids company for a year (.) and er he said "I'm definitely going next year" and we thought oh good and he said (.) "because Harry and Harry won't be there" "Ohh (.) Well what happened then" and on the night he got picked up for the party he told my husband Casper R and erm erm popped my tried to pop my balloon but when I spoke to him the next day he said Casper R was trying pop everybody's balloon and I said "well at least it wasn't just yours then

J initially thought ok but not now

Voice of blame and criticism

Voice of sadness

Sociocultural discourse

Detailed event here – Processing events, trying to make sense of, help me make sense of so I can understand?

Christmas party – Incident with balloon and school bullies

M: {Mm

J: {and he said "no but he I was the only one who he tried to take the balloon out of my hand (.) and pop it (.) So this is like at least a year on (.) from any involvement with these children but he sees it as oh right next Christmas which will be the Christmas after I'm speaking to into this thing erm he wants to go to the party because er those boys won't be at the party and we're actively avoiding the school they go to because those boys are not academics erm (.) so it doesn't mat (3) it does matter their schooling but school is not going to be an absolute (2) er erm ((struggling for word)) force that dictates what their future will be

M: {Mm

J: {whereas Alex (.) school could well be because he is an academic sto I believe unless he totally drops out because of this whole experience which it is still likely ((intake of breath)) Erm so we are avoiding that school and even now we're going to erm H Secondary which is a smaller school (1) and (.) has a reputation of (1) being more person focused than (1) erm traditional exam route university focussed if I can put it in that (.) very brief descriptive way because I'm (.) not actively looking at all the different schools because I feel like we've had to knock one out because of not wanting to be on the bus with the bullies

M: {ok

J: {and then we've gone for the next nearest and the good thing about it is that they don't have school unif don't have blazer and tie (.)Which I think might actually be (.) a positive thing for Alex not having a blazer and tie although I am concerned very concerned that Alex might not have a erm ((swallows)) academic

Aware of the recording
J not sending Alex to same school

Voice of loss

Voice of pride. Also get a sense here that J sees A as different to others?

Worry Alex will drop out school

Voice of worry

Voice of loss

School discourse

Voice of loss

Choice of Secondary school ltd by bullies and J worried won't stretch A

School discourse

Voice of worry

(1) equal or whatever the word is like equal bu bu to sort of (2) push each other (.) along and encourage each other's further (1) challenge

M: {Mm

J: {You know what I mean when I say that I can't think of the words. Erm where I think that might be available in M Secondary but equally there'll be a lot more bullying an an all I hear from M Secondary (1) and have done for the last five years, nothing to do with Alex, is bullying stories

M: {Ok

J: {so I'm really heightened to that (.) and really(.) added to which for me personally (.) I was bullied when I was (2) er (2) five or six so same sort of age and all this time I have (.) yeah I remember their names Anna X and Sarah X (1) an erm the fact they would come up to me and ask me a question which had two answers and if I said one they'd go "NO it's the other one" and if I said the other one "NO yunno you're stupid you don't know anything" And I remember being very lonely in the playground and having nobody to talk to play with or anything like that (.) That is what I knew I didn't know there was anything different my mum taught another school she took my sister my younger sister with her (.) too early for my younger sister really to go to school but they were desperate for teachers and it all worked very well so I my mum's talking to about it now a bit more because so I presumably felt very (2) left out those sort of things so (1) and so she what she did was she moved me out of that school for the last year of Infants I was at the school that she was taught so and my birthday's July so for my July birthday party (1) before that September of the last year

Confused processing voice.

J experienced bullying at school

Voice of sadness and isolation

Voice of outsider

M: {Mm

J: {of Infants school all the girls who came to my party
(.) were people I didn't know

M: Right

J: So to me that tells something that tells a very very
sad (1) thing and yet I don't have any erm I'm sort of
sad an I might cry when I'm saying all of this because
it's coming up again but all those years between now
and then (2) that is that (.) doesn't really matter went
to the next school and everything was fine
everything's fine everything's fine everything's fine
and everything's fine but it has made me (2)
independent (.) not ready to trust people erm I have I
do have some friends and one of my best friends
(laughs) in a moment of drunkenness with other
people there was two or three other people there
she'd say "It's not true anyway what they say about
you Jenny you are a nice person" She's done that twice
to me so

M: {laughs

J: {she definitely thinks it erm but I think an I find it
quite amusing but now with in the light of all of this (.)
it sort of there's a bit of a pattern and my husband
says "yeah I was bullied as well at school" and he only
has a few friends but they're really close friends so (.)
yunno we're thinking poor Alex he's got (.) parents
who are (.) independently minded, we don't have that
thick body of friends to mix with, he doesn't have
brother or sister like my husband's got a brother and
sister and I've got a sister we (.) don't feel like we're
inviting people round all the time so he's got a loner
lifestyle before he even starts going wrong and then
you've got that at school so having known my own
experience (1) that's what the world is, that's what he

Distressed voice

Covered up this pain – self-aware knows it's shaped her

Voice of self-aware

Voice of self esteem

Husband also bullied at school
Self-aware voice but seems like searching for an explanation. Is this self-blame? Fault with J or husband?
J - Not a lot of friends but some friends

Voice of loneliness/feelings of exclusion

Voice of sadness

would have thought this is what the world is and (.)
even one of these bullies went to (.) Alex the
headteacher to say "Alex won't invite me to his
birthday party" as if she could change that so he found
that she could change that yunno to Alex so erm and
Alex was quite surprised that this teacher said well
Alex is entitled to have who he wants

M: {Mm

J: {at the party (.) And the reason he wanted that
particular party was a swimming pool party that we
invited all of Alex's year so not all of his class, all of his
year, and all of his football squad (2) so that's fifteen
people plus fifteen people something like that at a
swimming pool party

M: {Mm

J: {so we could have the numbers and the alpha male
(.) was in Year 4 and in the football squad and so the
alpha male's friend who thought Alex was going to
steal him from him wasn't in the football thing, wasn't
in the year so he didn't get invited and er he felt some
sort of right (2) that he could be invited an so he was a
bit disturbed by that and I think that also might yunno
that was all in the same year maybe I think, yes it was.

So (2) could we did we do something wrong then (2)
Even now I don't think so, how could we possibly think
that that was gonna cause (.) bullying something like
that. Anyway and ultimately Alex seemed to have
kicked off more (1) when we (.) so he didn't mind
about being bullied in December and people climbing
on his back and he had to shake em off, he didn't mind
erm (2) the issue oh that er that party that we erm I've
told you before but I'll say it I didn't fully

M: {Mm

Sociocultural discourse

Alex swimming pool party

Sociocultural discourse

Voice of self-blame but doesn't
make sense

Processing voice

J: {between so er I told you about the Christmas the Christmas lights the Christmas lights going on in the village the light levels going down this is the first incidence we actually know (.) practical bullying but we sensed that things were happening before and I can't tell you any examples but we know this happened and another parent was looking across at the children saying "don't they look nice" I said "don't they look nice" they said "they do now" "Why" " Oh well mm there was something going on before but it's all stopped now" And I said "Oheroh my son involved in that" being naughty is what I'm worrying and he said "well he was involved but not (1) he was more like he was the victim of it but it's all sorted out now". Then that man's wife said to me a couple of days later "is Alex alright? I mean I know boys can be rough but that seemed a bit unfair to me". Again we didn't talk about it to Alex about it at all. That was sort of around the 19th of December in the village ((swallows)) Then between Christmas and new year (.) one of the football team mums said "Oh is Alex coming to play football tomorrow in your village on your village green with the others?" (.) Er "No we haven't been invited" I said "anyway I'm busy now I've committed now, I've I've booked a van and I'm I'm taking some stuff to the skip and stuff like that so I can't do it" and she said "Well I'll look after Alex that's ok" and I said "Well alright then well I've still gotta go and do something to do with this van, I'll come back, I'll drop Alex off and then I'll go off with the van" "Yeah, yeah, that's fine". So I did that and when I came back at the and I said to the mum "is this al" the mum who was organising it "is this alright him staying for so many hours?" and she

Previous incident of bullying at Xmas light switch on

Voice of worry that A is causing difficulties

Detailed recall of incidents. Sense J has gone over and over this

Football on village green – not invited. Goes last minute.

Voice of excluded

said "Yeah, yeah I've got several coming for lunch anyway". So (1) I it was Alpha male's mum

M: {Mm

J: {who said that and after several hours I returned no people playing football on the green, there was a posse of mum's chatting and they said "he's at" cos they knew I was looking for Alex "he's at Daniel's house" who was our next-door neighbour Daniel's one of the other ones who left who wasn't included in things and wasn't in the football team either (.) So I went to Daniel's house and the mum, his mum was there says "well yeah there he is playing" I looked out for them I went over to Alpha male's house Valerie's house and erm they were sitting Alex and Daniel were sitting eating party food and I thought well if you're sitting here eating party food well they said "we're tired and hungry or cold and hungry" (.) something like that (1) eating and "well you can do that in your own house yunno you're meant to be playing with the others, you're not playing with the others so come home

M: {Mm

J: {So I was working in the shop that night and several of the (.) mums came through my till well (.) the mum who said "well I'll look after him" the mum whose house it was at said she'd erm she came through my till (2) ((background noises M checks dictaphone)) Just checking tape there and erm the sister of Casper H, not Casper R mother, the sister came through my till (.) So I had an opportunity to say to them "so how was it, what happened what happened" and I gathered that there'd been a fisticuffs between Alex and Casper H and (.) the general mood was that they were both equally to blame erm both equally involved and

Voice of excluded

Sociocultural discourse

Awareness of recording

Seeking information

Finds out fight between Alex and Casper at football on green

maybe Casper goaded Alex and Alex took the bait and it became physical blah blah. So I said to Alex "what happened?" and he said "oh well, we kept changing teams they wanted to change teams all the time, change teams and then Casper and I were on the same team and we both went for the ball I got it and he kicked me" Now I know both those boys are not good at football so I suspect that he didn't kick Alex on purpose and I said this to Alex "Yunno ((inaudible))" "No, no, no definitely did" and I said "well what happened then?" "Why I kicked him back" "and then what happened?" "He kicked me" and then what happened "I kicked him" "and then what happened"(.)

"Casper's mum got involved and stopped it" (.) "Right" (1) "What happened on the night of the Christmas tree lights going up?" ((Swallows)) "Well they all jumped on me" (.) Which I still don't understand what that means, I presume it means (.) like piggy backey and more

M: {Mm

J: {"And what happened?" "I shook em off" "and then what happened" "they jumped on me again" "and what happened" "I jump I shook em off" "then what happened?" "I sat on a rock" (.) These are big rocks that're round the outside of the green to stop people parking an "Then what happened?" "Casper H went for me" "What happened?" "I jumped off the rock" "what happened?" Casper H hurt his head and Claire got involved and stopped it (.) So in that context I can understand why Alex thought that Casper H did kick him on purpose and maybe he did (.) I suspect not not in front of people (1) But I can see (1) a situation had built up over (.) I believe over months

M: {yeah

Processing voice

J questioning Alex about events

Sociocultural discourse

Processing voice

Have been number of events where A and peers been in conflict. J trying to make sense of these difficulties

J believes situation building up over time, J unaware and out of her control

J: {of whatever whether it started with the book reading and also there's BREXIT going on and my husband's surname is Polish and Casper H's dad (1) my husband thinks has said things like oh er Polish people coming over here getting our jobs at XXXXXXXX before so mmmmmmm (1) maybe it wasn't personal to do with Alex Seb I don't know. Added to which I'm chair of (.) er I don't think I was chair I was chair of the PTA then and chair of the parish meeting and chair of the village fair so (1) people do so I mean I know what I'm like about my boss

M: {(laughs)}

J: {people don't like bosses so yunno an if Casper H heard his parents talking that way (2) doesn't take much to spill over (1) these sorta things but the thing is it wasn't seen (.) by the teachers

M: {ok}

J: {and that's what I think needs to change as well I don't know what an that girl who got kic the ball hit her thigh (1) she was regularly told off for causing the problems in the in the playground and it wasn't always her but she was always and her mum said can you get more supervision in the playground please (1) and it didn't happen and in the end she was taken out of the school as well

M: Ok

J: So there's a pattern there (.) An erm the other two boys who left P school wer weren't allowed to join in with the playground games one of them, Daniel, who I've mentioned before he comes from Romanian descent but actually born in Portugal and erm lived and never lived in Romania. But English was his second language and now English is his first language he picked it up very quickly but when he joined the school

Voice of difference/outsider

Sociocultural discourse

Processing voice

J trying to make sense of things here

Sociocultural discourse

BREXIT, role on PTA possible reasons for events

Voice of let down

Critical voice

No supervision at school playtime means events not seen.

Pattern of children withdrawn from school also "different"

in Year (3) 1 or 2 1 1 1 (.) Erm he wouldn't have known much English so he had so and the other kids would know that and that sort of stuff and in fact his parents speak with very accented (.) accents

M: {Mm

J: {so (.) if there is and with the whole BREXIT thing going on (.) an we live in a (.) er vote leave area so (1) yunno that could've had er influence over it or maybe not but anyway that's just setting the scene. Erm so Daniel is in his own (.) bubble a little bit doesn't pay too much so when Alex actually left school (2) and moved to another school er and when we left when we moved house he still wasn't fully aware that we had left an was really surprised when we were no longer their next-door neighbours so he sort of switches off a bit. The other boy Ollie school thought he was autistic as well because he was nn falling behind with work erm but his mum's a teacher and was a teacher in that school and his dad's a train training to be a teacher and so they brought him on and now he's not behind anymore and they dispute (.) the fact that the schoo they don't think he's autistic, I don't know, he wouldn't 've got a diagnosis cos I'm sure they would have told me by now but he's moved away anyway. He (.) was erm (.) his mum was unhappy teaching there could see these three boys not at a loss to do with each other if (1) the other ones weren't in the playground (.) So and she said (1) erm she advised me definitely (.) "in a heartbeat" she said "get him out of that school (.) in a heartbeat". And she was looking at moving her own son and had some trial days and she told me that the Year 4 boys had been unpleasant to her boy so I didn't know any of this because it

Sociocultural discourse

Processing voice. Feeling judged, isolated, different

Medical discourse

Advised to remove A from school by an ex-teacher and parent

School discourse

Voice of in the dark

wasn't common knowledge it wasn't talked about stuff like that

M: {Mm

J: {it was only because we had a (1) year 3 Alex's year 3 boys day where we're meant to bring ,there's only five of them including Alex, come to our house, play in the field, take the dog for a walk in the woods, whatever and this one, that particular year for year 3 we were gonna go into the woods, build dens and they were talking about it excited about it an for Alex it was absolute excitement because Hector and Bill, who were allowed to play with the other boys (.) he didn't get to play with them in the playground and this was his chance to play with them and he was really looking forward to it but on the actual day of the event the Year 3 boys day erm it was the last PE lesson of the year and it was rounders and they're four teams and Alex is in team 4 and the other two boys in team four were Daniel and Ollie, the ones who don't get to play (.) join in with the boys in the playground ((swallows)) and every team had thirty bowls to (2) hit and they ran out of time and Team 4 didn't get chance to bat and Alex was really distressed about this I was asked to go into class to sort it out and er the headteacher came knocking on the door cos she couldn't ring me cos I was on the phone (.) Been an incident er Alex's in the classroom on his own throwing things the others are practising songs for the show. I went in and Alex was actively trying to rip up his reading record which he managed. There were some tables that had been top knocked over some chairs were in the wrong place and on their sides. He then tried to rip up (.) and some pots of pens that had obviously been thrown because the pens were all over the place. Erm he (.) was trying to

Event – Y3 boys day and last PE lesson of year

Voice of sadness, loneliness

Voice of loss and disappointment

School discourse

Alex team not allowed to bowl
ran out of time – A distressed.
Headteacher knocks on J door
to come to school

Voice of sadness

School discourse

Terrible scene – Alex distressed,
isolated, alone and excluded

rip the real books that he was meant to be reading then which belonged to the school and I said "don't do that, don't do that" and he tried to sort off pull th the (3) blinds (2) the furniture called blinds off the window so I said "don't do that" so we need to tidy up if you want the year 3 boys day thing to still to happen today and he was jabbering away I couldn't understand what he was saying, cos he was crying and er he said saying the same thing over and over again and I realised it was "we didn't even get a chance to bat you would've thought it would be fair in class "

M: Ok

J: He's picked up a shoe to throw it cos there's lots of (.) PE kit around because it's the last PE lesson so every got PE kit to take home and er the headteacher looked through the glass slot in the window and sort of beckoned for me to come out because (.) of Alex throwing things. So I went out and the teacher says the headteacher, classteacher and the SENCO (3) the teacher who takes on the role of SENCO person

M: {Mm

J: {were all there and "what's he saying what's he saying?" and I said he said "We didn't even get a chance to bat" "Ohhhh" that made sense to them cos I didn't know what the situation was or anything like that ((swallows)) I went back in and said "come on Alex we've got to make everything right again we've got for the year 3 boys thing to happen" So we've corrected the tables , we've put the chairs, started to collect the pens and the headteacher came in with camera "oh no I've got to take a picture of what he's done to the room for records." ((Intake of breath)) so she took a picture then we continued and then (.) it was all sorted out, she came and erm I said to Alex he had to

Voice of distress

A distressed at unfairness of situation

Yes, you would have thought it would be fair. So sad.

School discourse

Literally on the outside looking in – watched, judged. Some sort of specimen in a zoo. He's 7 and distressed.

Voice of confused

A and J tidy class

Headteacher takes photo

Voice of blamed

School discourse

J and A together here. Teachers judgemental

apologise to her and he did he said "I'm sorry" and she said "well what for?" and he said "for worrying you" and she said "well that's right we are worried, we are worried , we're really worried but " and the class teacher came in and she took his hand and she whispered to him, because she always seems to whisper (.). I don't know if it's some class management strategy they all have to be quiet to listen to it, but she said "but you're not angry with me are you Alex?" I'll say that loud so you can hear ((speaks into dictaphone))"But you're not angry with me are you Alex?" but it's literally just mouthed and she took his hand and they went to the library and I was left on my own and then I think what are you doing here and the SENCO teacher came and said "oh when erm" No she didn't come then (1) The headteacher came back and said er "Oh I've just had a telephone call from (1) Bill's mum" he's one of the two that do play

M: {Mm

J: {with the year older year boys "erm to say oh just remind you that her son will be going home with you, Jenny" Erm and I said to her this is the headteacher said to me that she said to her so "I said to her erm you might want to review that because there's been an incident at school Alex is alright, not hurt anybody, Jenny's come in, he's calmed down but you might want to review it" and she said "will my son be safe with Jenny?" and the headteacher reported that she said "I don't know" and (.). so the mum said "oh can you let Jenny know I'm really sorry er we won't come this time erm (.). but we will try and support with play dates and things like that but not this time (1) So this is what the headteacher reported to me

M:{ Mm

School discourse

Awareness of recording

Voice of loneliness and confusion

Headteacher cancels Y3 boys day

J reports this incident – head is interfering, judgemental, pass on information, steps over a line -warning other parents to cancel a private party. Another parent led by her.

Voice of loss, sadness, condemnation, judged, powerless

Sociocultural discourse

<p>J: { and then she said "oh well since I've told one I think I need to tell the others (.) d'ya mind?" "Yes I do mind (.) but I can't stop you doing what you're doing" and anyway that mum would represent two mums because the the pick up one would pick up both</p> <p>M: {Ok</p> <p>J: {An erm so she rang the others I was again left in the classroom on my own. I understand from the other mums, our next door neighbour, she rang the next door neighbour spoke to the dad, the dad was helping somebody move home, she spoke to and he said "ring my wife" and then the other one was a teacher was (1) out somewhere like at a sports day out visiting something out with another teacher with her a teaching assistant or teacher I think teacher and they were both very surprised that the headteacher made that call don't think should have made that call but she was told (.) erm Bill and Hector aren't going (2) so you probably don't want to go yunno that sort of it's already failing cancelling</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>J: {of its own accord ((intake of breath)) And er when we and then the SENCO worker the whatever that's called</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>J: {the teacher the class teacher who is taking on the SENCO role came and she said "oh well when you tell him it's cancelled tell him you'll try and arrange for another one" an I said "I don't know whether I can go through all of that" because we've only got a few days left and some of them were slow to reply anyway (.) Hector and Bill were slow to reply. Anyway we went (.) so all the kids left school at the right time I was still in the classroom Alex was brought to me (.) after they'd</p>	<p>Jenny minds but can't do anything to stop her</p> <p>Voice of powerless</p> <p>Voice of loneliness/excluded</p> <p>Finds out from other parents what was said</p> <p>School discourse</p> <p>Voice of supported</p> <p>Voice of outsider, voice of loss, voice of condemned</p> <p>School discourse</p> <p>Voice of dictated to</p> <p>Voice of sorrow and emotional toll</p> <p>This is so sad</p>
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all gone we walked back and Alex said "where are the boys?" Cos I usually had a wheelchair a wheel barrow that they put all their bags in and everything because we only live opposite the school

M: {Mm

J: {which is another thing you can't escape it erm "where are the boys?" and I said "well they're not coming" He was crying then and I was virtually crying and I said "I can't make them come, you can't make people come" but when we sat down by the four back door that we use to go in and out and unlock and go in us I'm not unlocking because we'd got logs there and Alex was throwing them up and not caring if they landed on him and I said "I'm not unlocking the door and going in until you calm down". We end up sitting in the garden for a bit and erm he's very upset about it and I said "Look d'ya wanna go (.) swimming I think, I might have even offered him the river cos you like doing that or do you want a game of chess something like that and I can't remember what he said (1) Might have done some chess actually (1) Can't remember but then I got phone calls from the next door neighbour saying is it happening still? I said "No its not now" and the teacher one saying Ollie was also upset that there was no they didn't bat in the rounders and he would like to come if you're postponing it yunno he'd like to come and I said "right ok you two if you can make Tuesday then I'll ask the others" "Yes we can make Tuesday" cos this was on a Thursday

M: {Mm

J: {So I asked the others (.) and the (.) mum (.) one of the mums the one who rung up and said it will my son be safe she rang me on the phone to speak to me about it rather than text she said "Have you been to

Alex upset that day cancelled

Voice of distress and emotion

So distressed by the event.
Excluded, disappointed,
betrayed.

Voice of compassion, trying to
comfort

Event rearranged as some
parents rally round

see a doctor" erm blah blah ((swallows)). Erm she's the SENCO Co-ordinator in another primary school

M: {Mm

J: {"Have you been to see a doctor? dedederdiderder

er we feel that because you're repeating a treat (.)

you're basically erm (2) rewarding bad behaviour (.)

with a treat so we can't we feel we can't support this"

speaking on behalf of the other mum as well

M: {Mm

J: {"erm but we will review it in September" as if I'm

(3) open to their reviews and I thought there's no

future for us at this school so I made from that

moment on I made (1) erm looked into what can I do

to change schools

M: {Mm

J: {but (.) because there was two boys coming on the

Tuesday and Alex I went to the Scouts and asked them

if they some of the scouts cubs they beavers or

whatever they were then

M: {Mm

J: {And some came and erm to the point that Ollie's

mum, the teacher, texted me a few days afterwards

and said "Oh they're nice boys and erm y y is my son

old enough to go to cubs?" "Definitely old enough and

they're nice it's really inclusive, really good group erm

and none of the year 4 boys goes" This is all through

text and she said "yes the year 4 boys aren't very nice

they've erm shouted unpleasantly to Ollie erm but I'm

taking him to some trial days at some other schools"

(2) An that's the first I knew of A that there were such

things as trial days

M: {Mm

J: {and B that somebody else was thinking of leaving

the school for similar reason and because when I was

Voice of blamed from a parent but also a parent in position of power

Voice of judged

Sociocultural discourse

Voice of ganged up on

Other parent and SENCO blaming

Voice of anger and despair

J decides to change schools

Voice of agency

Finds out about trial days

School discourse

Voice of in dark/disbelief/relief that now found out and can act on it

Voice of vindicated

<p>waiting in that classroom waiting for (.) whatever was going to happen to me I did say to the headteacher at the time (.) because this would be several (.) maybe two exclusions have happened before then</p> <p>M: {Ok</p> <p>J: {so this was going to be another one (1) erm and so I think he was excluded two days for that even though he didn't hurt anybody and he also said "the exclusions are more even though I'm actually not hurting anybody" (2) So that's ((talking into dictaphone)) something else to be aware of</p> <p>M: {(laughs)}</p> <p>J: {I don't know yunno anyway erm she er (1) and in fact the first exclusion when he was first excluded (3) whatever happened that that kicking and standing and all that sort of stuff</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>J: { when he came home (7) or maybe the first day was something else I can't remember exactly but because Seb brought him home. Seb was asked to collect him and take him home (1) and he was sick (1) on the (1) patio just before getting to the and we only live across the door so and there had been a bout of something going round so his behaviour (.) on that first time (.) could've been (.) certainly (.) affected</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>J: {by not feeling very well (.) erm (2) but damage was done then he was excluded and then that started and we're the first ones ever to be excluded for me a very public humiliation being chair of the PTA and all that sort of stuff</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>J: { Erm anyway getting back to this one so (.) what was I what was I saying about (2)</p>	<p>Voice of powerless</p> <p>A had exclusion before</p> <p>Critical voice</p> <p>Exclusions don't make sense to A</p> <p>Aware of interview and research</p> <p>Processing voice, seeking explanations</p> <p>Voice of loss and pain</p> <p>School discourse</p> <p>Voice of shame and humiliation</p>
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M: The trial days, you were

J: {The trial days yes

M: {saying

J: {yes and yes so she said that about the (.) erm that she was going to do this **trial day** thing. So that's when **I found** out cos oh yeah cos (1) in the **classroom** when **I was** waiting for Alex to be brought to me (.) cos he was in the **library** with the **classteacher** **I did** say "**wh wh wh what can we do shall we move schools?**" (1) and the **headteacher** "**no no there's no point in moving it's in him it will always (2) be wherever he goes**" (1) **I said** "**what about Flexi learning**" She said "That might work that might work"(2) So then but then **with the tea the other mums saying oh well we'll review it September**

M: {Mhm

J: {**I thought that is not supporting with play dates** and stuff like that so **I thought** No (1) and the fact that the (.) erm (1) this other child was having **trial days** that ((inaudible)) out get out of there and my sister who's a **psychiatrist**, who's she's got issues at the moment but she s got two daughters one of which is **ADHD** and was being bulie had been bullied in from year 4 an was self-harming she had taken the view (.) **not to move schools and it was her biggest regret**

M: Ok

J: **So her advice to me was get him out of that school** (.) cos she thought her daughter would rise above it and look back on it and say well I **I yunno**

M: {Mm

J: Er and her view (2) together with my view is that **primary school is not a place for (1) academically talented** children because they the school is trying to make everybody feel confident about things and if they're not good at **maths** (1) it's alright yunno you've

Voice of struggle seeking advice
Asks head shall we move schools – told the problem is A.
Headteacher judgemental and damning of A
Seeking options, answers, knowledge, agency
School discourse
Voice of judged

Unsupported

Sociocultural discourse

School discourse

Medical discourse
J providing detail here to explain her reasons for moving
A. Processing voice

Sister also advises move

School discourse
Primary school doesn't value A
Not a place for – "outsider"?

got beautiful **handwriting** or you sing really well or oh that's a lovely picture your picture's going on the wall all that sort of stuff but if **you are good at maths (3)** **maths work doesn't go on the wall**

M: {ok

J: {its not you don't get the same (.) yunno whatever and at the time when her daughter was going through this year 4 5 6 **I said** (1) no so her daughter is now 15 so 5 years ahead of Alex so Alex would have been a baby maybe erm **I said** yes but **academically bright** children will have that confidence that they'll be doing alright in the end

M: {Mm

J: {an erm she's mmm not necessarily (.) her daughter is incredibly **academically bright** and having a rotten time or did have a rotten time and it's clouded (.) the later times so she's a bit bet having a better time now but then she got **ADHD** she's er so **I'm watching that (1) and thinking (.) what's coming to me**

M: {Mm

J: {And someone one person said yeah well **ADHD and ASD** different families of er (1) they're not related (1) **I don't know I haven't read those sort of books yet** but it doesn't matter whether they're related or not you've got two very **academically gifted children who are struggling in the in very environment they should be thriving so what (2) is goin on**

M: {Mm

J: {And (.) erm somebody else **I met** erm who (.) lived round the corner from my mum **I met** her when she was aged ((puh)) sixty to sixty five (.) she had been a **headteacher of an autism school** (1) Alex was reading (.) one of the **Harry Potter books** one of the thick ones,

Voice of ignored/not valued

School discourse

Medical discourse

Voice of worry/anxiety

J trying to make sense of events here, processing, seeking information, sifting it and evaluating it

School discourse

Trying to make sense why A struggling not thriving

Voice of confusion and let down

Sociocultural discourse

later ones in the same room I ha I ha I've met not met that woman any more times than Alex has

M: {Mm

J: {Alex was in the same room we were round at mum's there was cups of tea and biscuits Alex was sitting one end of the room reading (.) I was talking to this lady (.) Alex would come forward for a biscuit go back and read and she said (1) "he's not autistic but he's clearly bright" and (1) erm "if it comes to home schooling (.) don't be frightened (.) it might come to it but" she said "you are an intense person and" (.) erm (4) I can't remember my husband being there but I get the strong message that she was saying to my husband (2) if its home schooling with between these two it will be (2) hell basically ((laughter))

J: {so brace yourself it's not gonna be nice so even though she said don't be frightened of home schooling and she said I I used to say home schooling's awful you need the socialisa sh but she did say but make sure you keep the socialisation with the football team scouts do that as much as you can out of school so (.) that's one reason why we're still doing all these things

M: {Mm

J: {another reason is to keep him busy, keep him active, keep him otherwise he won't tire

M {Mm

J: {so we have to do those things even though (3) and like if there was a kick boxing thing I would send him to that because clearly (.) he's got that (.) motion but (.) part of me thinks will he become disciplined with it to know only to use it in the kick boxing thing or will it make him absolute brilliant (.) fighting on the streets and joining yunno I how can I be sure (2) I can't be

Headteacher of autistic school advises J bout home schooling Sociocultural discourse Another voice here that J has internalised?

J keeping up football, scouts, etc – looking for activities that A can access. Considers setting up own chess club

Processing voice trying to make sense of things, find solutions, weighing up options

sure but there isn't a kick boxing thing but I if there was one I would go to it but if there was a chess club (.). I would send him there but there isn't a chess club round here an I'm even thinking of setting one up myself but I need to jump through a few hoops first an one of them is attending a chess club somewhere else which means I've got to go somewhere else and I can't because as yunno the ser the yunno (.). When he was at E school we were gonna set one up (.). and that was gonna be it (1) Can't do that now because he's not part (.). of E school the same way (1) Sounds like they might be coming home ((recording stopped while we moved rooms))

J: Ok so we then took the view that we were definitely gonna move him er from P School and we (.). chose to go to C school because A it's an outstanding school but more because erm he knew the boys there through the football team and cubs. So I found out about how to do it online and fill out the forms and stuff like that and I contacted the school out of courtesy (1) erm beforehand and I asked to have a meeting with him and Mr Smith the headteacher his first response was (.). look your taking a child out of a small school (.). and bringing him to a small school (.). an it it was a budgetary response really I mean he was he was more concerned about the small school I was taking him from knowing what it feels like to lose that

M: {Ok

J: {budget thing (.). An er I said yes but (1) er its yunno its (.). about the experience for the child an an that sort of thing "Right ok if it's the right thing to do it's the right thing to do" (.). and he had some a trial day I think only one trial day (1) and then erm I had been ringing up so when Alex was in Year 1 so yeah I what I hadn't

Voice of agency

As well as voice of difficulty

Voice of loss

Move to C school
School discourse/ Sociocultural discourse

Voice of agency

Agency

Seeking partnership with new head

Headteacher more concerned with budget

Voice of unimportant

Voice of confusion and bafflement – advocate for A

Awareness of recording

mentioned on this tape is that when Alex was in reception the Year 6 boys really liked him year 5 and 6 boys really liked him and he had a sort of er I don't know if er he felt elevated above his peers (.) but he had a really nice (1) thing going with them and to the point he invited these boys to his birthday party and I asked th th (.) she's a foster carer actually but the person who looked after Alex when I was at work "is this normal" and she said "weeell it'sss a" this is the thing about the small family school

M: {Mm

J: {so it worked well for him then (2) but then they left and the ones that replaced him were the ones that were saying no you can't no you can't join in and play in the playground games.

M: {Ok

J: {So that big difference from being (3) protected, chosen (1) loved

M: {Mhm

J: {to being ostracised (1) bullied by exclusion that it must be a massive

M: {Mm

J: {change for anybody and if he's becoming more aware of his surroundings and potentially and I do believe this more aware then others (.) around him were aware (1) he'd think well this is what the world is

M: {Yep

J: {and er I don't like it much but this is what it is (.) and then the various other things yunno got worse or yunno an he saw for example I told you last time about the headteacher whose eldest child is erm the one that Alex wrestled to the ground er in Alex's year and she would whisper the answer to her and then ask the question of the class and ask her daughter who put her

Processing voice

Seeking advice

Sociocultural discourse

J explaining things for me here

Voice of loss and sadness and isolation. Emotional feels the loss for Alex but also her experience too?

Voice of sadness

hand up “oh what's **the answer** oh very good du du du” and Alex was annoyed by this to the point that only (.) this summer **I had** the opportunity to erm ask my niece who's very (.) the ADH one who's really dramatic and so can make tears in her eyes but she says I can't quite get tt roll down my cheek but I can do tha she can do that if she thinks hard about something (.) And er **I said** “you haven't used it to erm get something at school or something like that have you” and she said “no no I haven't “and **I said** to Alex “ha have you pretended to cry” an he said “no (.) oh once once” And **I said** “oh o what was that” and he said “well (.) erm the headteacher was taking the **lesson** and she said “right er whoever puts their hand up first I'll will **answer the question**” And he shot up yunno when the question comes he shot his hand up and she didn't ask him and there were two or three others put their hands up and then the daughter put her hand up and she started saying H the first letter the daughter's name Helen (.) and Alex ((J mimics crying)) started crying and she said “Oh what's what's up Alex?” an she oh no it wasn't like oh what's up it was “Oh Alex” and he immediately gave the answer

M: {{{(laughter)}}

J: { sort of stopped crying and immediately gave the answer and he (2) **no matter what that illustrates wh wh what was really going on I think that describes everything that he thought (.) was definitely going on the sort of nepotism (1) erm yeah in a big way in his feeling** and all that sorta an an he said this (1) wha (.) a full year (1) after it happened

M: {Ok

J: {having never mentioned it before and **I think** there's **lots of little stories like that.** Another one after the (.)

Event with headteachers daughter – nepotism. Alex witnesses how others are favoured

School discourse

Voice of ostracised/left out.
Voice of sadness

Voice of sadness – lots of events like this

erm balloon popping thing at the party (.) I said Alex well er the thing is (2) if it's going on now still going on now you might find yourself in a situation (.) where you might you might get involved in a fight (.) with this boy (1) but brace yourself because (1) erm (1) he may well be supported by the other Casper and you might find yourself fighting against two (2) And he said "I've already done it" And I said "Ooh when di you" ne ne ne (.) Again a year after he was at school I said "Wh what d'ya mean" and he said "well I managed to get myself playing football with them and I had the ball and they tackled me for it but then they continued tackling me even after I didn't have the ball anymore an I did this" And he crossed his hands over his chest and (1) made out his legs kicked out in both directions and he got both of them in the balls he says (1) Now if he did manage to do that (1) oh my goodness what athleticism (.) so I can't really believe he did it but anyway that's what he's telling me he did that but he an he got an then they wen rrrunning rou ran to the teacher (.) or the who on duty and he got into trouble for it and he lost a whole week of playtime for it (.) this is what he says

M: {Mm

J: {and (.) had to sharpen pencils instead of going out to play and at the end (.) when he went back to play they said to him right don't kick anybody in the balls anymore or some private parts or whatever the situation was now ((swallows)) I don't know if he's made up that story because I can't believe the flying kick getting two at once (1) but (.) it does make me think that if y y you get letters home if they've banged their heads on something or they've fallen over erm (1) or (.) have been slapped in the stomach that might

Processing voice. Trying to make sense of what is happening/has happened/ confusion.

School discourse

School discourse

make them later on sick but I think if a child is missing playtimes (1) for an extended period (1) like missing two playtimes I think the parents need to know erm

M: and you weren't aware of

J: {I wasn't aware

M: {any of these

J: {No No not of that (1) But I find tha that very hard punishment but this business about sharpening pencils makes me think there is some truth in it because erm I've read somewhere (1) that he likes sharpening pencils (2) and I think C wrote it he liked sharpening pencils (3) And I I find that hard yunno I think I questioned him and he said oh they made me sharpen pencils at P (2) So there's something about sharpening pencils as well. Now if he liked sharpening pencils he'd be doing it at home

M: {Mm

J: {if he ((inaudible)) yunno he's not sharpening pen whether they've got one of those things ((mimes desk sharpener))

M: {Mm Ok

J: {I don't know but there's something (.) there (.)

Anyway so going back to so year 1 we had problems at home (2) in terms of Alex and I were locked horns a bit and I was crying and going to the school and we had change of headteacher change of staff all that sort of stuff but I don't think that was the problem I don't I don't know if the change of the year 6 boys who were lookin up looking out for him might've been a bit of a problem or may I dunno. But certainly I wasn't working an we had less money I was a bit stressed about that an Alex wasn't on the computer wasn't allowed to go on the computer and I thought oer should I let him go on is that what the problem is and headteacher when I

Voice of in the dark. Lacks knowledge and agency

School/Sociocultural discourse
Seems that things happen and J only finds out later. Adds to her confusion. Doesn't know who or what to believe. Sense floundering trying to come to terms with so many things

Processing voice

No problems at school Y1 but problems at home

Voice of difficulty seeks support of school

Processing voice

Voice of stress and distress

Distress. Seeks advice and help.
Voice of lost and floundering

went in crying about it she said "well I'm sure you'll be pleased to know we don't see anything like this at school" Went to the G my sister said "go to an ask the GP for a parent go on a parenting course" so I went on a parenting course I didn't like that that much (.) but they did teach us special time (.) so we've done that

M: {Mm

J: {and I said to Seb you should go on this parenting course as well because we've got to learn the same sort of thing [REDACTED] (.)

yunno then cos they had this pyramid of do you know what I'm talking about the pyram there's a pyramid

M: {yeh

J: {the bottom bit must be like special time and then (.) erm rewards and so we had like hazelnut jar when good things happen put the hazelnuts (.) they say

marble jar we had a hazelnut jar and when it's full then you do something like go swimming together

whatever the child wants to do erm so we picked up a few little things like this but then this pyramid (.) the la

the top (.) bit (.) is punishment so (.) in other words you've got to lay the foundations of (.) feeling good

M: {Mm

J: {and working together and that sort of stuff. So Seb you should go on this course as well an er (.) his was all

about eating doughnuts apparently an yunn they had fine dining well not fine dining but that sort of stuff

and had a good time whereas ours was quite stressful .

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

J: Right so the parenting course (.) erm yeah (.) it was alright an that's why I told Seb he should do it because

Voice of supported
J seeking help, knowledge, support, tries things even though doesn't like them
Sociocultural discourse

Attends Parenting course

Voice of partnership. Proactive

Strategies suggested by parenting course adopted by J and S

Voice of supported

Proactive – seeking help

Voice of difficulty

Sociocultural discourse

there's no point in me coming home an me telling him
he should do something he'd hear better from (.)
somebody else telling him yunno whatever although it
seems like they had different (.) methodology of
teaching (.)

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

but anyway then when it all kicked off in year 3 (2) I
went back to MAT I wanted to speak to them (.) an
they wouldn't speak to me because I hadn't been
referred to by school now that cannot be right (1)
because they did say yunno Je anytime you need to
speak to us Je Je but no th th they were polite

M: {Mm

J: { but they wouldn't let me (.) I couldn't go furth
there's something blocked. So when school said they'd
got MAT team involved great I thought marvellous
even though I'd made the arrangements to move him
to another school I won't tell school that because we'll
yunno. So this lady Brenda D she came on one day and
she went to the school at 9.00 o'clock an I was invited
to join them at 9.30 an the first thing she said to me
was "what d'ya wanna gain out this Jenny" An I said
"to meet you because I've been trying to contact the
MAT team aner actually I've arranged for Alex to go to
another school and have some trial days before then
but the only trial days they're offering are the day
when you're going on a school trip an a day when
you're doing a school performance

M: {Mm

J: {so I'm not sure how I can do this" and so we talked
about an then the phone call for the headteacher
came through an then she left and she didn't come
back and then the erm MAT worker said oh I need to

Voice of confusion – different
methods

Voice of
blocked/powerless/ignored

Voice of confused

Seeking help/ agency/ but not
forthcoming

Voice of powerless
School have power to involve
other agencies

Sociocultural discourse

Voice of appreciation – wants
help and support

Meeting with MAT worker

Invited to join them –
interesting terminology – she is
the outsider

Voice of powerless/ignored

Sociocultural discourse

speaking to you separately Jenny and I said well I live just across the road we can do it now so we did it now and I showed her things that Alex had written (1) and she said well I'm no expert but I think your (2) cos before this I'd looked at all the bits about (.) autism, ADHD, erm (.) anything I could find my hands on th reading on the net and stuff like that why children were excluded and issues an all the sort of pattern of behaviour and sort of like under autism it would be yes yes yes yes no no not really not really not at all no no no maybe so an th ju cos th that sort of thing was giving all the lists and blurbs

M: {Mm

J: {but then when I stumbled across gifted (2) it was yes yes yes yes yes yes yes for all the things including the bad things like the tantrums and whatever so I thought ooohh and it said every school will have a gifted policy so ask them for it so I asked school an an the headteacher sent it she said "well it's gonna be edited in a couple of months anyway but (.) this is how it stands" An I looked at C's which was much more specific an erm I thought yeah C's on this an but I thought now we we're moving him schools an I did say to both schools right (2) there's so many reasons to stay at P to do with convenience (1) that it would be good if he could stay (.) but what I'm gonna do is I'm gonna ask both I'm gonna interview interview sort of thing both schools and (.) with the same questions so some of the questions were (2) more reasons to stay at P and some of the questions were more reasons to go

M: {Mm

J: {I just asked them both the same questions an about the gifted thing ((swallows))P teacher who taught him

Voice of researcher

Voice of relief

School discourse

Voice of agency

Policy not clear will change

Voice of conflict

Interviews schools

Voice of agency

Voice of agency

for two years she said well we can't tell whether he's gifted or not he doesn't write enough down (2) Erm and (.) I'd looked at the Gifted Futures website about gifted and talented children and it describes six different sorts of (.) gifted children but the teacher there said (.) erm (.) sort of (.) she didn't say how dare you but it was a bit like that she said "I've taught gifted children before an I've never seen behaviour like this"

An what I told you on the previous time you have to sort of insert this in the right thing about the football (.) game and stuff like that and the Christmas whatever so there was the Christmas lights then the football game between Christmas and new year I went into school an I said "there's something going on between Alex and the year 4 boys" erm (1) an she said then she said "yeah I think I know what it is" Then a week later she said "yeah you're right there is something it's self-policing" An then in February we had a parent evening and she said he's model pupil (.) erm so much better than last year (.) ((Gasp God)) "How bad bad was he last year" "No No last year he was good (1) normal (.) so much better than last year he's listening to adults properly, he's engaging with the conversation he knows what things mean if he gets told off for something an somebody else gets told off next week he's able to tell them what it's for" (.) that also could be (.) like bossy goody two shoes I realise now but anyway that's what they said then. And then in May it was can you ta can you take him to the GP for a second opinion so we did have a period of (1) good

M: {Mm

J: {except his bit his presentation of his work wasn't good and he was (.) starting to scribble on scribbling on his hands and scribbling on a ruler (2) And the

School/Sociocultural discourse

Voice of researcher

Voice of criticised /blamed and judged

This contrasts with next event where a few months previously A was model pupil. How do you make sense of this? model pupil to never seen behaviour like this before?

J seeks info, new school, proactive Vs authorities who are powerful, contradictory, not transparent so she is baffled and loses agency

Voice of confusion

Medical

<p>teacher didn't like him scribbling on the ruler so I was (.) an she showed me an there's was just a little an I thought (.) really is that that bad</p>	<p>Voice of conflict with school</p>
<p>M: {Mm J: {anyway that's (2) different coming at things from a different point of view. So when she said "I've taught gifted children before I've never had this kind of behaviour" (2) Erm an I'd read about the six different sorts of gifted</p>	<p>Processing voice School discourse</p>
<p>M: {Mm J: {children an er er it was all (.) starting to unravel a bit. Anyway so we decided definitely going to C school and the MAT worker said "well (.) I'm not an expert but looking what he's written" an he's written a story that includes elections and (1) erm about BREXIT she said "this isn't what most 9 year olds are writing" or would he be 8 then anyway whatever age he was</p>	<p>Voice of agency MAT worker agrees gifted Sociocultural discourse</p>
<p>M: {Mm J: [Year 3 (2) She said "I think (.) he might be gifted and the money that coul erm that P is trying to access for teaching autistic child they should get for accessing to tea gifted child ((Intake of breath)) An I said well what I really want is for him to meet other children like him because I think which is what I started off with (.) that loneliness</p>	<p>Voice of loneliness and sadness</p>
<p>M: {Mm J: {and avoiding that loneliness and just knowing that you're not the only one like this (1) there are others (.) somewhere. So erm (2) an she said oh there is a group er I think there's a group in North East Shire there used to be I'll look it into it ((Intake of breath)) then we moved to C we were meant to have an appointment with her and the headteacher before half term which we didn't (.) We stalked her basically I rang her, I</p>	<p>Voice of desire for acceptance/belonging Voice of Let down</p>

texted her and then I went and parked outside her office and walked towards it and she came out for lunch and so I said we're meant to be having a meeting at some point an she said "Oh yeh yeh yeh"

M: {Was this the MAT worker

J: {Yeh

M: {Ok

J: {so we made an appointment for the week after half term (1) an at that point he had kicked (.) somebody in the last week when the PE teacher so I told you this before but I'll tell you again so PE obviously was a trigger point in P

M: {Mm

J: {because e everything and she's an experienced teacher she should've known about sixty but she should have worked it out (.) but anyway unfortunate (.) combination of things. An even at P there's a chess set which I didn't agree to be there, outdoor one an I thought it wouldn't get used it was hardly ever used. I said to the teacher "well could you put the chess set out does that ever go out"? an it was "oh no no y we could put that out" Two weeks later I said to Alex "has the chess set been out" And he said "N oh yeah (.) I only noticed when they were putting it away" I said "oh who's playing with it" An he said "oh year 4 boys" Which meant of course he wouldn't play with it ((swallows)) He said "but they weren't using the Knight pro correctly" (.) So an he didn't feel he could be part of well this is how you use it or anything like that. So even though they were putting the chess set out almost that they were pressed by me they didn't check that it was there for Alex to use if he wanted to (.) Yunno he was it was just falling between stalls so many places I believe

Voice of agency. Proactive.
Seeking help

Solution seeking voice

Voice of let
down/ignored/unsupported/
frustrated/lack of power

M: {Mm

J: {{{Intake of breath}} Erm anyway (.) so C (.) he liked the PE teacher and everything was fine (.) but the PE teacher was a stand in PE teacher and the last week of th that first half term the real one came in took the lesson it was football (2) Alex was Goalie which he is in the football team and he was cold because he wasn't doing anything because the other team weren't really scoring so he said to somebody on his outdoor outside school football team who likes being in the goal as well "D'ya wanna swap cos I'm gettin cold"

M: {Mm

J: {when it was a goal had just been scored so they were waiting so he's waiting for the whistle to blow to say yes kick off again an er while they're having this conversation the boy didn't even answer I don't think (.) a ball came over and Alex conceded it and he was annoyed by this cos he thought the only two people who could do that one was the chap in goal at the other end (2) and the other one was the teacher and he thought the teacher did it. Who obviously said something that the teacher didn't appreciate so he was banished in some way

M: {Mm

J: {An erm an then the ball rolled towards him an he held onto it and wouldn't let it go an then he was sort of sent to face the wall (2) So real humiliation and on the way out when they're doin that he kicked somebody who's on his team out of school so it's not a personal thing (.) cos one of the things he did at P one of the things was (.) he was told off for not (.) responding when his name was called and three times he didn't respond (2) And he had to go and put his name on a humiliating thing on the yunno sort of sun

Event with PE teacher at C School

School discourse

Processing/explaining voice

Wants A to be understood. He has been humiliated. School not a safe place for A.

cloud white cloud that thing. His name wasn't there so he had to they told him to write his name on the board, he wrote it thre threw the pen, not at anyone, threw it, could've hit anybody, didn't ((swallows)) Then cos of that he was sent out.

[REDACTED]

M: {Mm

J: {so there's but he yunno (.) to be told off because he hadn't listened when his name was called (3) it it spiralled

M: {Yeh

J: {it's escalated from nothing

M: {Yeh

J: {and to an element of humiliation involved as well and I think there's a pattern there and having all that unfairness with the nepotism and not being allowed to join in the playground it all sort of a big melting pot of what I think

M: {Mm

J: {An then when we put an offer on a broken down house there (.) and he thought oh my goodness I can put up with the nepotism I can put up with the bullying by exclusion but please don't take away the only home I've got and move to somewhere where the door doesn't even shut

M: {{{(laughs)}}

J: {What you doing you crazy parents so that was the final

M: {Mm

J: {straw apparently (.) So we found out later(.) Anyway we moved school to C (1) liked the PE teacher but then the old PE teacher came back he didn't like him. And then PE was a bit of a trigger and erm (1) the

Voice of sadness. A humiliated, excluded, treated unfairly

Sociocultural discourse

Voice of self-blame

MAT worker did say when he'd kicked somebody at from th that first time she said well if it was anybody else we wouldn't even be talking about it because this sort of quite normal occasional things like this It's just that we're watching it yunno (.) intensely

M: {right

J: {so not worry and at that point **I said** yunno (.) Oh no not then cos then the **class teacher** made reference to the fact that a lot of people were leaving (1) the class an **I was surprised** cos at the time I thought she was good teacher an she was "N yeh I don't know why either" An erm but it meant there was an **odd number in the class (.)** and whereas there had been four boys (2) including Alex who could pair up (1) together (.) because one girl had left (.) the tomboy girl who partnered that girl (.) then wanted to partner one of the boys and then Alex was the odd number and **I mentioned** that at one of the **meetings** we had in February and or January February and she made a note of oh sensitive to not being er to being the left one out and then she had this er erm (.) random (1) way of (.) identifying somebody who could be the left the one who didn't pair up but it wasn't like (.) pick your name out of a straw out yunno and then that's you you've had your go at being on your own

M: {Mm

J: {an then when everybody's had a we'll start again. It was computer generated which meant it Alex was, Alex noticed that he was picked more often and others hadn't been picked at all. So that didn't help and then they went on a **school trip** and Alex (.) wasn't sitting next to somebody on the way. Which **I think was** **unsensi insensitive of her because she could've (.) managed who how many people sat on the back seat**

Voice of watched and judged

Another event here where A is isolated/excluded/lonely

School discourse

Voice of criticism/ sadness that A not looked after

to make it be partners everywhere else. An he worked out who's an he'd arranged to sit next to somebody on the way back but because there was a bee in the bus she just herded them all on just sit down sit down sit down and Alex was sitting on his own again. And she said "well he er erm he didn't like the fact that when we got off the bus (.) I told them to walk in single file and some people were still walking in pairs an he he got a bit narked about that but then ((inaudible)) I gave him an iPad and he seemed quite happy with that" And on the way back I said how what did you do an he said "oh it was just me, the bee and the iPad an yunno and when the bus stopped (.) bee flew out at C I think" So he was quite sort of resigned to this is his lot in life I think

M: {Mm

J: {which is not really nice.

M: {No

J: {Anyway but the worst thing in C was that Mrs Pear who was the who is the erm teacher for Key Stage 1 so all the other children (.) have been gone through her lessons and stuff like that

M: {Mm

J: {and know her what she's like so if somebody thought that a teacher was a dragon or something like that then they might have learnt other oh just yunno

M: {Mm

J: {that's what she's like just put up with it but Alex hadn't gone through all of that with her and he was allowed to play football in the playground and so he did play football in the playground an they had preference of balls and stuff like that and there was a girl called Molly B in Alex's year who's very clever, very competitive and they'd had issues with competitive

Voice of sadness. A left out and excluded again

Voice of sadness

School discourse

Event at C with Molly and ball

nature before we'd even arrived at the school so there's something going on there and she was flexi schooled and did some gymnastics out of school don't know what the full story was since we've I've been told that her parents gave a lot of gifts to Mrs Pear I don't know if that makes any difference or if indeed it's true I think it probably is true but (.) Whatever anyway erm (1) Molly was playing with a ball (.) in the playground a yellow ball the boys were playing with a yellow ball playing football and a yellow ball rolled towards Mrs Pear who was on duty at the time she kicked it back to the boys cos that's where she thought it came from an she maintains "I know what I saw at the playground" Anyway Molly decided she didn't want to play with the ball anymore (.) Maybe that's the one that rolled towards Mrs Pear and she kicked it back to the boys I don't know but anyway she st so the boys end up with both balls and then after a bit Molly decided she did want the ball back. So she went and Alex had the good ball in his hand and she said "oh I'd like my ball back" an he said "that's yours over there you can have that one" and she said "no I want that one" Cos there's a little mark on one of them that identifies which one's the good one. And "no no n this was out here I'm gonna go and tell Mrs Pear you won't give me my ball back" (.) So she did and Mrs Pear came and she asked Alex to give that ball to Molly and Alex threw it out the playground and Mrs Pear sent another boy to go and get it which he did and she brought Molly and Alex into inside (.) and the boy brought the ball and he sort of gently (1) tossed it to Mrs Pear close distance for her to take it and she gently tossed it to Alex and asked him to give it to Molly and sai so was expecting that gently tossed an Molly's arms were already

Processing voice

School discourse

waiting for it and at the last Alex maintains that at the last minute she crossed her hands and it bounced off her elbow and it hit her face and he was excluded for throwing a ball in her face (.). When I went to collect him Mrs Pear was all ((mimes gasping)) agitated and like this an er I said "well (2) erm there was some dispute about whether the boys had had the ball which ball the boys had had an an she said "I know what I saw I know what I saw". And I said "well it's easy just ask the other boys which ball they had" and she said "oh well (.) they were backing up Alex but that's what they do"(1) So I think you've going from Mrs James the headteacher at P and her nepotism with her daughter (1) and then you've got Mrs Pear and Alex had been told to stay away from Molly B and (.) but Molly B hadn't been told to stay away from Alex and then Mrs Pear bringing them together and making Alex give Molly something that he maintains wasn't

M: {Mm

J: {right anyway it's furthering that message that (.) adults in charge are (.) wrong ((Intake of breath)) So he's lost respect for them and anyway (.) ultimately I can't it was all a bit of a mish mash

[REDACTED]

I dunno. Anyway so erm he got expelled they tried to expel him from C but then changed it to and we'd already range we'd already thought Mrs after that incident with the ball, if Mrs Pear isn't going to listen to the other boys as well as Alex whe what is the future here so we moved to S School where those two other boys had gone from P

M: {Mm

A excluded from C

School/ Sociocultural discourse

Voice of
lonely/excluded/Unfairness/
lack of power

Processing voice. All a mish
mash. Can't make sense of what
is going on...

Event – exclusion changed to
managed move to S school

J presents this as a choice here
– feeling that desperate to find
somewhere that will work for A

Voice of agency?

J: {and the headteacher there could see that "oh Alex Alex yeah" so there was no issue. She was a bit concerned if we still lived next door to Daniel that Daniel and Alex couldn't escape each other from being at school

M: {Mm

J: {and there (.) But I said "well we've moved that's not a "oh right ok that's fine then" ((Swallows)) Anyway ((Intake of breath)) so they started erm he started no school then we had some trial days we did one trial day and my idea was to have lots of trial days so that come September they'd all know each other and that sort of stuff

M: {Mhm

J: {and even the raft race I'd got tickets so that we could pair em up they could pair themselves up how the kids wanted to pair up an an we had three rafts but in the end no we couldn't do that we couldn't match people we couldn't yunno because I wasn't given access to them diderdiderdiderdider an erm the other parents weren't interested and even I said to the headteacher can I know GDPR can you give them my details for them to contact me and we'll try and do something but it didn't work (.) so none of that so when Alex was going to the pupil referral unit because they did a managed move to S which involved going through pupil referral unit and Mr Oscar there said he shouldn't even be here (.) He's mainstream appropriate an he maintained that an n n it all started in October (.) cos he did a term in (1) so that July ter half term he was at pupil referral unit half the time i.e. morning or afternoon (3) erm morning morning and then afternoon being taught by Individual Programmes in the afternoon at er XXXX library but when we

School discourse

Tries to be proactive

Voice of let down

Voice of isolated

Voice of sadness

A attends PRU mornings and individual programmes afternoons and then managed move to S

Voice of powerless

A attends S in October

School discourse

looked at the work later it was very very easy stuff like copying over a handwritten poem several times very very simple. Anyway we lost the folder from that so then when we in the October when we had to start doing it again he had to do the work again (1) Which yunno bit of an anathema but at the same time I did say to Individual Programmes "have you got any reports for us any school report stuff" "Oh yeah we've had some tests done an y you'd be amazed" Now we wouldn't be amazed because what I haven't told on this tape the way I'm (.) telling this story out of order in February because of the gifted thing (.) and I got in touch with Gifted Futures who said "oh yes this is typical pattern this is typical yeh yeh an the bullying as well yeh all of that yeh yeh this is absolutely typical of gifted children" she said "you really need to have him assessed" ((Intake of breath)) looked into the assessment it's expensive did get a grant towards it erm and Brenda D said "No you must never do that you must not do that no because he'll get a low (.) score because he's not in a good place at the moment an his self-esteem" An I said "kids like this apparently like this sort of day it's a full day" "Oh no no" Anyway headmaster said "when d'ya wanna go you can have the day off that's fine" And (.) but not within the MAT worker's hearing so she was all "no no we agreed that you weren't ever gone do this" sorta thing and then "well no headmaster says we can have the day off" Anyway he did enjoy it It was the Friday before the SATs week (2) The SATs were done He did (1) he enjoyed the SATs week cos it's quiet an you just get on with the work. The results came back th this 9 year old was reading as a sixteen year old doing maths age 10 to 13 and I said to the headteacher because I'd

Voice of loss of education

Not informed. Has to chase information

Tests from Individual programmes support tests done by Gifted futures

Conflicting voices of agencies again here, MAT, Gifted Futures, Headteacher, J

School discourse

Alex gifted. Event described here conversation with headteacher – Headteacher seems dismissive of J

previously said to the headteacher "how bright is Alex?" (.) and he said so bearing in mind P said "well we can't we can't do any tests because because he doesn't write anything enough down" He said "he'll probably achieve what he needs to achieve by the end of the day ((interruption)) Erm an I said "rea by the end of the year really?" ((Recording interrupted to move rooms))

J: Right ok so I was saying about saying to Mr Smith "how bright is he" and he said he will achieve he'll probably achieve what he needs to achieve by the end of the year"

M: {Mm

J: {an I said well surely he's already done that. He said "well he'll probably exceed what he needs to achieve by the end of the year" An I said "mmmmm" an he said "he's an he's an able child (.) in an able class if he was in an inner city class school maybe it would be different" or it would be more noticeable or some some

M: {Mm

J: {phrasing like that (2) Then the results came back an I said "what d'ya think of the result"s An he said "well it's a long report" (1) 31 pages "Well he's erm (2) he's an unusual child (1) He likes tests he performs well in tests he can do stuff we didn't even know he could do (2) an then in the afternoon he was expelled (1) So I ((sigh)) my experience is (2) so overshadowed by what I perceive to be (2) erm lack of (4) er observation (1) of what Alex was doing so his whole experience of the playground (1) that ball (2) erm (3) understa spea any adult that could speak to him an an try an work with (.) him Mr Smith did try an erm (.) engage with him he did er (.) ask Alex an a couple of other boys to help sweep

Sociocultural discourse

School discourse

Voice of dismissed

Voice of distress

Voice of let down

Voice of fairness/processing

the snow an stuff like that an he did recognise that Alex liked Harry Potter an when they had a film week or whatever it was he did save the poster of Harry Potter films and give it to Alex but (2) Things like they asked them to set up a chess club or a (.) model making club or a Harry Potter club to keep him busy in th cos they were saying what happens something happens in the playground he gets agitated by it an it carries on through into the school in the afternoon

M: {Mm

J: {{{Intake of breath an er but the chess he beat everybody but he tailored his game to how he was playing against people so people who were didn't know how to play (1) and some er e then he wou he would play much more gently an he didn't have to be (1) vigorous or whatever

M: {Mm

J: {there's one boy James who did know how to play and they played hard together an an Alex beat him an anoth Robert erm hates board games and he played against Alex and Alex said to me "oh I'll tell you something that happened to" when we were listening to Chris Evans what happened what did you do for the first time yesterday "I'll tell you something that happened to me for the first time yesterday I lost a game of chess" I said "ooh who's that against" an he said "Robert" I said "Robert Robert doesn't even like board games how did that happen" He said "well it went on for ages well in fact we didn't finish In fact he went to the toilet twice during yunno one of the times it's his go" I said "twice" he said "yeh I went with him once an when we came back my queen was gone" and one of his friends said "ohhhh cr oo what a shame

Sociocultural discourse

Voice of let down

Describes chess event here

Alex's queen's gone" He said "but I didn't put it back"

(1) Yunno because he felt he could win

M: {Mm

J: {without it an er but they didn't finish the game and the teacher wouldn't take a photograph of the board so she said "just go on who's taken the most pieces" (.) and Robert had taken the most pieces so erm he was down as winning and (1) yet (.) that did not spill into the afternoon

M: Mhm

J: So I think that shows some element of (.) understanding an yunno easy goingness or whatever so but Alex did say well if I beat James who's beaten everybody and I beat him (1) that must mean that I've won (.) the league or something but he was expelled before that happened. He wrote a poem to go into a poem book that was (.) not really directly to do with school but (.) a lot of them did it an then it would be who was published got a pencil Alex left and was not given the pencil even though it was around to be given to him (.) Never came even though we were on C's books all the way through till the next October or something

M: Ok

J: An then what else well these little badges that you can get bronze silver gold for good behaviour erm he got his bronze an then he was the second boy in his class to get silver. Robert got it first an got it yunno the next assembly. Alex got it a day after that but didn't get it for few days cos the headteacher was always busy an then th th we it was happened to be a fundraising Saturday headteacher wasn't busy asked for it then got it. So he didn't get the adulation or not that I think particularly Alex would want that but its (.)

Processing voice

Voice of sadness – A treated differently unfairly
Voice of sorrow, loss, ignored, isolate

School discourse

Voice of loneliness, exclusion, injustice

just the same message (.) other people are adored and praised and whatever an you're not (1) Whatever you've achieved is not really worth anything (.) we won't mention it

M: {Ok

J: {but we'll just keep putting out all these bad things and saying more about them. So like one of the erm times that there was trouble an he was excluded (.) PE lesson (2) something happened (4) he was crawling, the teachers tell me he was climbing the out the inside of the (.) the wall the chain link fence or what whatever it is. They have to walk outside that mugger, along a public footpath and then into the school down the corridor, go to get their clothes that they've left in the corridor an then come back an er go upstairs and change if they're a boy straight across change in the classroom if they're a girl (1) Alex says that after that lesson when he had a female teacher and the male PE teacher he was walking at the back the teachers led it (1) he was swinging his sweatshirt arm which he's done before walked into the school swing walking forward with his sweatshirt arm going round a girl had got her PE her clothes and was walk crossing this path of other children walking into the go to the classroom to change (1) she collided with this moving sweatshirt arm (.) So she should've stopped Alex should've stopped but neither of them did and Alex was excluded for that. But I'm saying why if he was so awful in the lesson how come he was (.) walking at the back on his own erm or even if even if he's got that wrong why was wasn't a teacher walking next to him an yunno was say stop swinging that Alex or yunno whatever

M: {Mm

Voice of judged and blamed

Angry critical voice. Feeling victimised/injustice

Event with PE sweatshirt

Anger, lack of power, victimised. Excluded, no trust

J: {the situation

M: {Mm

J: {th th there's so many holes there. An when I've asked the school "w yunno what happened what happened" Mmmmmm flimsy things come back lay much later an its just not (1) good enough to (1) for me to believe them

M: Ok

J: An they say oh Alex lies an er (2) it's just not enough yunno th th there's gaps there there's gaps there an being inexperienced now I'm more experienced bit more an cos I part of me thinks is this all gonna happen when he's in year 7 and 8

M: {ok

J: {so at the moment he's being taught out of school (.) so today while you we've been er taping this we've had an incidence where Alex's come home from with Seb from XXXXX he's done a bit of writing (.) For some reason it probably be cos he probably thinks I've done the writing I'm entitled to go on the computer even though we haven't got time to go on the computer because you're going to athletics. Erm that might be what's (2) is this this timing thing you asked about does he have a timetable (1) Not as such (2) or not at all (2) but its same th er because its like we have to go somewhere on Wednesday for climbing an he knows its Wednesday now because it used to be Wednesday cubs an cubs has moved an now he's a scout and scouts on Friday so e can yunno is is an he's an an even me when I'm saying why did we move that an he said because of cub yunno he knows all

M: {Mm

J: {the issues and it's not been a problem before

Disbelief

Voice of fear and anxiety for future

School discourse

<p>M {I'm just thinking looking at what you've said and I'm trying to make sense</p> <p>J: {yeah</p> <p>M: {of the moves so</p> <p>J: {Yeah</p> <p>M: {P,</p> <p>J: {C</p> <p>M: {C</p> <p>J: {S</p> <p>M: {S</p> <p>J: {and now E well E</p> <p>M: {E so</p> <p>J: {and now nowhere</p> <p>M: and now nowhere so</p> <p>J: {{{stutter}} I think E officially. He's still on roll at E</p> <p>M: Ok (.) So what happened at E?</p> <p>J: At E (.) So we were only at E from January (.) So P till the end of year 3. C for most of year 4 but er the last half term he was still on their books but was managed move to S</p> <p>M: {Ok</p> <p>J: {using individual programmes an pupil</p> <p>M: {Yeah</p> <p>J: {referral unit. Then started S (1) a week later than everybody else and only a couple of mornings an then an an and it only lasted till the 10th of October (2) but taught by (2) PRU in the afternoon nurture thing (1) Which Alex liked cooking, rats, games (.)</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>but that's because erm because what happened at S ((clears throat)) (1) he had to write a story of his of his choice an the girl next to him decided to write about unicorns he told her all unicorns are dead she laughed</p>	<p>Sense J is floundering, and I've lost track of the story. Lots of moves, lots of detail, nonlinear in the telling</p> <p>J clarifies events for me here</p> <p>School discourse</p> <p>Event at S with girl and unicorn</p>
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to begin, she may have laughed to begin with, but he pushed it an then she cried and then from that (.) ended up with him sittin so that's upstairs classroom ended up sitting up **downstairs under a table spitting and rocking and rocking the table with his head that's why it was rocking he was moving the table with his head, reading.** The TA who'd been assigned to him to yunno move around with him cos he needs **extra support** an **scaffolding**

M: {Mm

J: {an attention so even her being there made no difference. She said to me ((coughs)) **he says he when he gets in the car he's gonna take off his seatbelt and jump onto the road (1) So this a busy part of the A6 we had to walk to the car to begin with and he I thought mmmmmmm but I don't think he will.** We had to walk on a bit of a ginnell first where there's no cars and he was silly but he got to the bottom before me, to the

I said get in an we're either gonna get some new shoes or go for a run (.) which **I never** do erm thinking he needed energy out but (.) he said get some shoes well **I still** went past where we could park (.) to go for a run which meant we went past C school. **He ducked as low as he could this when we went past the school cos he didn't want anybody seeing that he was out of school during school time when we went past C an I'd been a bit insensitive not realising that might happen (2)**

"Why you come up here?" "Because we still might park and go for a run but there's no parking space so **I'll carry** on" "O I didn't know this road led to here"

From that moment on absolutely fine

M: {Mm

Voice of distress

Collects A from school TA reports A has said will jump in road. J has knowledge of A and doesn't think will.

A embarrassed?

Voice of self-blame

J: {(coughs)} but never went back to C er S erm but that evening (2) Pupil Referral Unit Mr Oscar had already preorganised a meeting with headteacher at S and us (.). An he said "I understand th I feel like communication's broken down between school and home so yunno do you trust them? You're lucky that he's in school" blah blah, blah blah, blah blah and we took he kept telling us how we've gotta trust school trust school an the reason that communication had broken down is because about homework and the homework was (.). you had to do (1) well a sheet with say KIRFS, Spelling, week list, year list an then choose something from this grid. So I didn't know what a KIRF was, we didn't have a weekly spelling list, I could see the yearly spelling list. We'd had this is like the third or fourth week we'd had had one weeks spelling list which was trout round those sorts of words and the other thing there was a grid you could choose things to do or you could do more than one if you wanted to (.). Obviously Alex wasn't in school all of the time so somethings he didn't know what they were because we hadn't done those lessons but there was some general things like look up Canada (.). some facts about Canada

M: {Mm

J: {But one of the thing they had erm something city Media City (2) some computer programme that you can learn through

M: {Mm

J: {an erm (1) Education City it might be anyway (.). And one of the things was have a go at some French games in erm on (.). Education City. So (.). we we got the password we went onto it an first question was what year (.). Well Alex was year 5 then so we put year

Voice of powerless

They should be grateful!

They should trust school!

But communication a problem

School discourse

Event around homework and difficulties completing described here

School discourse

ffffive even though (.) his French won't be year 5 but (.) let's see what happens. Then games wasn't an option but play was an option so we clicked on play and it had automatically came up with some random questions which Alex decided was about wardrobe and I worked really hard to try and answer these multiple choice questions and Alex said "thank goodness you're here thanks mum for doing this with me" An I said "we're doin it wrong something we've done wrong here" So I went in and I asked about the homework an I said "what's KIRF?" An she said "Key Incident Recall Facts It's at the front of the book" Certainly on the front of the book there was maths Key Incident Recall Facts but it wasn't called a KIRF and so I said "Oh oh right ok" An she said "anyway he should take he should pay attention to the lessons and take control of his own homework and pay attention an d d d d d it's his responsibility". An I said "right spelling lists" she said "there's the yearly spelling" I said "yes I can see the yearly spelling list at the front of the book, weekly spelling list we've only had one in the last three weeks and that was round trout" an she said "well that's not even for his level" (1) An I said "an then doin this grid" I said "we chose to do French" an she said "level three activities" what he should've done an I said "well it doesn't say that on there" "He should listen he should listen in the lesson" So I said to Alex he said "I haven't had a French lesson cos they're in the afternoons an I'm only there in the mornings" An I asked the teacher to confirm that cos it's a different teacher an she said "oh yeah but we can put French in the morning if you want" I said "no it's not that it's about who's telling the truth an that sort of stuff"

M: {Mm

Agency

Voice of judged, condemned, blamed

Communication a problem. J trying to be assertive. Teacher tries to undermine agency by blaming A

School discourse

Part time timetable – No co-ordination

Seeking justice and fairness. Trust has gone not sure what is right.

J: {an erm so I thought if the if the headteacher of a class of a school with 18 kids in it (1) one of which is this managed move can't follow what's goin on (.) well this is not gonna work

M: {Mm

J: {Anyway so we had this meeting in the an the erm (.) Mr Oscar saying look yunno you've got to trust the school trust the school you're lucky to be in a school blah b blah blah an erm (1) an he said until yunno (.) er there's reference to when the managed move finishes yunno wwwhen the managed move finishes then we can do cer An I said "well when does it finish" and we looked at her and she said "well actually (2) tomorrow I'm deciding whether to stop it" (2) And Mr Oscar said "Oh (3) right (2) mm ok well that will make it different but tomorrow" She said "Yeh" "Well at least that's quick we can know tomorrow" So the next day I slept on it an I thought this isn't the right school for us anyway. It's too cramped physically, there's no year 6 to look up to, there's no bright children, there's a lot of ASD ((swallows)) but I'm not sure and Gifted Futures stresses of the six different sorts of bright children (.) one of them is twice exceptional where they have giftedness and something else which could be dyslexia, could be ASD, could be whatever an they said if you're in that situation make sure you're taught somewhere where they recognise both (1) traits

M: {Mm

J: {because (.) dealing with one and not the other (2) is gonna lead to disaster (1) So at the most (.) if Alex is ASD we've got to address the giftedness as well

M: {Mhm

J: {If he's not ASD we have to address the giftedness so I'm pushing that an now (2) now it's being listened to

Voice of in the dark and powerless
Headteacher has all the power and control

Voice of sadness. Let down.
Grasps agency

School/ Sociocultural discourse

Voice of misunderstood

School/ Sociocultural discourse

<p>and the fact that we had those tests done and the fact that Individual Programmes did similar tests and came with similar (.) results shows that (2) we're not biased, wrong (2) yunno</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>J: {all those sort of things</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>J: {it backs that up and now it's being taken seriously (2) erm an they're teaching him at his level if he (1) can be bothered to engage with a teacher again because he's got himself into a situation where he thinks puh they're all rubbish (.) not another one</p> <p>M: {Ok</p> <p>J: {not another one so the advocate who MAT worker has put us onto Alex won't even see him an he he's been three times now the first time ((swallows)) he accepted that Alex might not wanna see him. The second time he tried an he said how's it gettin on with school how you thinkin about this an erm I thought you're not talking to him in the way he wants to be spoken to (.) but eventually they started talking about hamsters an they looked something up an they had a relationship and that was fine. So the next time Alex just couldn't be bothered to wouldn't come down and thi (1) the advocate said to me I said "oh the hamster stuff one of the stuff that you ordered yunno together (1) one's come and one hasn't" And he said "oh was it the lead" Cos they're looking up a hamster lead yunno</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>J: {To walk the hamster an I said (2) "you decided that the sizes was too too big an it wasn't suitable for a hamster that wasn't one of the things that you were" An I'm thinking this is advocate he's meant to be</p>	<p>Assertive voice. Vindicated after all that seeking and processing and talking but also how been feeling judged and isolated and dismissed</p> <p>Voice of relief</p> <p>Voice of worry</p> <p>Sociocultural discourse</p> <p>Event with MAT Advocate</p>
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<p>paying attention to what Alex thinks it's the same again it's not paying attention</p> <p>M: And where's this advocate from? How where's this bit in?</p> <p>J: {Erm so E (.) school asked for family support worker which comes from the MAT team to get involved and she got the advocate who is paid for by county council but not answerable to (1) education or social care or</p> <p>M: {ok</p> <p>J: {anything like that (.) But he (.) So I called Alex several times and Chris from erm Outside Teachers who's teaching Alex now (.) or he's the headteacher</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>J: {He said (1) I'd rather it was slow. I want (.) don't offer Alex any incentive to come to our lessons I want to know when he's genuinely wants to come. Erm an because there'll come a point where he won't be able to hel hopefully there'll come a point where he can't help himself but be involved. Erm (3) er he said he doesn't if he'd if he don't wanna come down fine, don't push it, don't push it. So that was my (.) own attitude towards Paul not pushing it. So I asked Alex to come down when Paul arrived. I asked him to come down after Paul had read the EHCP an I asked him to come down when erm (3) a little bit after that. An Alex said he would come down in a couple of minutes but he didn't. An I had a (1) I expected that I shouldn't be a part of this but I coul an I had somebody else to come round to talk to me about the pantomime I'm doing and the</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>J: {choreography. So we were doing that in there Paul was sitting here Alex was upstairs in his bedroom reading, dressed. Erm (2) an then Paul went an called</p>	<p>Voice of let down. Critical/angry – happening again</p> <p>I'm struggling to keep up here and seek clarification</p> <p>E school have referred to MAT to get involved</p> <p>Sociocultural discourse</p> <p>Outside teachers now teaching A</p> <p>Using strategy Chris has suggested but seems like a lack of clarity from MAT worker as to expectations – no communication. J kind of in the dark</p> <p>School discourse</p>
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him from the bottom of the stairs an I heard Paul use the word rude. Now I don't know whether he said (1) it's rude not to come or that's rude or it's a bit rude not to come I don't know but I said to a I said to Alex "what did you say to him" He said "I didn't say anything" So an then Paul said "well I don't think he's comin so I'll erm I'll try once more" But when I'd gone up an asked Alex to come down, Alex said just tell him what erm I'm happy with y whatever you say mum (.) whatever you say, whatever you think, whatever you say, whatever you think I'm happy for you to be my advocate

M: Okay

J: {So anyway so school wise so S finished on the 10th an that was the unicorn incident the meeting was on the 10th. I then contacted school the next day on the 11th to say (.) I tried to contact school but couldn't speak to the headteacher I spoke to Harriet B the erm SENCO Fundery person who's sorting out the funding between C an the managed move an yunno

M: {Mhm

J: {all that sort of stuff. An I said please get the message to the school that I will not take it personally if she cancels the managed move because I don't want it to continue an I contacted somebody else Individual Programmes I think to let them know

M: Mm

J: Anyway the next day I got a phone call from school the headteacher to say just to let you know I've decided to th that we will continue with it. An I said "Oh well I've decided not to" An she said "Oh why" an I said "well I think it's not your fault but the school's small, the playground's small there's no Year 6 (.) he's not got the sense of belonging, it's too late now,

Processing voice

No sense of partnership here unlike with Outside Teachers who explain and talk with J

Alex does not want to engage with Advocate

Seeking agency but thwarted voice of ignored

Assertive voice outlines all reasons why not right for A

missed it, it should've been in earlier an whatever. An I just don't think it's working, I don't think it's gonna work now" An she said "oh well I was only keepin it on so that you could keep the pla the place at Pupil Referral Unit" (.) An erm Pupil Referral Unit kept being a place all the way (.) He was then being taught by Individual Programmes who that's when they wanted us to redo the work because the file had been lost

M: {Right

J: { Erm and that then the money ran out on around about the 5th of November sort of time. I stopped work why I did stop work but I first of all took parental leave for five weeks (2) to try and sort it out because I expected (1) Lilly James to ring me bler because Mr Oscar had said the county council "will let you know which school they have chosen for you him" An I wasn't hearing a thing an I tried to contact Lilly James an she wasn't replying an then I bumped into somebody who I knew was a (1) SENCO worker because I'd seen her when I was a dinner lady at B an she had links with P an I said "do you remember Alex" an she said "course I remember Alex because I've been helping with Casper R (2) An then she said it's not for Lilly James to contact you with school you've got to find a school (1) An then somebody else said why don't you try E they don't exclude (1) Went to E for trial days in the last week of the Christmas term (2) Alex liked it

M: {Mm

J: {he called it the second-best school in the world and (.) then he started properly in January (1) erm (2) the pupil referral unit place was kept open apparently until Easter but actually it wasn't (1) They did stop it after a couple of weeks when Alex didn't go anymore

M: { ok

Strange comment – almost like she's affronted?

School discourse

A being taught by PRU and Individual programmes and then the funding runs out

Voice of stress and difficulty and loss

Voice of dictated to

Voice of ignored

J is chasing people here, lost, doesn't know what is happening and is being ignored

Voice of supported. Previous contact offers help and advice

A starts at E school

School discourse

J: {didn't need to he was full time at E. The day one that I collected him from January Alex was in tears before we'd even left the village why because somebody kicked him in the face "How did they do that your tall" "Somebody else held me in a headlock then somebody else kicked me in the face" Now me as a dinner lady at B I know we have to stand in certain places so that we can see there and see there

M: {Mm

J: {an somebody else is there an they can see there an the yunno (.) And yet when I was collecting Alex when he had an enforced timetable at E (1) in erm par part time timetable in February I would collect him at lunchtime there was one member of staff in the front playground which was shaped like a big capital letter E so there's bits yunno if you wa could see them you couldn't see what was goin over there an sometimes the ball went into the road an he came out (.) an got the ball and brought it in. So I know it's again that not observing

M: {Mm

J: {properly and seeing what was going on. Anyway he chose to stay in most lunchtimes and most playtimes and play on the computer. He had a friend there which helped enormously and (.) but that friendship broke when a boy called Fred [redacted] [redacted] Erm he wheeled Alex's chair away from the good computer that Alex got most of the time I don't know what's good about it. His friend came in took his position. Alex came back defended his territory. Alex bit (2) an the other boy kicked (.) so it was equal badness

M: {Mm

Difficulties continue
School discourse

Critical voice – A not being looked after/ supervised.
Voice of let down again

School discourse

Hear J processing voice throughout this narrative section. Trying to make sense of a situation

Relationships with peers problematic

J: {set up by Fred who was nothing to do with it really.
Fred in the playground Fred was involved with this
headlock and kicking and (1) erm (.) I think Fred also
used to reach out across Alex's keyboard and type
some letters (.) that annoyed him. So in the last weeks
at E Alex was doing that to certainly one ASD children
but the headteacher said Alex was annoying the ASD
kids (2) He was pressing their buttons an by that he
was literally

M: {pressing their buttons

J: {pressing their buttons but also (.) pressing their
trigger buttons. And on this par well last day erm they
sensed that (.) Alex wanted to go out and play which
was unusual so he wants to do somethin an he'd been
sort of since lunchtime fine mornings ((inaudible))
lunchtime a bit triggering other people's but triggers.
Went out to play on the threshold of going out Fred an
one other boy playing roughly with hea not headlocks
but some sort of wrestling still actually sort of inside
school ((Swallows)) Alex jumped to try and join in an
they all got told off and sent outside. Then they played
(2) tiggly off the ground or something like that

M: {Mm

J: {an so they're standing on hoops to be off the
ground safe an Fred (.) in the past has pulled the
hoops out from under Alex and Alex did that to Fred (.)
on that day. Alex was told off for it and sent inside on
the way inside there's a rounders bat on the floor he
picked it up (1) shouldn't have been on the floor. I
think he flailed it to keep the teachers away from him.
They managed to get it off him an hurt his (.) a wha cos
he he went to another corner of the room where there
were lots of rounders bats picked that up an they
managed to get that off him an one of these getting

Alex distressed lashes out and is
restrained

them off him they ma cos I said "what did you try and hit anything" "No" "did you try and hit anything" "No" "Did anybody get hurt" "No" Er yeh the only thing that got hurt was his own shoulder blade

M: {Mm

J: {when they tried to get it off him ((Intake breath)) anyway from the then so an then he went into another corner and he ended up on the floor and they were sitting on his leg (1) cornered. [REDACTED]

and (.) they told me that Alex was destined for prison

(.) And so when I went to collect him normal time to collect him the TA and the headteacher in the T the headteacher's office, the the office. They said so bad news you're not gonna like it, it's exclusion from he's never coming back here it's exclusion with something until further notice.

M: {Ok

J: {so that's what happened to him there (.) So I think

(.) the unfairness of him being the only one pulled in

M: {Mm

J: [for that sort of stuff but (2) they sensed he was going to do something before he did it so they were watching (.) for that sort of thing (1) and so they were right in that respect why was he but he an he still says Fred was always yunno did my keyboard

M: {Mm

J: {an so but he that was one person to him that he could maybe tolerate it him doing it to another person who could maybe couldn't tolerate it or Alex's has got an ASD diagnosis maybe he couldn't tolerate it. Yunno there's there's all those levels of things an but you see

Voice of judged and condemned

School/ Sociocultural discourse

Voice of dismissed and powerless

Voice of unfairness and injustice

Judged, condemned, made up their minds

being told that he was destined for prison. Whereas Alex now who's in the next room, no supervision on him his reading is fine (.) reading is fine. Erm so there's that sort (2) oh an they did say oh he calmed down quite quickly afterwards (1) but yeh they couldn't have him in the school anymore to protect the other ASD children maybe I don't know and the headteacher said "I don't think he is autistic anyway, he's got serious mental health issues" ((Intake of breath)) So th that tea an th the headteacher said I've got four options I can either home school, take him out of school and home school him, I can find him another placement somewhere, I could do a managed move or he can be taught out of school until the money runs out (2) And I went to Y school (.) an she was "what we don't do it th w kids would not do any headlocking that's no no. Right I need to speak to the teacher and the erm educational psychologist and it's difficult to get them to meet up" but they did meet up. I didn't go, if I would've been available I would've gone but I wanted them to have the meeting rather than delay it to when I couldn't go. Lilly didn't go but she sent an email which has been sent to me wh an she said oh in the light of it he shouldn't attend school anymore and (.) erm it had been sort of twisted a bit an she did say "it's unfortunate th that they chose to use that as the" whatever but (.) erm ultimately now he's out of sch when as he's been out of school my husband actually used the phrase "mmmm everything's better now they've taken away the bad influence of school" So th this is the phrase that we say to ourselves

M: {Mm

makes no sense with the boy at home

Other children protected but not her child

Headteacher voice of condemnation

Medical

Four options of exclusion given here all wrapped up in a language of choice

J approaches another school but it is decided that A should not attend school

School discourse

Voice of relief

<p>J: {and what's going on now ((sighs)) What is going on now (.) What is going on with me is I'm uncertain what's happening</p> <p>M: {Mhm</p> <p>J: {What's going on with him (.) He's uncertain what's happening. He's always much better when he's had a friend to play (1) or he's gonna see a friend so he does Creative Writing on a Saturday where he has a friend there (1) And now he's started doin erm woodworking on a Thursday, same friend, it's in Sheffield, there's six boys the most of them are home schooled an erm an he absolutely</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>J: {absolutely loves it. An he's only been twice so far. An he said "oh how how was the age (.) yunno limit" and I said "16" an you could see him thinking woah I've got several more years of this but he won't because the idea is he'll be (.) er at H Secondary so everything is (2) up in the air an even the Outside Teachers (1) the teacher that they've chosen for Alex so far baby steps little bits at a time</p> <p>M: {Mhm</p> <p>J: {is English and ((intake of breath)) they've said erm "there's no doubt about it Alex you're gifted at English we're throwing away school. We're doing everything yunno this is to your level yunno what, he didn't say what an opportunity but we will do this an you will yunno it it'll be forget school all that unpleasantness we're here for you, we're listening to you, you can trust us an derdededer. An Alex sort of can't help himself but answer some of the questions</p> <p>M: {Mm ((laughs))</p> <p>J: {an whatever she's gonna make him write something this time</p>	<p>Voice of confusion</p> <p>J out of her depth not sure what's happening</p> <p>A has a flex timetabled of sorts with a plan to reintegrate to H secondary</p> <p>School/ Sociocultural discourse</p> <p>Outside teachers understanding and compassion at last</p> <p>Trust, empathy, compassion, support</p>
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M: {Ok

J: {she thinks. We'll see how that goes (.). Erm but I said "Oh this is great great (1) erm but what about the maths which is the subject that we've always been told he's been gifted at" (2) "Hm What Erm (.). Oh right ok (.). maybe" and Chris said "well maybe I was told that but erm you've shown me lots of writing stuff (.). An er normally they're only gifted in one English or Maths so to have both is rare" And school right from nursery all the way we've been told Alex's gifted at maths

M: {Mm

J: {One teacher in year one said and English really good at English after that nothing. So I've said to erm so he goes to this creative writing thing in X town more because (3) we didn't know what was happening with the education so he's done it for a full year now so this is the second year erm (1) an he absolutely loves it so an then he was invited to erm be part of a small group to write a play for radio 4 (.). and I said "Ff Wha brilliant opportunity Yes " And me as a writer of a pantomime I would love that

M: {{{Laughs}}

J: {but parents aren't allowed to go it's just for the kids but they have to attend this at X City on one day and they have to attend these workshops on the other days during half term. We can do it all if you think he's suitable because school don't think he's very good so I said "How's his writing" to E "Well not very good but he's a STEM student you wouldn't expect much from a STEM student" Ok So I said "well if you think that he'll "he's brill e" she didn't say he was brilliant she said "he oh he's fantastic he can come and be part of it because he always contributes he always engage he's always erm funny erm and er he always challenges the

Appreciative voice and also desire for education for A

School discourse

A attending a creative writing event which he loves and is successful at

School discourse

questions and the instructions but always politely, always respectfully, and we always encourage that." I said "mm can I pass that on to the headteacher because I'm wanting him

M: {Mm

J: {to contact you but I know he hasn't got round to it yet" An er headteacher "I didn't say he wasn't very good at writing I just said he was better at Maths" (2)

So we've got English lessons going on at the moment (.). I thought it was English chosen because his reading he's reading (.). so you're already got him engage

M: {Mm

J: {"what book are you reading

M: {Mm

J: {if you won't read the book I'm asking you to what book are you reading

M: {Mhm

J: {we can work with that" But er no I though I though English erm he said "oh right ok" an erm the teacher he said "she can she did science A level she can teach anything" And so I said "Oh C Chris said you can teach anything" An she was a bit (2) An I said (.). I've been doin this with him Maths an she said "where do I get that from then?" An she did actually get something wrong that I was pointing out to her. An apparently, she told me later, that she'd told Chris "I can't teach Maths, I can't teach Maths" So she's nervous about that. So he says he's got another teacher called Josh to do the Maths and we haven't got a date that that's gonna start yet. But (.). and now there's this teacher Rebecca who does English and Media Studies who's already in H secondary so he's trying to build a posse round Alex

M: {Right

Another incident of conflict with school

School discourse
 Outside Teachers trying to build a programme and team around A

J: {But he doesn't wanna lose Debbie cos Debbie is making progress but Rebecca's subject is English but it's Media Studies as well **so maybe we can do something with that**. Er hence, discussions about **Philip Pullman** because Alex's just finished the trilogy an she said "Oh does he know it's on **BBC soon**" ((Swallows)) so trying to draw that in or remind him what he knows and those sort of things

M: { **So is there? I'm just sort of listening to how you talking about that group of people**

J: {Mmmm is there a co-ordinated

M: { **erm I'm just wondering like is it is there a difference in your relationship with them just or what do they do? because it seems to me like your saying that they're doing something that's working?**

J: {Debbie is doing something that

M: {OK

J: {is working (.) Chris got Debbie there

M: {Mm

J: { **So I think Chris's doing something that's working and if Rebecca is part of the same thing then how can I say that's not working so Debbie is doing by working because (1) she absolutely listens to what Alex says and she responds like if he's sit on the floor she sits on the floor**

M: {Mm

J: {If he sits on that table she she says I'm coming round there erm if he gives her an answer that isn't the answer she's expecting so it's wrong

M: {Mm

J: {but it does have some something in it she works with that

M: {Mm

Voice of hope

Sociocultural discourse

This is how it sounded to me but I lead this here

Voice of appreciation

Voice of appreciation and understanding

J: {so there's a there's a response all the time an erm
an that she asks him she says "what homework what
do you want to give to me what d'ya think I should
know what d'ya think" Yunno so there's so he's ooh "I
think you should read this an I think this an" An then
they talk about the books that she's reading. An she'd
talk to me normally in the middle of things while she's
waiting for Alex to do something or while she cos last
lesson I think he it was a two hour lesson an he was
reading and wanted to get to the end of the chapter so
he came down after a quarter of an hour or something
an th she said "that's absolutely fine" (.) No problems
no forcing anybody to do anything

M: {ok

J: {so whether there's PDA Pathological Demand
Avoidance, which is on the autistic spectrum, whether
that's part of it but some people don't talk about it
some people do talk about it we erm E School also set
us up to go to CAMHS and Clinical Psychologist and
because of going to CAMHS then Action for Children
wouldn't talk to us because we were going to CAMHS.
She saw us she said ((swallows))"well he's autistic isn't
he, he's autistic. There's no other signs of any other
mental issues because of what you've said and what
you've not said and what he said and what he's not
said. Clearly he's clever and what you told me he's
clever I'm I'm not doing any, Lilly hasn't had a chance
to test him on anything but she says yunno you've got
this other body of evidence whatever erm

M: {So that was CAMHS who said

J: {that was CAMHS

M: {and who were Action for Children?

J: {Action for Children is something that the that TA
who had been in the police I spoke to him on the

Voice of supported/partnership

Voice of confusion

Medical

Medical
Relief?

Interesting phrase any other
mental issues almost
condemning "mental issues"

Vindicated?

School/ Sociocultural discourse

phone an he said "well there's something called Action for Children they might help" Because I was saying "I think Alex needs counselling for his experience with the bullies and that nepotism and all that sort of stuff in P"

M: {Ok

J: {because unfortunately it is gonna happen again.

There is gonna be nepotism in his life and there is gonna be bullying in his life. So he needs to be told by somebody not me (1) yeah they weren't right (2) but it is gonna happen again and it happens to a lot of people and you have to (.) somehow learn to deal with it. When you're older you can walk away. When you're at school you can't walk away so you're trapped in that situation an actually yunno you've been dealt a rough hand in those circumstances. But nobody's doing that they're just saying you're wrong, you're bad, you're to blame you're and an the parents are bad parents, we were told we were bad par. That's another thing to learn we the MAT teacher and the headteacher told us er just before friday half term that we were bad parents and we haven't put enough routines in place and we haven't put enough boundaries in place. My friend who's a social worker (.) who doesn't see me that often (1) she attended one of the MAT work meetings with me er more than one she came to I went to the first one on my own I think maybe she came with me the first one. And then after that our therapist came as well and our therapist because we'd had some therapy time on NHS an she said well I can use it with you or I can attend these meetings with you. So attend the meetings with us. An she and the social worker after the second meeting, were jabbering at each other "who was that woman?" An I

Voice of worry and concern
wants help for A

Isolated, judged, condemned,
blamed

Blamed
School/ Sociocultural discourse

Voices of friend and therapist
supportive of J here whilst
others blame and judge

Medical

Sociocultural discourse

said an then she "yeh she's awful isn't she" An I said "Who were you" an they said both looked at me an they said "the woman with the glasses" an then they carried on with the "y y she she should never 've said that that is absolutely inappropriate and she's not trained to say" An I said "which one" "the one who said such an such ((inaudible))" an then both in the clammering about

M: {Mm

J: {how awful the meeting was. And the first meeting that only my friend came to as I say she's a social worker and she she works (2) as the person in between the professionals and the family

M: {Ok

J: {So she said "I have never been in that situation, Jenny, being on the side of the parent where you have nowhere to go, they were all ganging up against you" and the last because when we were told that we were rubbish parents and hadn't put boundaries in place and what else we were told (3) no routines and Seb, Me, Seb, headteacher and MAT worker (2) we came away thinking we were aw everything was awful. And we both felt suicidal. Different things. So by the so that was, I think that meeting was on a Monday or a Tuesday by Friday (3) we spoke to each other about it. Seb had considered driving into walls. I had considered pillows not just for me no. Our child is a menace to the public, we have created him, the whole education system would be better off without him, the world would be better off without us. We have no future. That's how we felt. Spoke to each other about it. Had no actual plans about doing anything

M: {Mm

Friend and therapist point out inappropriateness of way J treated

Ganged up on. Victimised/Isolated by professionals

Blamed

Sociocultural discourse

Judged and blamed to point of emotional despair

<p>J: {We know why we're thinking this (.).We're thinking that from that meeting. So since then we have we are not gonna be spoken to like that again (.). We are stronger (.). we are (.). we feel like that was spoken to us an from a point of ignorance, certainly unhelpfulness, these are meant to be people that are helping us, guide us through the situation an (1) we know that now an to the point that right ok another MAT worker, another Family Support Worker, ok ((intake of breath)) E says that we got Alex's got serious er mental health issues and we've got to go to CAMHS an we've got to (2) erm have this Family Support Worker which we have to welcome into our house and so let's go through it all again, even though we've had a social worker already and she said sorry there's no ca. That was all to do with the seatbelt taken off</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>J: {So Brenda D rang me, I was in London at the time, "Erm, I've been told that Alex said he was gonna take the seatbelt off and run into the road" "Yeah, yeah" "And what was your reaction to that" (1) "I don't think he will do it. We've got to go to the car (3) We'll see what happens sort of thing" Well that reaction was wrong (.). and because of that the MAT worker had worked out that they were gonna get the social worker involved so the soc ser so in this house an I didn't want to see that MAT worker anymore ever again. She came to this house with a social worker, it wasn't the social worker who was assigned to us because she was ill, so she hadn't read the files and stuff like that so th this. I'd never met her before anyway</p> <p>M: {Mhm</p>	<p>Voice of anger</p> <p>Voice of let down and betrayed</p> <p>Voice of powerless</p> <p>Event safeguarding meeting because of seatbelt incident</p> <p>Voice of blamed</p> <p>Lack agency, judged, blamed, authority takes over,</p> <p>Voice of disbelief – this person doesn't even know them or take the time to find out anything about them</p>
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J: {even the one who was meant to come but so this one came blind so to speak an our therapist. An I recorded the interview and went through all everything that'd happened and then at the end the social worker said "So why am I here?". And the therapist said "Exactly, why are you here?" An Erm Brenda D said "o o o well er erm I I I er safeguarding, safeguarding" "Well what's the safeguard?" "Well er" and then Alex was due to come back any moment an I didn't want Alex to see people. He knows that you are doing a PhD

M: {Ok

J: {so he shouldn't ha an he knows that erm an I think I might have even said it's all gonna be anonymised and we're all "OH"

M: {(laughs)}

J: {Erm talking about I'm sure we've had that conversation over dinner so (.) but he there's that many people coming through

M: {Mm

J: {so for him to take his clothes from there I don't but it sounds like he was in a weird mood anyway maybe doing the work, maybe he felt like he wants to go on the computer because he didn't go on the computer all last week because he forgot. He was entitled to an hour at the weekend an he forgot. So he has got an extra hour to use at some point

M: {Mm

J: {He did do some stuff on the computer because we did some stuff to do with Ghengis Khan and Photoshop and Excel, so he hasn't not been on it but not for doing stuff

M: {Mm

Sociocultural discourse

J: {because too busy an that is the case in point because he's either at XXXXX because I'm at work (1) or lesson or going to athletics so we have got issues of (.) that sort of

M: {Mm

J: {when he says I don't have any free time but he does have free time but he chooses to read (2) An it's that balance he he can't see you can't have your cake and eat it. Anyway so what was I saying about then (.) Er the MAT worker she came in so yunno why am I here, safeguard, so Alex was due to come back from pupil referral unit or something taxi and I didn't want him to see Social Workers in the house so everybody scarpered quickly which was agreed so we didn't finish it properly but the therapist said "check what, ring up find out what the safeguarding issue was" an the safeguarding issue was that issue then. Anyway so that rumbled on for another (.) month an a bit an she wanted to speak to all the schools an not all schools would speak to her an eventually she said "I'm sorry there's no case to answer, I'm closing the file, there's nothing there" So for E to bring it up again (2) say right MAT worker gonna be assigned to you I thought oh here we go again (.) So Katy D was our MA Family Support Worker I said "I don't want Brenda D" "Oh no Brenda's left" Erm Katy D and she (2) it's a bit she's dyslexic she's going back to college to do some course so now she's not our Family Support Worker

M: {Mm

J: {she's been replaced by Tilly C. D' you know Tilly C ((M shakes head)) Ok but Katy wanted (.) when I said "Oh Alex plays chess" she said "Oh I play chess an I'm quite competitive" So she played chess with him an actually shshshe made a mistake because she set up a

School/Sociocultural discourse

Sociocultural discourse

Difficult time

Voice of judged and isolated

Voice of vindicated

Voice of despair – resigned
judged under constant scrutiny

New Family support worker
enters scene

chess board, she made one on A3 paper, and in the white squares she wrote things like talk to Pythagoras, ask a friend that sort of thing, so she was makin it into a thing an Alex th this isn't chess

M: {{{(laughs)}}

J: {what is this? And making the pieces as well

M: {Mm

J: {So it wasn't a ch an even she didn't even come an she sent somebody in her stead so she said "I'm sorry, I'm sorry (.) We will play chess prop, bring your chess board an we will play a proper game of chess. So they did play a proper game of chess. Alex won (.) but Alex thought that she let him win (.) An then she came again to say I'm sorry I'm leaving, I'm going to back to so your new person and she wanted to meet Chris as well erm so she saw us more often but anyway.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

she said "now I'm gonna also I'm leaving" an de der de der "an it's gonna be Tilly who does it" But she said "I have to say (2) Alex played chess really well he beat me fair and square and I had got him in check a few times but he then it just came from nowhere" An **I** **said** "Oh he thinks you let him win" and she said "I did not (1) I absolutely did not" she said "I'm rusty

M: {{{(laughs)}}

J: {but (.) I played to win"

M: {Mm

J: {an he got me (.) fair and square. An erm an he said "but you let all your pieces wide open you" he said "there was a couple of times when I could have taken more an an I'd an you yunno I'd laid myself that you could take me an you didn't" And she said "oh well I didn't notice I didn't notice" something like. So she

had a lot of respect for Alex and that was sort of buildi
an now Tilly's come (.) ((swallows)) and Tilly was er
she's got (1) erm two children one's seven (2) **I think**
the other one must be five but **I might** have that
wrong and they wanted a pet, wanted a pet, wanted a
pet and now they've got a hamster. So she was
interested that Alex's got a hamster because her
hamster had arrived a week before she came to us.
She saw what Alex had built (2) and she said "Ohh" (.)
and she called Alex and she said "d'ya think my seven-
year-old could build that" And Alex was (2) really
polite and didn't say (.) of course not

M: {(laughs)}

J: {erm and apart from anything else they might burn
themselves on the glue gun. He sort of said "erm (1)
well (1). erm (1) er" yunno he was holding it back and
then he said an **I said** "well let's start with Alex have
you burnt yourself?" An he said "yeah a couple of
times" (.) So **I said** "that might happen" and yunno

M: {Mm

J: {one thing. Anyway (.) then we've had another
meeting with her and with Chris and she said about
Asperger's she said erm "oh (1) I've got er a niece and
a nephew who are **Asperger's** and the neph the school
says they can take as many **GCSEs** as you want" and
Chris said "Oh this is really success story then they're
succeeding at school doing what they need to do at
school" And she said "**well the nephew's taken 11 and
the niece's decided she's gonna beat him so she's
doing 12 but**" she said "**I feel really sorry for them**"
"Oh Why" "Er because well they're a bit nerdish aren't
they an erm (1) socially awkward I mean (.) So Alex is
in scouts? yeah keep him doin that because that's the
sort of it's good for that sort of person" An "**but**

Judged and misunderstood,
stereotyped, pigeon holed

This is awful

<p>they're probably alright in their own little world later on" And afterwards I thought (1) she's supposed to be helping us</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>J: {and she's been so dismissive (.) of a pair who've done alright at school and scouts an this</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>J: {in their own little worlds So I sent her an email (2) an I said (.) "erm I've been thinking about how those two Asperger's children were described at our meeting so I didn't say what you said</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>J: {Erm an I said "I'm not (.) given the fact I'm not sure about Alex's own diagnosis anyway but I've read a lot to know that (.) many people with this diagnosis have special skills as well and (.) we not in their own little world in our world we are benefitting from (.) advances to technology</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>J: {or anything and it's happening at the moment" an I said "this might've this shouldn't they should be celebrated for their skills, not ostracised, pitied, bullied and (.) we of all people should (1) start that vocabulary and understanding because I think this is gonna be the next ME TOO (.) moment but not in a sexual sense"</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>J: {an erm so that's going back to my first point that I said the neurodiversity mentioning it earlier</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>J: {as a (1) fact of the world</p> <p>M: {Mm Mm</p> <p>J: {rather than making people who are in this (2) situation feel ((sigh)) what have we done wrong</p> <p>M: {Mm</p>	<p>Dismissed</p> <p>Angry</p> <p>Sociocultural discourse</p> <p>Voice of agency</p> <p>Medical</p> <p>Voice of advocate – difference to be celebrated</p> <p>Voice of activist</p> <p>Sociocultural discourse</p> <p>Voice of judged and condemned</p>
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<p>J: {and my niece (.) who stayed with us for three weeks (2) there's some similarities in some of the things she thinks or whatever and Alex an she said to me without Alex in hearing she said "whatever you do ((swallows)) don't have conversation with Seb where you're saying it's your genes it's from you</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>J: {an erm allocate blame" because she said "it if cos that if child hears that feels that i it's a wrong thing it's bad enough calling it a disorder (.) but erm (.) it's yunno it's it needs to be turned on its head</p> <p>M: So that's one thing, that you said at the</p> <p>J: {Yeah</p> <p>M: {beginning about things needing to change. You've obviously been through like a lot of</p> <p>J: {yeah</p> <p>M: {exclusions here</p> <p>J: {yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah</p> <p>M: [So coming back to that question</p> <p>J: {and the other thing is that exclusions</p> <p>M: {Oh ok ((laughs))</p> <p>J: {exclusions to be told that it's about (.) we need more routines more boundaries (.) we're not yunno decent parents enough or yunno whatever</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>J: {but the routines and boundaries an then(.) have exclusions (2) what happened to the routine, what happened to the boundary (.) What happened to my job (.) Yunno how're we meant to balance that (.) You can't and then also to be in the letter it says do not take them to any public places otherwise you (.) might be fined</p> <p>M: {Mm</p>	<p>Medical</p> <p>Voice of blamed</p> <p>School/ Sociocultural discourse</p> <p>Voice of anger</p> <p>J fights back against condemnation she feels – rules apply to them but not to authorities</p>
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J: {and to the point that we didn't (.)and he's trapped inside what can you do (1) And so that also needs

M: {Mm

J: {significant changes so now when we get a letter like that we're (1) absolutely ignore anything like that an the work that we've been sent (.) to to do for him to do has been (3) one of them was a photocopy three photocopies from E recently when he was when he left

M: {Yeh

J: {we were given three (1) I think they came in by email so they were scanned a double page of maths quite simple (1) I think it was erm (3) it was like (2) if you've got 13p and a doughnut cost 2p how many can you have that sort of question (.) Quite a few of those (.) but on a on a so if this is double page there might be question question question question question question question question

M: {Mm

J: {but the scan (1) hadn't got that bit of the page ((shows bit missing))

M: Ok

J: So we had three pages of that which was simple enough to do (.) Hadn't even checked that we couldn't even read it (.) and no follow up of all the work that we've sent there's no follow up how was it, d'ya need any more anything like that but then I have done all of the information I have done the information to school saying this is what we're doin (1) this is what we're doin an when then we got a telephone call from Individual Programmes (.) saying "oh this is come Individual Programmes is starting again" and we had arranged (2) going back a bit but (.) in February (.) this year so Alex's year (.) 5 when he was at E an he had an enforced part-time timetable during which time (.) the

School/ Sociocultural discourse

Angry voice/Let down

Lack of collaboration and support from E school affects A education. They don't play their part

Voice of dictated to not consulted

School/ Sociocultural discourse

headteacher said his behaviour was virtually impeccable (1) which makes me think flexi-learning is the future erm I took the opportunity to go to H Secondary and say look "I don't know if he's gonna be accelerated I don't know (2) if he's gonna (.) I don't know what's gonna happen but I feel like we should (.) be aware of this school so can we come and visit" "Yeah you can come and visit" So Mrs (.) Start I think her name is who was the SENCO Co-Ordicator or that sort of role she met us we were a bit late she said "don't worry about that" She said "it's Alec isn't it (.) the genius" (3) "Er it's Alex I don't know whether he's a genius" She showed us round for a bit an er she took us into the cafeteria first so obviously it's closed yunno it's four o'clock

M: {Mm

J: {so everything's seats on tables and stuff like that an she said "this is where they eat and this is how they do it and the money's on cards that you can yunno so you people can't steal

M: {Mm

J: {money" and that sort of stuff and she said "but if this is too noisy (1) an environment" which obviously it was quiet then but she said "if you're not comfortable about this there are other places to eat" An I said "no I don't think this is gonna be a problem" An then as we were walking I saw these sort of more open plan toilets so there's a (.) you break off the corridor you can see a corridor with cubicles either side cubicles either side an the sinks are here that you can see from walking up an I said "Oh" an not quite unisex but almost

M: {Mm

Voice of agency

J arranges visit to H Secondary when A is on part-time timetable at E

J is active trying to find things that will work.

The visit is positive – seems flexible, compassionate, understanding to suit individual

J: {and I said "oh open plan toilets" which to me means there has been bullying in the toilets before but now it's open plan and everybody can see what's goin on and she said "Yeah but if you if that's too open for you an you want a more privacy" an I said "no I don't think that's gonna be a problem" And we carried on and we saw some other things and then we met Mr Lamp and she said "Ah Mr Lamp (2) er w can you continue taking this family round if you've got time because Mr Lamp is taking over the role I used to be the SENCO Co-ordinator and now he is an it will be suit if he shows you round" He said "yeah yeah I can" an he said "it's Alex from E isn't it" (1) He said "well you're wearing the sweatshirt so that did help" Right so he showed us round ((swallows)) an er (.) an I thought Alex an then there's a climbing wall there and they'd just started their climbing (.) Friday night climbing (.) club

M: {Mm

J: {Which I think is the ony thing they use it for (.) an oover he said an erm Alex was (.) quite interested in an he'd never seen a pottery wheel and yunno all these sort a th 3D printer all this an er at the end (2) he said "if you think this school is suitable for you yunno come back and have as many visits as you want" (.) An I said "well erm" an I I I must have been gushing something I was happy about an he said "actually we did (.) I did know the name because (1) er Lilly James has been in touch and also I've been in touch with pupil referral unit so we were expecting your call we were expecting you to want to come round we didn't have your contact details so we couldn't contact you but we've been expecting this and we've been able to speak to the different schools" An I said "Oh right" I said "what I really want is for a better bus service between B and

Voice of collaborated with

School/ Sociocultural discourse

Seem to be building relationship/supportive

Voice of happy/pleased/welcomed

you. He said "w we n n n" and then I said "what I really want is for him to come and do erm practical chemistry once a week or once a fortnight now"

M: {Mm

J: {and he said I'm sure that can be arranged give me a ring when you want to start" "WHAT" and then he was dealing him with another family who'd just arrived and I said I I said "I will I will ring you I will ring you" So (.) an he said yunno "if you think it's suitable come have some more visits if you want some" So we went the next week with Seb had the same tour

M: {Mhm

J: {and then sat in a room and arranged what day would be suitable and that sort of thing and how it would work an he said "have you got any money associated with this ch yunno funding" and I said "no" and he said "that's unusual for a child that's gone through all this (.) to not have any funding" He said "but I have a pot of money that can help with this sort of stuff" And we bumped into a couple of people the climbing tutor, who also does geography and sort of engineeringy man and making stuff on (2) the mills

M: {Mm

J: {pieces of kit an erm Alex was ((mimes staring at it)) an when we left when we arrive when we went the first time an it was just me an Alex erm Alex was furious with me taking him out of erm E school and he wouldn't speak to me in the car now that doesn't happen (.)

M: Mm

J: ever at any other time (.) He would not speak (1) But he didn't realise he wouldn't have been in E school anyway that afternoon ((swallows)) but he would not speak an I said "Alex" as we approached H Secondary I

Voice of agency

Voice of supported

H school SENCO is supportive, accommodating, understanding

School/ Sociocultural discourse

said "you'd better start talking otherwise they're gonna think you're strange" An when we were there he was absolutely fine then when we left he was in a really good mood and he bumped into a scout and (.) waved at the scout and erm (.) an when we left I said "Oh what what did you think he said "I really loved it" an I said "what did you like best" thinking it would be the climbing wall he said "everything (.) everything" An I said what d'ya think about going there" "YEAH" Ok (.) when we went with Seb saw the scout again

M: {Mm

J: {and Mr Lamp said "well we could put him in erm the same house as the scout but he's not necessarily a good role model" but actually maybe it is because it's somebody he knows it's almost like that same Year 6 when

M: {yeh

J: {a bigger boy plus he sees him in scouts helping as a young er I don't know if it's a young leader

M: {Mm

J: {or what but it's somehow he's helping so he's recognised him from there so there's a sort of protective air an I think it will be and the other person we know who goes there is Lizzy er who lives in B who's in the pantomime and (3) Mr Lamp said "oh yeah the lovely Lizzy o yeah we could put him in the same class as that" yunno as her an he was more pos but I think ultimately it will be good to go with the one who's the scout (.) maybe. Anyway then we went to see (.) erm Billy Elliot that was there show (2) a lot of swearing (1) "What does wanker mean" (2) "You don't need to know that at the moment" "mmm but I want to know" "No no you don't need to know at the moment" Ok so all yunno he's sitting in the middle and

Voice of supported and protected

Relationship with school is harmonious here. The scene hopeful

Seb an I are hearing this language an we're (4) Ok
 we're having to explain to him

M: {ok

J: {the whole issue of the culture (.) the situation (.)
 yunno

M: {Mm

J: {the stress (.) all that sort of stuff. Anyway erm so it
 brought on his language a notch as did the PRU as did
 C's boys toilets that was the first one (.) Erm anyway so
 what was I saying so (.) we went to so when we were
 talking the second time with Mr Lamp in a small room
 an we talking about the money and stuff like that
 ((swallows)) erm we seemed to agree that Alex could
 start (.) after half term after May yeah after half ter it
 was still May cos it was May the 10th when Alex was
 so it was yeah May after Easter maybe (.) Anyway the
 idea's he would start maybe once a fortnight

M: {Mm

J: {an he (.) Mr Lamp said Monday (2) afternoon and
 then when the exams were on in maybe there
 wouldn't be any

M: Mm

J: An then after the exams they have a walk a
 sponsored walk type thing an the whole school does it
 an he said that would be a good time to come an then
 there's the starter days for th the intake (1) and that
 those would be good days to come so it was all
 planned and it might even end up being weekly
 towards the end (.) Fine (.) That was as agreed. Then
 (.) so that was ssss (1) February March (.) April ((Intake
 of breath)) then erm an I said to school we've been to
 ((inaudible)) so this was all without E knowing so right
 we've been to E school and we've "the only thing I
 would say is not to do it on a Tuesday because

A going to attend H Secondary
 flexi

Sociocultural discourse

Voice of supported and hopeful

Informs E school and agree
 what they will do

Tuesday morn we and not to do maths because we're gonna teach him Year 7 maths on a one to one basis on Tuesday morning so we don't want him one to one in the afternoon with

M: {Mm

J: {Something else" An he said "it works very well but we can't teach him other things but we can teach him maths" Right the first Maths lesson that he'd got extra money for this the funding came through

M: Ok

J: Erm first Maths lesson the teacher didn't come. I don't know why so they had (2) KNEX roller coaster that somebody else had brought in an before an it had been successful so they built that (.) I don't know if it was for all of them (.) or if it was ostensibly for Alex an everybody did it but that was fine they built it and over a week they built it up an an made it work but then it was broken so it didn't actually an then at one point somebody (1) Fred started doing some stuff (.) on his own and Alex went to Fred cos then he stopped doin it in an said "where are you how far did you get" "I can't remember" "What have you done" "I don't know" So Alex was furious with that an then erm something else happened maybe someone's pushed a anyway it broke an they built it up again and then they actually didn't work.

M: Ok

J: So a bit frustrating (.) But that made us buy one

M: Mm

J: and then it didn't come on Ebay so then we bought another one and then the first one came so we've ended up with two which he's built and he's built all himself an in he did it all in two weeks or something like that amazing an I'm trying to still built I'm trying to

Funding needed to provide appropriate curriculum seems to have taken some time to come/to have been applied for

Description of KNEX here and difficulty at E school

Socio-cultural discourse

make him see reason that if you sell them on **Ebay** around November time you will keep your money cos people will be looking for **Christmas** presents and this will be yunno so we should take pictures bler bler ((Coughs)) Not interested. He can't yunno the idea of (1) throwing anything out

M: {Mm

J: {hard for him at the moment but yunno **I'm a bit** the same so erm anyway so that was the first maths lesson that didn't happen. The second maths lesson (2) did happen (1) in the afternoon **that's when he was excluded**

M: So

J: {**So he never had any more so the money was there** and the **money** was also gonna be spent for the **TA**

erm to spend more time with Alex (2) so presumably he had his contract then so that was being spent even though Alex wasn't there (.) An I said "look an what about this so we want to start doing this chemistry thing and (.) H secondary then said "Oh" Oh H Secondary had said before (.) in the in the in the intervening time between saying yes yes come erm then when we were r is erm can because he's not on roll here can erm E offer some money (1) and E said "No it's all been allocated" (.) And apparently it's going to be thirty pound a session an I said "well we can pay 30 pound" "No it's not for you to do that" Erm anyway on the last day when Alex was excluded the headteacher said (.) "he doesn't realise how many letters I've written for him I've even got some money for him to go to H secondary" But that hasn't (.) materialised

M: {Ok

Voice of loss

Money comes through just as A excluded

Hope of H Secondary drifting away with funding issues

Struggle and difficulty here. Everyone seemingly pulling in different directions – thwarting the hope of H secondary opportunity. Result betrayed and let down as others hold all the power.

Voice of let down

<p>J: {And so he didn't go to H Secondary all that time. Lilly said er (.) cos H Secondary said "oh no if he's excluded from school he can't come here not while he's off roll" or off something like that</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>J: {an erm (1) an when I spoke to Lilly after about (2) four weeks of trying to get hold of her an she said "well that's not a reason he shouldn't be going to H Secondary he should be going anyway I'll look into it" an then when I next spoke to her she said "it's the head said no we want him more settled" so yunno (.) they'd drawn a line under an it was gonna happen anyway (1) But hopefully it will (.) I'm expecting I want it to happen now but (2) it obviously isn't and (2) I've got to I feel like I've got to (3) slow down all my aspirations and just be led by what Chris can do and now it seems like there mi Alex's got his fund his erm EHCP thing has come through 6000 pounds plus 6000 and 25 and Chris says yes that's erm the full six hours (2) So he's only gonna get six hours of tuition (1) with Outside Teachers (3) Right (2) Ok and apparently we're gonna have somebody holding our hand through this whole EHCP thing no we're not we're gonna get paperwork two to three weeks later than they said it was coming an yunno I'm constantly ringing up ringing up ringing up ringing up ringing up where is it what is it what do we do but we have got a meeting tomo on the Thursday the 10th about it so I know (.) austerity I know everybody's pushed but if we (2) have somebody holding our hands and they're not there not answering the calls an not (1) what sort of holding hand's that (.) Erm cos I applied for an EHCP when he was at C I mentioned it in February when he was at C because that lady who was the headteacher of the</p>	<p>Voice of loss</p> <p>School discourse</p> <p>Voice of desire. J hopeful it will happen</p> <p>Voice of loss</p> <p>EHC through but only 6 hours – even the application for this been problematic</p> <p>Voice of loss</p> <p>Voice of let down</p> <p>Voice of difficulty/having to fight</p> <p>Voice of anger Voice of let down</p> <p>Constantly let down</p> <p>Themes of trust and power</p>
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autistic school she said **apply for an EHC** she said "have you got an EHCP" an **I said** "**I don't** know **I did** fill out a" She said "no you'd know if you had an EHCP you haven't got one apply for one of those because that will **register** to the **local authority** that this is a **bright** child who has been **excluded** from two schools (.) That is unusual what's goin on and it will make them look"(1) So **I mentioned** it to C in February when we were told we were **bad parents** "oh no no no no there's no need for that no need for that no need for that no no its **graduated response** we" ner ner ner "and we're doing the **funding** thing first an if that doesn't work then we're" dddder "an then after that **EHCP** no no no need for that" (1) Whereas B school **headteacher** cos **I was** headteach **dinner lady** there at one point and **Lilly said we should go to B school when it broke down at S school and B school then said (.) had a meeting** (2) don't know who they had a **meeting** with (.) maybe they just rang up the other schools she said "no not after what the other schools are telling us **no he definitely**" Which is exactly what Y were saying

M: {Right

J: {No, never, not after what the other school an B said "he needs to go to" (4) is it A School is there a school there where she said there's a a a twin yunno there's mainstream next to Rainbow

M: {Mm

J: {or whatever it's called and he can dip in and dip out but **I don't** think (2) **I don't** think any a (.) at scouts Alex's not dipping in and dipping out

M: {Mhm

J: {It just needs to be something that (.) he gets on with an he enjoys an yunno there's **I think** he **I don't** think he does deals well with (.) impatience (.) cos **I**

Voices in conflict – external agencies tell J one thing, headteachers another... contributes to despair, criticism, anger – J is betrayed

Voice of blamed and let down

School/ Sociocultural discourse

Schools refusing to accept A on roll

said "Yunno Alex you're gonna have to wait for other people to do some stuff sometimes you just have to wait" He said "I gave them plenty I waited I think I wait I gave them plenty of time in P I waited fifteen minutes" (.) Fifteen minutes if he's getting doing it like that fifteen minutes is nothing (2) for other people so I **I don't** know anyway so wh where was **I goin** with that sentence erm uh just **the whole thing about H**

Secondary I don't know what's happening I don't know if I don't know what's happening how does he know what's happening

M: {No

J: {or if he did wants to happen what do **I want** to happen **I don't** know

M: So thinking about all of that

J: {Mm

M: {and all you've been through

J: {Yeah

M: {this experience

J: {What would make things better?

M: {Wha what what needs to change?

J: Needs to change erm **parents need to be put in touch with other parents most definitely**

M: {Mm

J: Now there's something called **Future Action** which has **workshops** for erm **talented children** and you book it it tells you what Year group they're doing sometimes it says 2-6 sometimes it'll be 5 and 6 whatever and you er don't think oh well my child's Year 3 but really clever so I'll put them in the Year 6 one No you put them in the in the right one ((intake of breath)) but Alex's been to a few of those (.) and when **I first** rang her up she said "Oh sh d bullying as well wa oh n again" the same sort of noises that some ser she

Confused and bewildered voice

Isolated and excluded, loss, anger, lack of agency, confusion, no support, collaboration or empathy.

Voice of desire for support

School/ Sociocultural discourse

Feelings of betrayal, isolation, being judged, unsupported

recognised the things I was saying whereas (.) other mums "Oh er have you been to the doctors have you done this have you done that (.) You know they know so much but they don't know unless you walk in my shoes you do not know what it's like ((intake of breath)) So she and she said "Well what we do with here (.) erm if you don't mind (.) and I says to all of the mums I er I put you in touch you all of you can see each other's emails so you can ask direct Was this good for you? What did you do what you do then?" And I did do that and I had some emails coming back that were really erm emotional and touching and erm some of them were "Well that doesn't really apply to me you need a you need a good Educational Psychologist" B said when he was in trouble at C "Get the Isn't the Educational Psychologist on board?" Lilly James has asked "Don't C have the same arrangement" And I asked "Can we have an Educational Psychologist please?" Form came (1) and it there's something like (sound of turning pages) I had to sign somewhere here but here it says something like Parents will be invited to comment on the Educational Psychologist will meet with the parents as well and I ring I remember ringing and saying "Yes I want this to happen" And presumably because it costs money C didn't do anything so all that time, the only time, so I met (.) there was a meeting to do with the sch the managed move (.) er on a day that I normally worked and that week, that day I'd swapped ((swallows)) not because of this meeting (.) because of something to do with work so I got a phone call are you coming to this meeting I don't know anything about it and it's normally a day that I work I wouldn't expect to well I said "do you know what I don't wanna see Brenda D

Voice of judged and blamed

Voice of pain and isolation, no empathy

Advised when difficulties at C school to involve EP

Voice of agency

Voice of powerless and betrayed

Voice of out of control not consulted

Voice of no trust and difficulty

again and I don't really wanna come to C school and have any more meetings" "Shall I tell you who's here (1) Lilly James" "I'm coming (.) I'm coming" So I met Lilly there and she said (1) so this is when after Mr Oscar from PRU said after the first week that he was there in the autumn term said "I haven't spoke been in contact with S School but it's as I'm just ringing to let you know that Alex's been fine here there's been no issues no behavioural issues it's just as I expected he is gonna get bored here (.) My advice is he needs to be in mainstream school (.) as quickly as possible for as long as possible" Right well I've noticed there's a football day and a cross" "Perfect (.) Perfect (.) I would definitely support him being in those things" So I've mentioned it to school

M: {Mm

J: {an there's this meeting an it was I raised it then or it was raised and erm S School said "no because we haven't got the funding (1) across from the other school" And (.) Lilly was a bit "Wha what what's go" Erm an erm then there's er "well why isn't the fund and why" "no because I haven't got the staff I can't take him cos I haven't got the staff levels" "What what what d'ya mean" "Well the funding hasn't come through" "Well why" "and an anyway we haven't appointed anybody" "Why w well is there anybody in mind" "No there's nobody in mind" (.) "So you have to" "Yeah we don't know how to put the advert because we don't know if he's gonna be erm employed by C or S" "Does that matter" "Yes it does matter" An I thought (1) you don't even know who will be doing the work (.) you're gonna have to advertise, interview, they might have to give a period of notice on their job this is not gonna happen for several months

Sociocultural discourse

Managed move to S school but problems with funding

Sociocultural discourse

School/ Sociocultural discourse

Conflict and struggle here – no-one seemingly able to sort anything out, no money, no co-ordination – J and A let down and in limbo

Voice of let down and unsupported

<p>M: {Mm</p> <p>J: {So I was horrified by that</p> <p>M: {Mhm</p> <p>J: {And the next meeting was in S and there was Lilly didn't go but Harriet B was there and Russell W from Individual Programmes an the first thing was said was we need to cut a lot of these extra people who are like Behaviour Support, all these, we don't need it all. So cut it out and try and get Alex on roll at S as soon as possible cos there's something to do it's census day because It all came down to money which I don't mind I understand but so then I wrote a a stiff letter on cardboard to Jessica Parry (Chief Exec) yunno who that is don't you?</p> <p>M: Yes</p> <p>J: Yeh an erm is it Ally Smith the er councillor for Educational Services saying my son is a managed move and things have fallen between stools because the funding isn't moving from one school to another can you sort that out and then when that all went pear shaped then I wrote again and said he's not in a school who's finding the school what do I have to do can you make the the funding</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>J: {needs to go with the boy an we need to yunno support and Ally Smith did reply to me and say erm (2) something like everything's in hand and n (.) but it was wishy washy an it wasn't</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>J: {quite so an then when I got a call from Shire County Council complaints department (2) Well I said "I had I haven't made a complaint" "Well I did wonder if you'd made a complaint" I said "I haven't made a complaint</p>	<p>Voice of distress</p> <p>System dictates what happens when</p> <p>Voice of agency and advocate</p> <p>School/ Sociocultural discourse</p> <p>Voice of let down</p> <p>Voice of betrayed</p> <p>Voice of difficulty</p> <p>Voice of ignored/dismissed/powerless</p>
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<p>but I feel like (.) we've fallen between stools an I'm having to sort of rattle</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>J: {cages and say what is going on</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>J: {what is which what is the plan (2) There is no nobody's tellin</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>J: {me anything and in fact all the time in the pupil referral unit everything to do with the pupil referral unit every single thing about it going to it (.) and thing no we had no formal writing letters about it that he would be attending there</p> <p>M: {Ok</p> <p>J: {it was all by telephone call from Mr Oscar to me (2) Even though it was supplied by (2) another school maybe (.) So that whole yun bearing in mind what state of mind you're in</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>J: {to not have something in writing that you can look at and say oh they said it was Monday or they said it was yunno</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>J: {That's but as I say I'm a (.) yunno bright educated person who's got (4) bravery whatever confidence</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>J: {to speak (.) What about others who can't yunno what state are they in. So now we are in a much an and in all the middle of this my mum was a bit ill, she moved house, She moved to X town that work did an we brought this that needed work doing to it, she brought a house needed work doing, she came and lived here while Alex was at S and his anxiety levels presume this is the terminology ((Intake of breath))</p>	<p>Voice of ignored</p> <p>School/ Sociocultural discourse</p> <p>Voice of not consulted Let down, ignored, confusion, no agency, out of the loop</p> <p>Voice of distress</p> <p>Voice of strength- assertive, confident</p> <p>Voice of difficulty</p> <p>Stress at home as well when all of this is going on.</p> <p>Next two pages personal struggles and difficulties, family</p>
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rose to the point that he went to breakfast club at S says he wasn't eating anything, says nobody noticed says the bowl smelt (1) I went in they said "You did you had half a bowl the other day" (2) So A somebody didn't notice he was eating something but "yeh" he said "but it was only half a bowl and I didn't eat very much an the bowls still smell" An he didn't like the way they were being washed up an there was yunno

M: {Mm

J: {there's all that sorta thing and so I'm very conscious like at the moment for some reason when we get in the car he's always winding the window down so it's cold so I'm trying to wind wind it up, he's winding it down. He then wants the heating on cold. I said "look Alex I'm the driver the driver needs to be comfortable" (.). An then we compromise on I would say like a third of the window open and the heating might be on middle but he just doesn't but this is this the sort (.). of crazy behaviour that I link with (.). the smell the bowls smelling and

M:{Mm

J: {that sort of thing so an with my sister saying for the last six years she's had terrible September I'm thinking (.). we're September October we don't know what we're doing is this what's happening (.). Is that what the bowls was all about his anxiety and mum was living here at the time now mum's not living here we went on holiday with her in August in September in Switzerland. He, mum an I shared a room, Seb and Alex shared a room (1) Mum really didn't like (.). Alex (.). then (.). Presumably he didn't like ((inaudible)) Alex seems to push me away (2) by tellin me (1) I'm rubbish at this an I'm rubbish at that an (1) erm well we don't want mum doin this whatever but then everybody

dynamics, J sits in the middle, seemingly torn in all directions

Processing voice

seems to say he wants you he wants more time with you he's jealous of the time your spending with your mum and you're going to see your mum when your mum's upset an your mum's house needs work on it yunno all those sort of things so it's a really hard

M: {Mm

J: {mixed messages

M: {Mm

J: {to deal with there. Added to which (.) Seb an I (.) our attitude to the whole parenting thing so (2) I would like Alex to do some washing up and Seb like empty the compost bin th the recycling bags into the bin. Easy 25p job (1) easy earner. I remind him and remind him and remind him erm he might do it he might not do it but Seb sort of almost walks down the stairs with him opens the lid for him an I said "that's not him doin it that's not him doin it you're doin it (.) really" "Well I bl bl ay" So we're different come from different points on that as well which doesn't help but (.) What would make it better (.) to be in touch with other people who've been through the same thing. Even if it's different the whole (2) talking (.) Yeh (.) Other parents at the school gate (1) yunno just knowing what that is like (2) Erm the fact that you are accused of being so on that parenting course I went to (.) there's a boy who was Auti I saw her the other day erm er autistic whose now got an autistic diagnosis but she was being told at that parenting class that she wasn't putting enough routines in place and boundaries in place and he's the (.) third one of three children (2) the other two fine so (1) An he really is gets very very very agitated when it's like nativity season, everything's different. We haven't got any of that problem Alex's quite fine with change of routine

Voice of desire for support

Voice of desire for understanding

Sociocultural discourse

(.) Absolutely fine with it what he think that he thinks that he's (2) maybe entitled to things but it's like we know a boy who just doesn't know what to do with himself when he's not on a computer game and he's got a little wotsit that he takes to bed at night and does an Alex says "he's wrong for doin that they're wrong for givin that to him an he shouldn't be doin this" an so he erm an I say "d'you understand why" I said "the thing is Alex (.) these things weren't around when we were kids an it will come out at some point what is the best thing to do. Technology is moving too quick for us to adapt to it and know what is the right thing to do so everybody does what they think is right" but if you look at Daniel's parents they're all on the computer all the time. So they're doin to him I look at us I am for tasks like committee, writing this pantomime doin the posters but not for games (1) So I think we need to er up our computer use a bit but (.) at the same time doin all these things like the athletics. He'll come back, he'll be delighted, whatever will have happened (.) he'll be happy doin whatever they're doin now

M: So

J: Do you want the light on?

M: {more parents in, putting people

J: {it's around something like that

M: {in in touch with parents. Anything else that you would think would make a difference?

J: {I haven't been to an autism course somebody told me last week oh yunno we thought we know everything about it oh n n n but she said but we did learn something actually

M: {Mm

We have been talking for some time – trying to focus J here

Seeking information

J: {but the aut the really when there's an autism course or something like that you need (1) a creche (2) because it's **hard enough for me to go to work**

M: {Mm

J: {who's looking after Alex then. Seb's work turns a blind eye, we're really lucky about that. Mum doesn't want him on her own now but partly because she thinks it's not good for a 10 year old to be with an 85 year old for a lot of the time erm (.) an she said "oh he's been really good" an when he was over the summer erm yeh from May

M: [Mm

J: {to the end of term he went to her house when I was workin an **I said** "has he done his work" "yeh yeh he just sat down an did it" an so some of it was handwritten stuff some of it was maths some of it was erm typing a story on a computer "yeh he jus just got on with it an then we went for a walk in the park or went to the shops or went to the library an yeh he's just got on with it just did it" But a couple of times she said "oh he di he di he sai he said he didn't have any" **I said** "he has got some that's why **I wrote** it in that black book what **I set** him" An she said "I don't wanna get involved with telling him off he's got to do this because I'm his grandma and yunno" ((this was whispered)) I don't want to get involved with tellin him off that's what I just whispered then because she whispered

M: {Mhm

J: {she so she on the hand she was telling me everything was fine (.) and then she's saying well actually I'm a bit frightened of telling him off about things so perhaps not as fine **I thought** he was but she did go to some of her friends or her friends came

Voice of loss and difficulty

Family dynamics problematic

round an they all thought Alex was so handsome an polite an all these sort of things but not normal for a 10 year old boy to be mixing with old ladies so ((swallows)) Anyway so she decided don't want to do that anymore not when it's just her on her own (.) So for me to go to a daytime course

M: {That's

J: {Who's lookin after Alex (2) or an evening an really both parents should go so I suppose we could have babysitters but when you're not even confident about (.) socialising normally th th this is a babysitter babysitter (1) teachers can't look after him so we can't go to something like that unless something pops out that's so easy to go to

M: Ok in terms of the experience with the schools (.)because you you've had experience of four

J: {Yeah

M: {schools

J: {yeah yeah

M: {Is there anything you think needs to change, could be different, would

J: {Er

M: {make things better?

J: { I did feel that a lot of professionals were telling us stuff (2) that this is like Behaviour Support an all the yunno the headteachers, the MAT workers, and none of it (1) was the same (1) Which made me think (3) if you don't know (1)how are we meant to know. And yet we see him for longer than you do an one of the things that was said was well of course he's alright at scouts that's only for a couple of hours. But it's not for a couple of hours sometimes its a weekend

M: {Mm

Voice of loss and isolation and difficulty

Can't attend courses

Voice of confused and unsupported
Agencies speak in contradiction of one another

J: {an it is with kids and sometimes they do things (.) they've annoyed Alex an he's just ((puffs air out)) he's yunno found his own way round it. So I don't (.) I th I think with schools ((swallows)) they've got their budget which is restricted, they've got their curriculum which is restricted an they've got their SATS to worry about (.) An then around here they've got mixed age group classes so they've got a lot of (3) restrictions, limitations, hard work before they've even started an that's if all children are beautifully behaved (.) an if they're not then you've got problems and I just don't think they can cope with it erm (1) think Mr Smith (2) did what he thought was (1) Mr Smith can be like Teflon shouldered in that it will run off because he did the right thing he was in contact with the MAT team (.) he was in contact with Behaviour Support (.) he was in contact with Individual Programmes and did what they said. Oh by the way the Individual Programmes when nec that came back on course in May (1) after Alex left E (1) they contacted us they wanted to make appointment to book in to bring a computer

M: {Mm

J: {an get all of everything working we never got to that far before but they obviously worked out that was what needed to happen I said "just a minute (1) if there's an issue of money being spent an it's bein spent on Individual Programmes don't let it be Individual programmes spend it on the H Secondary thing because that is stimulating. Individual Programmes was not stimulating he was being taught by a teaching assistant doin this very very basic work (1) at least with Debbie she is a teacher

M: {Mm

J: {an she is working (1) yunno a very high level

Voice of understanding of the difficulties school face

Voice of not consulted

Others make decisions for A without consulting J

School/ Sociocultural discourse

Voice of loss of education

M: {Mm

J: {but he wouldn't pass an exam now but he's much higher than his peers an (.) he but he (.) an the the erm the Clinical Psychologist said "well if they're autistic then they're a third younger than their chronological age an their sort of social (2) and emotional behaviour but then if he's 16 in his reading an (1) a Maths getting up there if he was taught it he's got the ability to do it that is a wide range difficult for him to manage difficult for you to manage difficult for the school to manage" So I think (.) so when Brenda D said "oh yeah I think there's somethin in the North East Shire I'll look at it" She never did anything about that an when I reminded her of it six months later she said "oh (.) well it would be nice if there was something but there isn't

M: {Ok

J: {an I don't know what home school group Lilly said (1) cos she made some reference to the home schooling or I with me saying that E said and we can choose hoom home schooling but I'm being a bit frightened of it because I don't think that I'm capable of doing it all plus I don't wanna be locking horns all the time. Erm (.) an she said an I said an I understand if you do go home schooling then you can't erm go back into school if you wanted to an you have to pay for your exams an she said "it's not like that" (.) So I still don't know what it is like (.) erm but there's there's it she's the only one who would talk about home school in a normal way whereas all the rest have said that is completely different from what we do an oh we're not even talki we can't talk about because it's diff so you're feeling like you you're already blind in this situation an you'd be really blind in that situation but

Voice of loss of education

School/ Sociocultural discourse

Voice of betrayed and let down

You can choose an illegal exclusion – being pushed to withdraw A from school.

Voice of worry/concern

School discourse

Voice of lost

you know a lot of people do it and then gradually
when you're under this stone that we're under you
find a lot of people. An they rea they can talk to you
because they know you're not gonna you are gonna
judge but in a diff with a different parameter because
you've been through it

M: {Mm

J: {An you know it's like it's like it is literally like trying
to put a square peg in a round hole you can't (.) and
forcing Alex to do that is just not working and doing it
more and more and more and more and more is not
going to work so it needs to be a different thing (.) And
so that's why I have hope with this Outside Teachers
but he says "well yunno we'll get him school ready for
year 7 nnn" An I'm thinking I think the same thing's
gonna happen in year 7 (.) But what's happening now
(1) an Chris said "I want it I as soon as he's ready I
want to put him in for an exam because then he'll have
a piece of paper to say yeah you've passed an exam
you've you've done this" but now he seems to be
talking a different language "we're getting him year
school ready for year 7 an he'll be with his peers cos
he wants to be with his peers" (2) Mm does he (2)
which peers are these that he doesn't know yet (.) Erm
and it's nice that he doesn't know them but then
they'll all know each other so they'll have friendship
groups but then everybody's making new friendship
grou groups all the time an then you're gonna have the
same mixed ability ((intake of breath)) probably not
very many people like Alex (3) Mm It's gonna be the
same pattern (.) possibly and puberty which might
have already started or not
((laughter))

Voice of lonely and burdened

Voice of not fitting/ outsider
No flexibility in the system to
accommodate difference

Worries and concerns for future
Voice of hope but...

Voice of worry and no agency

School/ Sociocultural discourse

Voice of concern and worry

J: So I feel like we really are (2) just literally holding on (.) for whatever knowing that this is gonna continue until he's 18 I think because 18 if I hope he stays in education but I think there's a real possibility he might say "I can leave at 16 I'm out"

M: {Mm

J: {so now my message to him is Alex take the opportunities that you've got here now because if you don't you're gonna want to do them you are gonna want to do them because it's gonna be in your interest to do these exams but you'll be to having to go to school in the evening that you'll be paying for an then do you exams (.) when all your mates (1) are doing fun things (.) or earning more money so and then you'll get a better job an you'll earn more money cos that's what y yunno you want. He's driven by money he's interested in money dunno why. An somebody said "what d'ya want for Christmas" an the answer was "I don't know I don't know" I don't know what he wants erm

M: What do you want for Christmas?

J: What well

M: ((laughs))

J: {what I want for Christmas is calm

M: {Mm

J: {What I (.) d'yunno what the basic thing I really want for Christmas I would like (2) to have some time with my mum and us as a family that is nice that might not happen and I would like us to watch something on television or a lot of things on television that make us laugh (1) together (1) That's all I want (.) I don't that's all I want an I don't think I'm gonna get it (1) So at work I said "I'll work all of it all of it all of it all the time erm but I would like the 30th and 31st off cos I'm

Voice of difficulty at end of tether

Voice of worry and anxiety

I was interested what J would want not necessarily for Christmas but I wondered what she needs to carry on with all of this

Desire for peace and calm

Desire for nice family time

Not much to ask
Voice of resigned not going to happen

painting pantomime scenery and I've booked the hall and stuff like that" and she said an I said "I know most people will want the 24th and 26th, 27th off so I'll work it all" (.). She said "but you've got a 10 year old" an I said "yeah" she said "but" I said "no all I want for Christmas is calm calm and if it's a bank holiday an that means Seb's off I can work (.). I can do it" Because what I'm hoping (2) is if we're financially we and we are because we've had a rebate on the heating, we've had a rebate on tax, I've earned something so I'm I've got my account is flush at the moment that's a I can have anything I want and that's great I can even put some new windows in if I want to but I'm not gonna be here the same time and winters just started but we did have three months of I'm overdrawn again I'm overdrawn again and Seb saying "what're you spending your money on what're you spending your money on" (3) His feet now, Alex's feet are size 41 so that

M: {{{(laughs)}}

J: {could be one thing we're going through

M: {Oh dear a bit of a growth

J: {Yeh

M: {spurt

J: {yeh absolutely

((laughter))

J: {An trousers well Seb's bought the trousers but what am I spending the money on we we're not doing anything but there is no money (.). so that's been an added stress but now we're flush an I think that's so what I would like is erm (1) a nice time with the family (2) don't think I'm gonna get it and a nice (1) erm wage of money to book a summer holiday that would be nice (.). time together. I'm thinking we gonna go to

Have money at the minute but has been financially difficult for the family

Voice of desire

the Isles of Scilly because we can take the dog, I've been to the Isles of Scilly before I'd like to go in the season when the tides are really extreme so we can walk across one island. Accommodation is more expensive than going to Switzerland. More expensive (.). So Seb said don't do it I'm thinking ((deep sigh)) we have to do it we have to do it cos if we don't do it now when are we gonna do it an y y y we should do it, we can earn the money an we can do it, we can do it'll work (.). So I will do it but do I know whether we are gonna be happy (2) or are we gonna be having a Aaagh fighting each other all the time, I won't take mum erm (1) dunno dunno so all I want is calm. I met an old boss today in X Area he didn't recognise me cos my hair's cut I've got make-up on I'm dressed posh rather than in mud and he goes to me, he's a landscape architect and arbore culturist, he's gone greyer so (.). we walked past each other thought just a minute I called him an his wife an said "oh how are you" He said "Ooh ((sound of struggling to find words possible surprise)) I said I know I work at that silly clothes shop expensive clothes so I have to look like this" He said "well bbllllll you look smart with your short hair" he sai he said "are you not doing any more landscape architect an you're not working in Sheffield" an I said "no" an he said (2) "Waste" (1) That's what it feels like I said "but what am I doing instead I'm teaching somebody who can't be taught" An I could see an his daughter works as a teacher in a special school an when I was working with him she was having chairs thrown at her an stuff like that and he was saying "Ugh ugh ((gulp)) as good as oh the monsters" an

M: {Mm

Voice of difficulty

It's been and still is a difficult time of stress, conflict, anxiety. J seeks peace from it all.

Voice of loss

Socio-cultural discourse

Voice of loss/sorrow/judged?

Seems sad voice, regretful, judged – everything J lost or had to give up

Voice of loss and regret for what she was what might have been

Voice of pride?

Voice of judged

<p>J: {an so (1) I I'm thinking well what do you think yunno what do you think of me now. Whereas my other boss I went to see him I don't know six months ago an he said “((sigh)) I'm sorry you have to go through this” (1) Which is a lot more understanding than I would ever give him credit for</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>J: {So there's diff er I presume it matters what they've seen in other people an (.). Cos he did say one of my colleagues her daughter's amazing, flying through school, flying through school erm bet she's gonna go to XXXX School, money behind her, ability behind her (.). but she's socially she won't wash, she's never had a boyfriend (.). something strange (1) So he's perhaps already pre prepared an er so he's probably thinking what is the world coming to the next generation's the next generation is is all not working an why isn't it working an that's why you're doin this PhD</p> <p>M:((laughs)) Is there anything on that note, Is there anything that you</p> <p>J: {advise</p> <p>M: {would like to say that you haven't said</p> <p>J: Well clearly if we've failed in four schools (.). it's us</p> <p>M: {{{deep sigh}}}</p> <p>J: {but it is small village schools and we haven't had an opportunity to go to a bigger school (.). Should we go to big one should we go I don't know cos I think Lilly now thinks oh erm smaller groups is better where he but we we haven't we've just tried the same model four times it feels like</p> <p>M: {Mhm</p> <p>J: {well except the last two schools were really small with a lot of ASD children an that didn't work (.). So I think (2) I'm I (1) I'm want I like the idea of Chris</p>	<p>Voice of supported/empathised with</p> <p>Voice of judged</p> <p>Awareness of research</p> <p>Voice of failure</p> <p>Voice of confusion/bewildered</p> <p>School/ Sociocultural discourse</p>
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teaching him and putting him in for exam next year
 and see wha cos that's completely different and see
 what happens because I would say we're not a sporty
 family erm even though all the athletics nernernern
 part of the football team an nerner ner and the cricket
 he's doin now we the season's stopped loves it all (.)
 but that's not from us that's just from us saying "do it
 yunno y'might" I support scouts he loves scouts that
 woodworking thing he loves the only thing he hasn't
 loved that I thought he would like (.) is music I thought
 he would like to play the piano in fact I thought he
 would like to play the guitar an he had one guitar
 teacher he liked, then he moved school had another
 guitar, didn't like that guitar teacher and hasn't picked
 it up again an hasn't shown any interest doesn't really
 we don't really listen to much music so that's part of
 the problem. So he's not got a but he's got a radio he
 could have the radio on in the morning an listen to
 whatever not interested (.) but erm he does like (.) all
 that outdoor tree climbing climb so I think I thought he
 might be a fell runner might like to do something like
 that but he's not linked the athletics and the being
 outside yet even though I tell him you'll probably want
 to be he's a mmm not na

M: {so it sounds to me like you're describing erm (.) a
 curriculum or an education that (.) plays to his
 strengths an his interests

J: {Yeah

M: {and is individualised

J: {Yes

M: {Is that

J: {Yeh

M: {Have I got that right

Voice of hope

I'm reflecting to J this is what
 she is describing

M: {Yes but erm he (3) he says he doesn't like French
“no no I'm not doin any French not doin any why do I
have to do French why I'm not I'm not gonna do
French I'm not gonna do French or German an why
would I do it I'm not gonna do it I'm not gonna do it”
and **part of me thinks (.) maybe he shouldn't ever be
forced to do any foreign languages maybe that'd just
be a nice cop out for everybody** shouldn't do it but
then **I did** buy a taped tape (1) so that's old old
language (1) course an he was furious with me for
getting it an but when **I asked** him to write something
down for his computing so **I told** him how showed him
to do something an we went through it an **I said** right
now write it down in this your computing book (.) how
to do it ((sound of turning pages)) or maybe (.) it's in
another book, can't remember which book anyway he
wrote down the instructions how you do it an at the
bottom he wrote Voila

M: {{{(laughter)}}

J: {Spelt wrong (.) but **I knew** exactly what it an **I said**
right he spelt it **I think** he spelt it W A double L A. **I said**
“**I know** what you mean there but this is how you spelt
it” he said “oh right ok” So does he really not want to
do any French (.) an then on the computer on the
piano oh “I don't wanna do any don't wanna practice
don't wanna practice don't wan” in fact practising is
the thing he doesn't want to practice that's part of the
“don't wanna practice” but then when **I sh show** them
a tune (1) to try to get them playing this duet really
simple right hand and Arpeggio's left hand this is Seb
an Alex they are capable of doin it (.) but no they
wouldn't do it but then Alex immediately rose to the
challenge and all **I said** something to him a little joke **I**
said “if you can find an If you can play me an Arpeggio

Voice of ambivalence

you can have an extra ten minutes on the computer”

(2) An after sort of five goes he got it

M: {so a curriculum that he is motivated to

J: {Yeh

M: {to do

J: {yeh

M: {whatever that motivation might be

J: {that's right we shou an it changes it moves

M: {Mm

J: {so at the moment we saw the Mongolian episode of Top er The Grand Tour which is the first one he's seen |
knew that I knew there wasn't much swearing because
if I'm watching something an there's swearing I'm
wincing

M: {Mm

J: {An I wasn't wincing an then I thought well maybe
we can watch it. An he absolutely loved it. An I said
well there's there'll be some others you can see them
but not all of them. So we saw the Mozambique one
and he found it hilarious ((inaudible)) this fish taking
fish an one of them is always fallin over on the
motorbike another one's got an aquarium in the back
but when he breaks the water sloshs down here an
they obviously didn't expect that to happen even
though they must (.) work out some scenarios before
an the other two were laughing so much clearly they
did not expect it to be like that an the one who's drivin
an every now an agai when it sort of happened an Alex
fell about laughing on that an he gets that slapstick
humour certainly but he he he even sophisticated
humour he can get it an erm an he wan he's desperate
to watch some more an I said ((inaudible)) “I've got to
think about which ones you can watch” an
derdederderderder and (1) but he's getting older I'd

love him I'd love him to watch James Bond think he'd love it all that stepping over crocodiles an that sort of stuff an I'm thinking oh it's so misogynist an errrr sex scenes an things like that an I think there probably mild but we can't do that yet but he's ready he's ready for that level (2) of the other side of things

M: {Yeh

J: {so we're in this sort of difficult an I'm sure that when he's 18 an he can do what he wants he will succeed in doin (.) somethin he will find success but in this yeh

M: So on that note

J: {On that note, on that terrible disappointment ((laughter))

J: Is that enough material for you

M: Thank you

((recording finished. Debrief conversation followed. Jenny then asked to switch the recording back on to say the following))

J: Right I was thinking about new ways of teaching that sort of thing so I went to a grammar school so I has 12 plus erm 12 plus exam it was called and we went straight into the second year at the grammar school because we stayed an extra year in primary just was XXshire that's what it was. Erm so I'm used to that level of strea streaming or selection process so I don't see it as a bad thing. But (.) Alex's experience I think selection should happen (.) but in a different sort of way it's almost like erm (.) people shouldn't go to one school maybe they should go to two schools er say Monday Wednesday Friday one school Tuesday Thursday another school so they can (1) be selected to (.) be like mini apprentices on the things that they're really good at so don't force for example Alex to do

Voice of hope for future but also anxious

Fear and anxiety displaced with a joke

Awareness of research wants to be helpful

Celebrate difference Aspirational

Modern Languages (1) but do encourage him to do more cricket than he would normally do at school so I've purposely chosen something that's not an academic thing but that sort of thing. Maybe don't force them all to be (.) part of a show if they don't wanna be part of a show but the ones who do wanna be part of a show it'll be cracking it will be absolutely wonderful get er cohorts from different schools an get an th then they all want good parts an they'll all be they'll support it brilliantly erm but then the others maybe want to (2) cook maybe they want to do languages maybe they want to yunno but don't force them all to be the same give them the opportunity for different friendships sets rather than be (.) stuck in that zone with the same ones for four years five years an then yunno that sort of thing End

Variety accomodating

Don't force all to be same, do the same, celebrate difference, encourage it, support it.

Aspirational voice for change

Appendix 12: LG analysis – Heather

<p><u>Colour Coding Key</u></p> <p>Listening for Plot Reflexive Listening Listening for Contapuntal/Polyphonic Voices Listening for the I – See I Poem Socio-cultural context</p> <p>M: Thank you for coming (.) and thank you for agreeing agreeing to be part of the research. Erm obviously what I've spoken to you before about (.) what the aims of the research are but it to summarise that it's (.) I want to get an understanding of what's happening around er exclusion particularly exclusion of young people with autism</p> <p>H: {Mhm</p> <p>M: {and I think that as a mother who has experienced that, that there's valuable insight to be gained (.) from that that we as professionals can learn from in the future.</p> <p>H: Yep</p> <p>M: So just how I see the research going and how the interview going (.) rather than having (.) a set of questions that (.) would come from what I would think are the important issues ((checking Dictaphone recording)) just checking it's recording ((laughter)) rather than, rather than having a set of questions that I think are the important issues I want to kind of leave it open (.) for you to go wherever you want to go with that story</p> <p>H: {Yeh</p>	<p>I'm seeking to put H at ease here and also to address the possible power differential. Positioning H as the expert</p>
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M: {because as I've said it to you before, I think the knowledge is in you rather than in me because

H. {Yeh

M: {you have experienced it. (1) So, I've got just two questions that hopefully will help you to (.) tell your story and I'm gonna go along with you kind of, (.) nodding in places and encouraging you in places to continue talking. Does that make sense?

((laughter))

H: Yes that's fine ((laughter))

M: Ok, so er my first question is (.) that I understand that E has experienced exclusion (.) from school (.) can you tell me about that?

H: Erm E was first diagnosed as being autistic when in (1) it was July 2017 when we got the official diagnosis, we'd been on the pathway for a couple of years, on and off, erm (1) due to more and more social problems (.) as she was in school and progressed through school it was becoming more and more obvious that that something was (2) not quite right erm and she wasn't hitting sort of the milestones in terms (.) the social and emotional (1) development. (.) Erm so we got the diagnosis erm but we'd she'd been refusing to go to school, she hated school, she didn't want to go in, she was kicking and screaming to go in erm (2) that was sort of the end of year 4. (.) Erm we managed to put a little reward system in place to get her back in to going to school so she was going into school and she was doing ok. Erm the start of year 5, she was (.) going in but wasn't really doing any work, wasn't really engaging, erm and (1) I got a phone call one morning in October (.) err (2) 2017, (.) I had to think of the year then,

Medical discourse
 Official autism diagnosis
 Voice of struggle/difficulty possibly downplayed with the words – On and off, not quite, sort of.
 On the pathway but use of word more and more suggests lack of control things running away escalating
 E not flourishing in school
 Unease
 Developmental discourse

Medical
 Refusing to go to school

Voice of struggle/difficulty
 School behaviour system.
 Some partnership working together here

Difficulty downplayed – doing ok
 Year 5 attending more but not engaging
 Phone call from school
 Story is hesitant lots of erm – hear the struggle in the voice. It's a time of difficulty but being downplayed?
 Autism discourse

M: {Yeah

H: {an (1) to say come in she'd had a meltdown, er and they needed me to go home, which wasn't a regular occurrence they didn't normally need me to go in. Erm so, I goes in and (.) the headteacher pulled me in, and (1) she basically said I'm going to have to permanently exclude her sh and (.) they took me in to the room where she was, erm she was confined into this area that was just (.) a mess, there was (.) papers everywhere, displays had been ripped off the walls, there was tables and chairs flipped over and she was in a a rage basically, and she didn't even recognise me (.) being there at first.

M: Ok

H: I got right (.) rather upset and took a step out, erm (1) calmed myself down went back in sort of (1) went over to her, sat down with her and she just sort of (.) came down and and we just sort of (2) breathed and and it's right I'm taking her home, and the headteacher she sort of said right well I'll I'll send all the paperwork that needs to be erm (.) gone through and we'll talk about that, I said Ok that's fine. Erm didn't really have that much sort of headspace to deal with it. I didn't really understand what it meant or anything at that time (.) and erm (1) main priority was getting E home

M: {Mm

H: {and getting her calm again. Erm (3) later on in the day she kind of (1) knew that she had been permanently excluded and she got really upset and she kept saying

Unusual occurrence

Change of tense Heather goes in – almost like reliving this is the telling
Educational discourse

Voice of surprise
shock/disbelief at school
response and also to find E in this situation.

Carol pulled in and E confined – lack of agency. Power with school

Voice of upset and high emotion

Sort of sort of repeated – things not making sense

Education system

Headteacher has knowledge of systems and the power – Carol has little knowledge and no power

Voice of confusion

School/Education

E upset by the exclusion.
The way H tells this mirrors E upset as is H in the recounting - it's as though still live for her –

sorry and sorry and sorry and and ((intake of breath))
and then sort of over the next few days, we kind of (2)
sort of got the (4) incident report

M: {ok

H: {of what had happened and what had led up to this
meltdown and what not. Erm (1) it was (3) a change of
routine (2) and (.) the teachers had implemented
something, (.) erm or were meant to be implementing
something. The teacher had explained it to E that
morning (.) but then wasn't there at lunchtime when E
went to find out what was going on. Erm so she said
well I'll go and do what I would normally do then I'll go
outside and they wouldn't let her, which is when she
went into this other room and then they wouldn't let
her get out, they kept her in this room (1) it was sort it
was lunchtime so there was kids here there and
everywhere,

erm so they wanted to (.) keep all of the other
children safe which is (.) ridiculous because she's
never attacked another child,

M: {Mm

H: {she just wanted to be outside. Erm she just got
more and more agitated and frustrated and just had a
complete and utter meltdown and they still wouldn't
let

her leave, and it was then that they rang me to go and
fetch her. It was (.) unavoidable to be fair. (1) So, then
we (3) sort of got ourselves together and (.) yunno
gathered more and more information (.) and then
went through the whole sort of (.) process of right this
is what happens now and she's not allowed out during
school hours for the first few days, and (.) and the
local authority will be in touch with you about what
happens next, and (.) erm it was just an absolute

things are confusing and
upsetting

Autism discourse

Reason for meltdown was
change of routine, poor
communication,
implementation.

They and the teachers – voices
of authority and control in
conflict with H who sees that E
has never attacked another
child

Voice of disbelief

They have power and control.
Ring H to fetch her – sense a
lack of communication and
partnership here

Voice of sadness/disbelief

Called to school to collect E
Voice of fairness

After the exclusion
Voice of knowledge
seeker/researcher

System

Public body. H left in limbo
while has to wait for LA to be in
touch – they have power that
asserts itself.

jumble of yunno (.). So so complicated and (2) we (2) had a couple of people from the local authority say yeah right ok this is what's gonna happen an (.) but it didn't really sink in, but we kinda decided we wanted to take it to the governors

M: {Mm

H: {because we didn't really agree (.) that she had been permanently excluded. Which then kind of got me to (2) doing lots of research (2) as school policies and and

(1) all this that and the other, and contacted National Autistic Society and explained to them what had happened and they sent me so much information it was fantastic, and (1) we had er called a governors meeting and said look they didn't follow their own behaviour policies, you know she's never had a fixed term exclusion and the school said well we didn't we thought that's what she'd want and and the governors basically said no we are gonna (.) uphold the decision to (.) keep her excluded and (.) and yeah. So then, (1) it kind of went from there and it was right so well this is what we do now and (1) it's been absolutely awful ever since to be fair. (.) She's been anxious, she's been depressed, it's just got so worse and worse and she's still not back in full time school nearly two years later (.) because she just can't handle it.

M: {Ok

H: {She doesn't trust people, she doesn't trust teachers or doctors. She just (1) stays inside, doesn't want to go anywhere, doesn't want to do anything. She's (.) not happy anymore and it's absolutely awful ((intake of breath)) so that's the basic side of it. Yeh ((laughter)) It's been a bit of a process.

Exclusion forces H to gather knowledge but feels out of depth, anxious
Voice of confusion and anxiety
Daze and confusion of it all.
Voice of shock, disbelief, confusion. Out of depth
Like sleepwalking through nightmare. Word choice and language seemingly casual – almost disassociation.

Disagree with exclusion.

Voice of agency – seeking knowledge

Public body

School system. Governors meeting

Voice of advocate

Manipulation. System retains power. As fast as H gains knowledge they manipulate and interpret the rules. H silenced.
Governor's support head.
School system

Voice of despair. – absolutely awful repeated

Impact of exclusion – E still not accessing full time education

E has no trust in the system anymore. I wonder if H feels the same way?

High emotional distress that struggling to articulate. Ends with a throw away voice and laughter to mask the pain.

M: It sounds sounds like a (.) like from thinking and listening to what you are saying it sounds like it was it sounds like it came a bit like out of the blue (.) really

H: {Yeah, yeah

M: {is that is that your sense?

H: Yeah it was. I mean we'd had some problems (.) in the months in the months before (1). Since she was excluded in the October (.), but then sort of the May er May June time was when she was (.) really sort of (1) I don't want to go school and she refused to get dressed in the morning, she refused to get in the car, she refused to get out of the car. Erm (.) when we did get her there she would try and escape and try to break through the security door but then (1) we managed to sort of take it sort of strip it all back and it was right ok if you can't get your uniform on you don't get your uniform on let's just get you to let's get to school and we'll sit and we'll (2) chill out for five minutes in there and then we'll see how we go and (.) and we (.) gradually built it back up again, and she had this reward chart erm so that (.) on a Friday she could (.) do something, well because she hated the singing assemblies that were on a Friday

M: {yeah

H: {she hated the singing the singing assemblies, so they said well during that time someone will take you outside and you can do either some baking or some roller skating around the playground or something that you want to do and that worked really well. (.) Her year 5 she had a new teacher (.) new teacher was amazing (.) and

I felt that this had all come from out of nowhere and I was struggling to make sense of it – possibly as was H.

Pre-exclusion – School difficult for E. Emotional distress comes out in the physical act of refusing to get dressed/ in out car

Sort of – key phrases – H trying to grasp sense of it all?
Voice of difficulty

Voice of partnership

School behaviour system

School discourse

Voice of partnership

Voice of appreciation

she was right ok I want to know as much as we can so that we can really try and help her, and she'd got (1) she was er down to play a musical instrument that she was really looking forward to, I wasn't because it was the trombone

M: {(laughs)}

H; {ok (1) but you know so long as she was looking forward to it, she had the residential coming up as well later in the school year and she was really looking forward to that and (.) er we feel a little bit let down.

Erm they'd been accepted to (1) er to (.) Autism Outreach they'd made a referral to Autism Outreach and they'd just accepted and were in the process of making an appointment to come and see her and whatnot to discuss strategies when she got excluded. It's like they didn't really give anything a chance. It's like they kinda went we can't deal with this anymore and gave up and it was really (.) disappointing and really, really frustrating

and (.) they had been amazing up until that point and (1) it was just (.) heart breaking that (.) they'd given up

M: {ok}

H: {so yeah.

M: So, you talk about amazing, what was amazing? What was what was working for you, for E at that point, what was good?

H: They had (.) there was a pastoral manager there and she was fantastic. She was so lovely, the whole school absolutely adored her, a lot of her time was spent with

E trying to yunno (.) because E was (1) she could be quite challenging sometimes. Erm (1) they'd got (.) sort of sensory things to help her in the classroom, she'd got

New Year 5 teacher supportive seeks knowledge from H to help E

Voice of loss

Despair and emotional voice often set against throwaway jokey voice and underplaying of the loss – a little bit let down. Too hard to feel the loss.

Voice of loss

Institutional discourse

Support was about to arrive – partnership and communication – strategies going to be set up and then E excluded

Voice of Let-down/Betrayed

I think maybe I was finding it hard to hear the pain of this despite the jokes and therefore steered the conversation here by focusing on H's comment about amazing

School discourse

Voice of support and appreciation

Strategies in place to support E

<p>her own little workstation in the cloakroom outside, so she could go there if she needed to, erm (.) they like they put the reward system in place. (.) Erm (1) on the days where she was struggling to go, in we would kind of go into the staff room and have a cup of tea with her and she was allowed to have a cup of tea (.) and erm, they were just (1), it seemed like they were really trying</p> <p>M: {Mhm</p> <p>H: {but sort of (.) only through sort of the exclusion and me kinda going well (1) they coulda done that actually, yunno they could've had behaviour service support (.) involved before she had a diagnosis. They could have come in and helped. Erm ((intake of breath)) they didn't give a chance with Autism Outreach to come in, there was other referrals that should have been made like speech and language to help with her communication difficulties which is kinda what she was struggling to communicate how she was feeling. Erm (1) it was ((intake of breath)) there were other things we could do and then there was other children in the school, yunno, that were (1) behavio(h)urally challenged</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>H: {and they would regularly be disruptive or (1) getting into trouble for incidents and (1) and yet they were still there, and I think there was other quite serious incidents that there was never any exclusions for and (1) they kind of (3) I don't know (3) it's like the goalposts had changed because she was coming into school and</p>	<p>Voice of partnership</p> <p>Institutional discourse</p> <p>Voice of blame/let down/betrayed</p> <p>Medical discourse</p> <p>Voice of unfairness/Inequity/Injustice</p> <p>Lack of agency, power lack of knowledge of system in which rules change and others do unto you. Voice of confusion/disbelief</p> <p>Kind of repeated- sense struggle to express these thoughts/feelings</p>
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there were things that she was looking forward to but it's kind of like they forgot (1) and they kinda went (.) it's not working, she wants she doesn't want to be in school, so if we give her a fixed term exclusion she's getting exactly what she wants. When, really, she just needed that break to kind of reset

M: {Yeah

H: {and we know that now from personal experience because she's (.) been in (2) a new school for Year 6.

Erm she's only been doing a few hours a day. Erm and in

October she had a little bit of a (.) erm another

breakdown. Erm (.) where we had to go to (.) the GP

for an emergency referral to CAMHS cos she was (.)

saying she wished she was dead and (.) it was it was (.)

quite (1) a difficult

M: {Yeah

H: {scary time. Erm so we (.) said right no she's not going to school

M: {Mm

H: {we're not forcing her to go to school, erm and we let her have the time off to sort of rest and recuperate and, and then she did go back again (.) because she was

able to, wanted to and and it's like they didn't trust

that (.) she would (.) and (3) so hindsight's a wonderful

thing but yunno

M: {Hmm

H: {they're the prof(h)essionals at the end of the day

M: Is that how you see them and that's how you (1)

H: {yeah

M: {saw the school?

H: {they're meant to be the ones who who can point us in the right direction. I'm trying to deal with things

School discourse

Knowledge and experience gained since the exclusion

E goes to new school in year 6

Medical discourse

Suicidal thoughts

Voice of distress comes through with the pauses and difficulties articulating story.

Distress and despair downplayed in language choice

Voice of let down

Voice of trust and knowledge Vs own personal experience

Lack of knowledge H trusted in the professionals in the system.

<p>as best I can as a mum but I don't know how the system works, I don't know all these (.) different services that can come in and help and it's like I say it's only through hindsight and through the exclusion with people saying well did they do this? No, they didn't do that. I didn't even know that was an option. Well what about this? (.) Not a clue (1). There was another (2) child who was (2) having behavioural issues. I'm not sure of the details because obviously they don't disclose but</p> <p>M: {Mhm</p> <p>H: {he went to the same sort of centre (.) that E was going to for a while, (.) erm in that (.) first year, (1) and (.) he was going there in the afternoons because he was at risk of exclusion (2) and given that she'd been obviously being having problems months and months before, well why wasn't this an option to us, to to take her out of the situation, take her somewhere else and work on these skills and so (1) why weren't we given that option (.) that could have helped her.</p> <p>M: So, you feel like (.) do you feel like you weren't given (.) information?</p> <p>H: Erm yeah (.) information, opportunities (.) yunno it's like it's (1) part of it's like a whole big secret (1) and whether it's down to the fact that sometimes they have to pay for these services I'm not sure, I have no idea, no idea how it works but (.) I know sometimes they have to (.) fund these things, and if they haven't got the money then to do it then (.) it's (.) it's difficult for them. But</p>	<p>Hindsight – H trusted as she didn't know then realises that been betrayed and let down</p> <p>Voice of despair and sadness. They have knowledge and they didn't act. H in the dark and uncertain</p> <p>School institutional discourse E attends a centre after excluded</p> <p>Voice of betrayal/let down</p> <p>Lack of choice and agency. Voice of disbelief/Frustration</p> <p>Voice of kept in dark/excluded/let down Later describes secret code</p> <p>Lack of knowledge of how things work. H gains Knowledge as goes along</p> <p>Voice of understanding but also blame for their failure to act. Financial discourse School institutional discourse Medical discourse</p>
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that that was another thing they could've done, they could've applied for additional funding because she was on the SEN register, she was newly diagnosed and ((intake of breath)) it was just, it was like (2) they just dropped the ball and they just let us down. They didn't (1) give us all the options to keep her in school so (.) she obviously got excluded and and it's made things a thousand times worse. She's a totally different child. It's (1) quite heart breaking ((intake of breath)).

M: It sounds it, it sounds it (1) So, how have you how have you kind of (.) managed things since (.) that event?

H: Erm (2) research ((laugh)). Research er was a huge part of it because (1) since she's (.) been excluded we looked into (2) demand avoidance because she was it was very much a (1) asking her getting her to do anything at all was met with a very firm no. Erm so I looked into demand avoidance strategies which was basically (.) stop all your demands (.) you need to (.) yunno, she needs to feel like she's in control again. An cos she didn't, she didn't have any control over anything which is why she was saying no to everything ((intake of breath)). So (1) I was looking into all this which was a bit difficult at first and you kinda go er it's fine if you don't want to do this, it's fine if you don't want to do that ((intake of breath)) but (.) eventually she'd come round to it herself, and it was like (1) it was brilliant (.) because it was like ooh ooh aah this is working. (.) Erm (1) it's been (3) very difficult (1) as a family (1). Erm my son was (1) very much like why does she get to stay home? (1) why do I still have to? I don't want to go to school (.) why does E get to stay home every day?

M: Mm

Voice of let-down/betrayed

Voice of blame

Emotional distress for H here. Feels like H experiences feelings of injustice but her anger is silent somehow.

H seeking knowledge

Medical discourse

Voice of knowledge

Impact of exclusion on family

<p>H: So he found it quite difficult to understand. ((intake of breath)) Put a lot of pressure on me and (.) my partner. Erm who's who was sort of the opinion, although yes, she'd been let down by the school and he was very much upset with that, he was like well she just needs to get on with the (.) things and and this is what's happened and we just need to deal with it and it's like (.) well actually no ((intake of breath)) we need to work on why it happened and and build her back up again and and make sure things are right in the future and he'd say well we can't control everything bluhh and no but we can certainly help ((laugh)) and and do things the right way</p>	<p>Voice of difficulty. Conflict in family created by exclusion event.</p> <p>Seeking understanding so can stop happening again Conflict with partner about how to manage</p> <p>Downplay of the distress</p>
<p>M: {Mhm</p> <p>H: {so so it's been a massive strain on (.) us personally. I have absolutely no social life. Well, I have a little bit more now than I did before but I couldn't go out anywhere during the day cos E didn't want to leave the house, she didn't want to leave her room sometimes. Erm I can't have a normal job because (.) I've got no one to watch her. Erm and I can't put her in childcare. She's (.) just (.) not suitable for nor(h)mal childcare. Erm (2) it's been very isolating. (1) Erm (.) very, very stressful. So we do bits where we can, try and get out when we can and my mum comes up (.) erm once a week to watch her for a little while (.) so I can get out and do something and ((intake of breath)). It's (2) but me and my partner don't really get much time to do things together anymore cos one of us is generally got to stay at home (.) with the kids and it's ((trails off))</p>	<p>Voice of distress</p> <p>Voice of isolation/loneliness</p> <p>During the exclusion E at home a lot not wanting to leave house Voice of loss</p> <p>Voice of loneliness Voice of distress</p> <p>Emotional strain and difficulty – using words like massive, absolutely, I can't I've got no-one also indicate loneliness isolation and then trails off – too difficult to go on</p> <p>I felt H's lonely struggle.</p>

M: It sounds kind of isolating you know when you tell me what's going on like like there isn't (.) other than your immediate family

H: {Mm

M: {I wonder where where the other support is from in terms of school was it there ever?

H: No not really. We had six hours a week where she'd go to (.) erm a centre (1) which she wasn't massively keen on (.) but she'd (1) go. Erm she didn't really do much there (.) she wasn't massively (.) keen on it (.) She had a one to one TA and she was with other children who were (1) a lot more extreme (2) in their behaviours

(2) more of more of the time. E has very occasional (.) sort of explosions (.), whereas these other children were (1) quite volatile a lot of the time

M: {Ok

H: {so she didn't feel like she fit in with them and so she wasn't really keen on going and we had a tutor come round (.) for an hour a week (1) but (.) the programmes that they were using were quite babyish and she didn't really want to do any of that, we had half an hour lesson (1) online, which was (.) generally ok, there wasn't really much (.) in terms of education but ((intake of breath)) but (1) that was it as far as her education was concerned. As far as anything else is concerned there's not really a lot (.) to support you (.) as a family It's (2) or if there is, it's very hard to access and (.) find (.) it's yunno

M: And do you feel like the onus has been on you in terms of finding things?

H: Yes (.) oh very much so, very much so. it's (1) you get the occasional (.) sort of oh there's this support

School discourse
Part-time timetable with support of TA. Home tutor but education generally poor

Voice of loss - Loss of education

Voice of isolation and let down.
Lack of partnership. Left to deal with things on own.

Socio-cultural discourse

group an (.) that people hear of but (.) we can't always go to them because sometimes they are during the day, when the kids are normally at school, which I obviously can't go to (1). Erm (1) and (1) they just seem to be at odd times or if I can take her with me then she doesn't want to go to them, and so right (1) so (2). Erm ((laugh)) paediatrician actually she said to me (1) erm (2) there is a (.) new support group that's just been set up I think it's at St Johns Ambulance (.) headquarters (1) er once a month and I kind of turned round and said yeh I know I run it ((laughter)) She was like oh right ah (.) well obviously I couldn't take E to that because I was actually running that. It was the only thing I could actually do at the time and it was once a month and so (.) E couldn't obviously couldn't come to that and she was right ok well there are workshops to go to but yes I can't go to them because they are during the day when I can't get childcare (1) Oh right ok then (2) Well (1) right then thanks for that is that all I get then? (.) Yeah that's it (1) Basically (.) if you can't get to the workshops, you can't get to the help groups then (2) there's not a lot they can do. (.) So mm (.) ok.

M: So, you set up this (.) support group and you run it?

H: Yeah, well yeah, it's through Autism Xarea.

M: {yeh

H: {so I'm employed by them and they wanted to expand to the X area so cos I (.) knew (.) my boss from one of the support groups I used to access down in X area when we lived down there when she was going to school a lot of the time (.) and we were sort of very new on the autism pathway and I used to go and go well I don't really know whether I'm supposed to be

Voice of isolation and lack of support – exclusion means can't access support groups

Medical discourse

Voice of disbelief that being directed to a group H runs herself

Agency – seems to have it runs own group and yet also has none – can't get to support groups and workshops

H runs own support group once a month

Voice of loneliness isolation lack of professional understanding

Voice of anger betrayed let down

Socio-cultural discourse

Medical discourse

H seeking support pre-diagnosis. Uncertain and out of depth.

here or not because yunno I don't know If she has got autism cos she's not been diagnosed and it was (.) yunno If you think that that's what it is then we can help you through (1) fabulous ok. So (1) erm (1) yeah we've got a (.) support group up here which (.) there are a few support groups up here (.) but again they're quite difficult to access (1) it's frustrating (.) and even if you can access them the kids don't always want to go.

M: No

H: The one that I run is aimed at under twelves (.) ish (.) it's very flexible but (.) it's in a playcentre and E's (.) not bothered about playcentres anymore, she's eleven but

in her own mind she's a teenager already (1) and you don't really find any teen support groups

M: {Ok

H: {they're very few and far between (1) there's one in X area (.) but again ((intake of breath)) can't really get to that either ((sigh)) so there's not a lot of (.) support out there.

M: So do you, I get the kind of whole feeling when you're talking again it's about that isolation and the no support (1) kind of anywhere that you can access?

H: Pretty much. (1) Especially not not for er children who have been excluded anyway, It's (2) it's few and far between.

M: What do you think what do you think's the issue? What what you say not for children that have been excluded what do you draw a difference there? Can you

H: { It's (3) It's It's very strange (.) I've got (.) I'm on a support group online

M: {Mm

Voice of supported.
Communication, knowledge sharing, partnership

Lack of support
Voice of frustration – wants to access but can't

Socio-cultural discourse

Voice of unsupported and isolated

Voice of ambivalence
Socio-cultural discourse

<p>H: {and there's a lot of people on there who have experienced exclusion but this is like all over the country</p> <p>M: {Yeah</p> <p>H: {and the kind of specifically in this (.) group, that there's people that have been excluded (1) and (3) we are all of the same opinion, what do you do with your kids when they've been excluded? When you try and get them back into school and the (.) the local authority said to me she's not ready to be in school full time, so they only gave her six hours a week (.) of interacting with other people, which made her feel more and more isolated so she didn't want to go, so by the time they said oh no she's ready to go back into school, she really wasn't ready to go back into school cos she'd missed almost a full year (.) and she didn't know how to be with other mainstream kids anymore, in a busy environment. (1) And so, at the beginning they were like no she's not ready and (1) when they said she was she really really wasn't ready. And so you've kind of made the problem worse here (2) an (.) so ((puffs air out))</p> <p>M: It sounds like you kind of disagreed with what was going on?</p> <p>H: Yeah and they had to sign off on her being ready to go back to school</p> <p>M: {ok</p> <p>H: {we said we wanted to try an get her in somewhere as soon as possible</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>H: {but (1) somewhere that was (2) either on a reduced timetable or something (.) so that she was still accessing the school</p>	<p>Voice of partnership and support, shared understanding</p> <p>Difficulty of getting a school after exclusion</p> <p>Institutional discourse</p> <p>Voice of anger/dismay</p> <p>Voice of sadness</p> <p>Power with the LA</p> <p>Voice of sadness</p> <p>Voice of distress and blame</p> <p>No sense of partnership between H and authorities here. Power with them as she is ignored</p> <p>Voice of powerless</p> <p>Voice of ignored</p> <p>School discourse</p>
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M: {Mm

H: {to try and overcome the difficulties and not being sort of isolated and made to feel guilty for (.) being excluded for having a meltdown (1) and it's kinda basically what happened. She felt (2) an enormous amount of guilt and the longer she was kept out of school because they were saying she wasn't allowed to go back (.) the worse she felt. So, she didn't want to go back in the end and it's (.) then they stuck her in a school she didn't want to be at either (.) ((Sigh)). So yeah that didn't go well either (.) so it's right

M: So, you say they stuck her in the school so you had no choice about where she went?

H: No, no not exactly, they made us think we did

M: {Ok

H: Erm cos (inaudible) we wanted we moved to a new area so there was a school right round the corner from us, so we thought that would have been fantastic location wise. Erm (1) and she said, well the woman, it was our caseworker, said well unfortunately, we've just put someone back into school in the same year and we don't particularly want two sort of children who've experienced similar sort of things or of a similar sort of personality being in the same year because they might just sort of (2) cause an explosion off each other (.) Right ok I understand that (1) so, then they were looking at the schools (2) and they suggested (.) X school which is a catholic school. (2) E has very strong (.) opinions on religion

M: {Ok

H: {She is not religious at all. She doesn't want to know anything to do with religion, which is fine. (.) Erm so that was already a bit of a (1) she's not gonna want to go

Autism discourse

E experience isolation, emotional distress and sense of guilt and blame

This is H describing E here she feels guilt and despair – Is this also how H feels/felt?

E enrolled in new school.

H again downplaying the difficulty?

Use of word stuck – struck me at the time and led me to reflecting that H felt she had no choice.

Voice of tricked deceived. Really there is no dialogue, partnership or choice

Voice of hope

Institutional discourse

Power with the LA here
Fair access protocol – not so fair - not about child need but about systems.

Voice of acceptance and fairness

Lack of agency, or control or choice

Religion

there, she's going to stick her heels in and not want to go there and (.) so I said (.) I don't think that's a good idea, I don't really want you to try and send her there and they said well unfortunately religion isn't a good enough reason for you not to want to send her there.

(1) I kind of went pardon (2) how is that not a good enough reason (.) that It's (.) basically completely against her own beliefs (.) that they would want to send her there anyway. And anyway (.) erm and so that was when we kinda realised that actually we don't really get a say in this, they've chosen a school and (1) because we haven't given a good enough reason that (1) they have to send try and send her there anyway. Erm the bonus being on that point was they went to meet with the headteacher and the headteacher basically said they don't think that it's right for her because er well several reasons one being that (1) there is a waiting list to get into that school (.) and the waiting list is full of catholic families, she would pretty much be the only non-Catholic child at that school (1) and (.) she would (.) not really fit in and would be made to feel even more of an ((tails off)) anyway. So, the headteacher, (.) she basically said I don't think it's right and I was so so pleased to hear that.

M: Ok

H: So, they suggested another school, it's just a mainstream school and the school itself is lovely but she didn't want to be there (.) and then she didn't get on with the teacher ((sigh)) either, really didn't get on with the teacher ((shaking head)) ((laughter))

M: So what sense did you kind of make at that point about her not wanting to be there, what

Voice of ignored and done to
H not being heard, no dialogue,
no partnership, no agency for H

Voice of disbelief

Religion and beliefs

Voice of silenced. Isolation.
Despair, let down. Voice of
powerless.

School discourse

The headteacher has power to
refuse not H. Faceless authority.
Socio-cultural discourse

Religion and belief

Voice of relief

Power with They

E gets school place for Year 6
but been problematic.

Humour here again to hide the
difficulty?

<p>H: { honestly don't know, I still don't know one hundred per cent</p> <p>M: {Ok</p> <p>H: {her mental health is is so (1) fragile</p> <p>M: {yeah</p> <p>H: {she's got no self-esteem (.) but she doesn't trust teachers (1)</p> <p>M: {ok</p> <p>H: {from what happened with the exclusion and (.) she she does say quite often they (.) punished me for being autistic (.) basically</p> <p>M: {ok</p> <p>H: {I had a meltdown and they were they caused that meltdown and then they exclude me for it and (.) so she didn't trust anyone</p> <p>M: {Mhm</p> <p>H: {erm especially not teachers, anyone in that sort of role, anything to do with School. She just didn't trust them, so she didn't want to be stuck somewhere. And then to be stuck with the teacher who doesn't really (.) get it (.) was even worse (.) So obviously the school placement hasn't really worked out very well, she didn't go for the last six weeks</p> <p>M: {ok</p> <p>H; {Erm (3) she just couldn't cope with it anymore so she (2) she did really well to go as much as she did (2) but it just didn't work and now we're (.) heading to secondary school and she's (3) really just (2) dreading it (3). It's (2) it's very nerve racking, especially for me. ((laughs))</p> <p>M: I can imagine, I can imagine. So, you say that the teacher</p> <p>H: {Mm</p>	<p>Voice of lost, unsure, disbelief</p> <p>Medical discourse Voice of concern</p> <p>Socio-cultural discourse E been damaged by exclusion. Voice of distress</p> <p>E voice of betrayal and anger</p> <p>Autism discourse</p> <p>Voice of blame</p> <p>Repetition of stuck with – done to without care and thought Lack of understanding and conflict</p> <p>Voice of despair and loss</p> <p>Voice of sadness</p> <p>Recognition of the difficulty</p> <p>Institution</p> <p>Fearful for the future Throwaway line and laugh again mask distress</p>
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M: {she didn't get it. So, can you tell me about that, can you expand on that for me?

H: Yes. The teacher, the Year 6 teacher, that she had (1) she seemed very lovely, she did come across as very lovely (.). erm and she said her brother's autistic (.). and she's taught many autistic children over the years so she knows about autism and what not but (3) E's demand avoidance (1) is (3) difficult to manage (.). and when you have a teacher who's saying you must do this you must do this you must do this, the more she says it the more E's going you've got no hope, absolutely no hope (1). And (2) it was (2) er (2) they have a thing in the morning when doing the register of saying good morning to each other to the children individually and the expectation is that they say good morning back and that's fine and that's polite (1) but E in certain (.). situations she she can't speak

M: {mm

H: {she she physically can't get the words out. So, we've seen this, whether it's with people that we know and she's just feeling a little bit nervous or if there's a big room of people, she will just kind of walk in and kind of go ((makes noise to indicate clamming up)) and clam up (2) and so the teacher's saying good morning E (1) and E's not saying anything. There's a class full of new people (.). and she's very out of her depth, all of these people know each other already and so she doesn't say it.

So, the the teacher is saying look you must say good morning E when I say good morning to you and she's kind of like god right now I've done something wrong (.).

M: {ok

Voice of confusion

Autism and Medical discourse

Voice of fairness

Year 6 problematic for E

H knowledge of her daughter set up here against professional knowledge

School discourse

Voice of sadness – E not seen as child in distress

Socio-cultural discourse

Rules of society and profession supersede an understanding of difficulties that trouble E

H: {but this kept going on and on and on and on (.) and the teacher kept saying that she was rude for not saying good morning (1) and the more obviously they made a big deal out of it the worse it got, the more anxious she was (.) cos she's got severe anxiety as well and it just made it worse and we said in one of the meetings we had together you need to not (.) give her any demands because that's what is working, it's a slow process but it's working and she will come to you in her own time. And (3) just before (.) she stopped going, towards the end, erm, she's had a one to one TA throughout this time as well, She well she'd been swapped from February onwards which she also didn't get on with but we didn't really have a choice in who the TA was because that TA was employed by the school (1) erm so we didn't really (2) have a choice, if that makes sense

M: {Yeah

H: {which is (1) unavoidable but erm (2) they said good morning to her and she didn't say it and so they again told her that she had been very rude and that she would need to learn to to respond to people politely as she, as she yunno she goes through life life and de de de, making her feel absolutely rubbish. So, she got really upset and they ended up calling me erm about an hour after she had been there saying she's really upset, I think she needs to come home, ((intake of breath)) and her TA said to me (.), about the good morning thing again, she said "we didn't force her to say it". You wouldn't have gotten her to say it even if you did try to force her to be fair ((laughter)) Erm she said "but we were just explaining to her how rude it was that she didn't say

Voice of battered/relentless powerful over powerless
Lack of compassion

Voice of disbelief at lack of care and failure to see sense

Medical discourse

Voice important here. E can't say what they insist she must say and H has no voice even though she has words. And the teacher "keeps saying" supported by the TA.

Voice of knowledge ignored

Voice of powerlessness and done to

School discourse

Relentless lack of compassion continues

Socio-cultural discourse

Voice of sadness

Emotional distress

Voice of knowledge of E

Explaining again how rude she is. Lack of compassion continues

<p>it" and I was like you didn't get the point at all. (2) The point is (1) is just to drop it basically because the more you make a big deal out of it, the worse it gets and they just didn't get it (.) and it's like (3) what they should've been doing, just to sort of make it easier was ((intake of breath) teacher says good morning E. E obviously doesn't ((swallow) say anything back. (2) I can see that you are here, we'll move on. And move on</p> <p>M: {Mhm</p> <p>H: {leave it, not na na na na na you're so rude blah blah blah. And because when even when she was little (1) erm she was very (1) shy, well she come across as very shy, and the children on the way to school would say morning E and she wouldn't be able to say hello to them and so (.) I'd sort of say are you saying good morning E and she she wouldn't answer me. So, I'd say good morning, whoever you are, and sort of model it and then move on. I wouldn't make a big deal out of it. I wouldn't make a big fuss. And then eventually, it took a couple of months, but eventually (1) she did it herself (2) and it was like, yunno. I've explained this to the school and the Educational Psychologist we had had agreed that yes these this will work erm, it was like the teacher and the TA they just didn't get it, yunno, they ignored the advice,</p> <p>no,no she's a child she does as she's told. It's like you just don't get (.) it doesn't work like that.</p> <p>M: It sounds It sounds like meetings you had because you say one of the meetings we had</p>	<p>Voices of distress, despair disbelief even anger here</p> <p>Voice of knowledge of E</p> <p>H blame, critical of way they behaved. Distress and anger at way E treated comes through in the non-verbal and linguistic sweeps</p> <p>Personal knowledge and expertise</p> <p>Institutional discourse</p> <p>Seeking partnership – explained to school – voice backed up by EP but still</p> <p>Voice of ignored</p> <p>Difficulties in meetings no joined up communication?</p> <p>Repetition of not getting it. Voice of critic/blame, disbelief that rules work only for professionals</p>
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<p>H: {Oh yeh we had loads. The last one I think there was about fourteen of us (.) in that room, there was me, her stepdad, class teacher, TA, headteacher, erm, SENCO from the new school, cos a lot of transition meetings erm, her new TA from the (.) new school, there was someone from Autism Outreach, someone from Behaviour Support, and someone else (.) I think, the educational psychologist, er the integration pathways (.) lady, (2) er, there were lots of people regular meetings ((Laugh)) So we've had a lot of meetings.</p> <p>M: And what did you feel, how was it, because you talk to me and it sounds to me like you felt like you weren't listened to necessarily but can you, I don't want to kind of feed that information into you, but</p> <p>H: Yeh (.) there (.) It's been very odd, every meeting's been different</p> <p>M:{Ok</p> <p>H: {erm (2) with the headteacher and the teacher (1) erm (1) it was like obviously the headteacher has things that she has to do, and I understand that, and she came across quite yunno I'm sorry there's not much I can do with regards to this but maybe we could try this or ok we'll listen to this but the teacher didn't really say much, but again she didn't really agree with what we were doing</p> <p>M: {ok</p> <p>H: {she was in fact quite clear from the way she (2) I can't even explain it, it was just that sort of (.) air of I don't really agree with what you're saying but (.) I can't</p>	<p>Meetings lots of them</p> <p>Can list all these professionals but no sense of it being collaborative or helpful</p> <p>Institutional discourse</p> <p>My interpretation here based on H talking earlier about advice being ignored. I'm aware I don't want to steer the conversation too much but on reflection H hadn't used the words not listened to.</p> <p>Voice of uncertainty – not knowing what is going to happen – out of depth</p> <p>Voice of understanding and fairness</p> <p>Headteacher seen to be trying to help</p> <p>Voice of appreciation set against teacher who disagrees with what "we" are doing</p> <p>H has an awareness of and understanding of different levels of power at work across systems.</p>
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<p>really do anything because I'm just a teacher and, anyway. Erm (1) the Educational Psychologist was wonderful (1) and (2) the lady from autism outreach, again, was brilliant because (.) and her positive playworker, who she's had (.) pretty much since the beginning of being excluded, she does half an hour sessions a week and helps her with her emotions and and things and they've got really good rapport. Erm</p> <p>M: {That's good</p> <p>H: {they listen</p> <p>M: {Ok</p> <p>H: {and I always felt like this is fantastic, these people are listening to me, and they're agreeing with me. But (.) it kind of felt like that anyone sort of employed by the school (1) or any of the school staff (.) it was like they had their hands tied and they can only do so many things and (1) they kind of sort of say well yes ok we'll try that, but you kind of get the idea think, the impression that (.) they're only saying it to (2) what's the word? (4) not please us but just to kind of placate us, it's just like</p> <p>yes ok we are listening to you but that's not gonna happen. It's that sort of (1) ok</p> <p>M: In terms of like you say they had their hands tied, what what makes you think that's going on?</p> <p>H: They (.) I know they have certain paths they have to follow with regards to things like exclusions, (.) like erm the headteacher (.) from the old school, erm I get on quite well with her actually now which is surprising but ((laughs)) but I have quite a good rapport with her now, and there's certain channels that she has to follow, erm</p>	<p>H is aware of my role – I wonder to what extent she felt she had to say this?</p> <p>Institutional discourse</p> <p>Voice of appreciation</p> <p>Voice of listened to and heard by some agencies but</p> <p>Voice of recognition and fairness</p> <p>Voice of ignored, dismissed they have power to say whether will happen or not. H sounds critical here almost blaming voice get a sense she feels let down and dismissed</p> <p>System</p> <p>Headteacher from first school reappears here</p> <p>Voice of knowledge of system</p>
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certain procedures, certain people that she has to speak to and she has to do things (.) a certain way. Which is (.) right ok I understand that ((inaudible)) and school exclusion is not something that they have to do that they can take lightly. They can't just go oh I'm done with this, you're excluded and then deal with it afterwards. They have to kind of go right (1) am I justified in in this and and this is what is going to happen next and this is blah, blah, blah, blah. (4) Erm and with the teachers they've got other children (.) in a classroom and they can't (.) sort of be seen to (.) be making special (3) adjustments. They can to a certain extent if that child's on the SEN register and been recognised as having a special educational need because they are (2) obliged to make reasonable adjustments (1). Erm, (.) but they won't if they don't have to (.) because they have (.) over twenty other children in the class that they need to try and keep control of and if one's been given special treatment, then someone else kind of goes well hang on a minute (1) why does she get away with doing that and not me. It's like E wears (.) was wearing a different uniform and (1) they were trying to, in the beginning, they were trying to say oh no she really should be wearing a a blue school jumper. Well, right well (1) I'll get rid of the er skeleton hoodie, this one ((indicates jumper H is wearing)) that's got a great big skull on it M: {{{Laughs}} It's a great hoodie I like it

H: {She would not take it off, she would not take it off, I can, I can try and get a plain black one but you won't get her in a royal blue jumper, you've got absolutely no hope (.) and (2) the TA wasn't very ha, you could see it in her face that she wasn't very happy about it. She was quite patronising when she was speaking to

Voice of acceptance and understanding

Dialogue here with headteacher, relationship and rapport. Things aren't black and white H grasps complexities and contradictions. She has knowledge. She is fair and aware of the bigger picture. Suspect this knowledge has come since the exclusion – something she has been forced to start to understand.

Legal/System discourse

I wonder to what extent H is repeating here what she has been told by teachers

School discourse

Problems with uniform

Voice of trying to comply with school systems whilst own knowledge of child appreciates this will be problematic.

Another example here of how TA/Teachers just not getting it.

Voice of spoke down to

me but, well you try living with it ((laughs)). You know we're very limited on the wardrobe. ((laughter)) She won't take that hoodie off anywhere. And she gets people coming up to her saying oh you're all skin and bones you are and she's kind of looking as if to say you what? God (.) someone's talking to me, go away ((Laughter)) But yeah, we managed to get her to wear a black (1) jumper with a hood on (.), an cos she'd always hide in her hood, she needed that hood (.) but the teachers were all like (.) well we don't really want to be er (.) the other children will feel a little bit left out, and I'm like that that's the other children that's your problem it's not mine. ((laughs)). You kind of, you end up getting a bit of a thick skin really. It's like no, oh god (1) I'm done. it's like when she wouldn't go into school, when she wouldn't have her hair brushed, and I'm like right well erm you don't have to have your hair brushed today let's just go to school and it was just (.) picking your battles (.) and, I'm like, I don't care about the other children, I only care about my daughter, and if this (.) having a a different coloured hoodie (.) means that she's in a classroom at least trying to get an education then (.) you can all (2) go away in a not so polite term ((Laughter)). It's er one of them. But yeah, the headteacher she's (2) she's obviously again got certain things to follow like with regards to applying for funding and (2) when Integration Pathway stepped away we needed a new TA for E but she had to apply for (1) funding, special funding for (2) a TA to be able to afford it because we didn't have the EH EHC

M: {Ok

Throwaway humour masking hurt and pain of this

Try living with it plus voice here that says managed to – voice here seems tired experience versus authoritative rules that make life difficult

Lack understanding

Voice of frustration

Voice of isolation. She is judged

Voice of pragmatism – coping strategies.

Voice of advocate. Battles for E here advocates for her.

This is a fierce voice protective of E and implicitly critical of the school

Headteacher needs to apply for funding for TA

H: {at the time. Erm now we do so she gets that funding so we don't have to jump through those extra hoops anymore but she was ((intake of breath)) I've got to apply for this funding and an (1) we don't know how it's going to work and what the timeframe is and then we've got to do interviews for new TAs and it's got to be the right person for E and an (1) that was great and the TA that she had was a lovely person, she was fantastic TA, but she didn't go didn't gel with E. E's got a very difficult personality (2) and someone who is very happy go lucky and come on E let's go and do this and let's do this and da de da de da and E just kind of goes are you real or what?

M: {{{(laughs)}}

H: {She's just like I don't think so. (2) But yeah, the headteacher she was on obviously on such a tight (.) deadline from being accepted for the funding to interviewing and then it only being a temporary position for a few hours a week (2) and I can understand why (.) it would have been difficult for her, but part of me didn't really care because at the end of the day this is my daughter's future

M: {Yeah

H: {so yunno, so it's difficult (2) for them but (1) part of me just really doesn't care. The system is what it is and then you've got all the (.) other families out there that are struggling and they're going through similar things, and they're all fighting to get the right support for their kids and you end up almost fighting each other to get to

Voice of difficulty prior to the EHC with getting funding

Voice seems harmonious with the school here – both however seem to lack knowledge and agency in this system
Institutional/Financial/System discourse

New TA and E not compatible

Voice of understanding and fairness
Institutional/Financial/Socio-cultural discourse

Again, here H recognises all the complex issues but voice here is protective and fierce – she is asserting herself

Voice of advocacy

Voice of blame and anger

Battle to get support even pits families against each other

Voice of warrior

the top to say right we need this now (1) and the teachers are kind of going ((intake of breath)) who do we deal with first? And it's normally the person who is shouting the loudest, the person who's kicking up the most fuss, or the child that's the most challenging that gets to the top because it's right we can get that one settled (.) but then there are families who aren't, who are struggling like mad but their child's not got so many needs in school or the parents aren't really making a big fuss about it cos they're just waiting, (1) they just get shoved back, further and further back and it's so (.) wrong that (1) everyone's sort of (.) having to fight so hard. And even even the teachers in the school are having to fight as well because they're all having funding cuts as well which doesn't help matters. So they're like right we've got less and less money to try and help families and all these families are getting angry with us and we're angry with the government because they keep taking all the money away from all the special needs funding, and it's it's absolutely broken. (.) The whole system is just falling apart (.) an so many people going into home education now because (.) there's just (.) too much stress and the kids mental health's going downhill, the families are breaking apart because the parents don't, yunno (1) they don't know what to do and it's awful and it's been an absolute eye opener, since we've had the exclusions, to how many people are really struggling (1) and going through absolute hell (1) and (.) again part of you kind of sits there and goes ((intake

Voice of Injustice

Funding cuts impacting on school's capacity to support

Voice of anger and blame
Institutional/Financial/Socio-cultural discourse
Voice of sadness

Voice of stress and pressure and its impact
Medical discourse
Socio-cultural discourse

H talks about this in the third person here – too painful to perhaps think of the personal impact?

<p>of breath)) I haven't even got the energy to feel sorry for them because we're going through it ourselves (1) and (.) it's awful, it's absolutely awful (3) ((Laughs))</p> <p>M: It does sound like, because you use the words fighting and an it kind of sounds like it's been a real battle?</p> <p>H: It has. It's been (2) absolute hell (.) an when E was (.) excluded, (2) I'd (.) just had a miscarriage</p> <p>M: {I'm sorry</p> <p>H: {erm (4) in the July we lost my partners mum (2) as well. She we lost her to cancer as well. So obviously he wasn't doing very well himself. I'd known her well over 15 years as well so, yunno. And then we had the miscarriage, E got excluded, (1) then I fell pregnant again ((intake of breath)) and it wa(h)s like woah I wasn't expecting that ((sighs)) Now what do we do? and then we moved house and it was like so on top of everything else that was going on everything</p> <p>M: {everything</p> <p>H: {everything was just like aargh. Er an I think if we weren't in such a stressful situation with all of the other things, then we probably would have gone (1) to a solicitor (.) for disability discrimination</p> <p>M: {Ok</p> <p>H: {and probably stood quite a good chance if we had but I just didn't have the mental space to stand up and an fight. (2) We'd ((intake of breath)) gone to the governors erm (1) they'd said no erm an it was quite disheartening but (1) I wouldn't have wanted to send her back there anyway.</p> <p>M: {ok</p>	<p>Voice of exhaustion and sadness and isolation</p> <p>Displacement laugh here at the end hides the pain?</p> <p>Voice of distress. It's a battle fighting to be heard – been hell</p> <p>Family events compound the difficulties</p> <p>Escalating emotional distress here</p> <p>Voice of despair, confusion, lost, lack of agency</p> <p>I wonder if H feels responsible and guilty that didn't pursue further – I sense she struggles with this</p> <p>Legal discourse</p> <p>Voice of weariness/ emotional break point School discourse</p> <p>Voice of protector</p>
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<p>H: {She would have felt she wouldn't have wanted to go back cos she, yunno, she (.) felt awful, she felt guilty, she felt (.)embarrassed and (2) she was scared, not scared</p> <p>of all the teachers, but, yunno, she didn't know how to act with all the teachers. She wouldn't go back in the playground after that either, so collecting my son wasn't fun</p> <p>M: Of course, yes because he's at the same school</p> <p>H: He's still there now and (2) I think (2) ugh, as awful as it sounds, I think it's been an eye-opening experience for the headteacher. I do get on quite well with her (.)</p> <p>now. Erm I didn't fall out with her then either, to be fair, but it was obviously a little bit tense. Erm but that was her first ever school exclusion, she'd been quite new to</p> <p>(.) being the headteacher at the school as well. Erm (1) I think it was since then, she's kind of gone right ok well this happened then this happened, what happened with E and trying not to make the same mistakes again or ((intake of breath)) what not</p> <p>M: Ok. Do you do you see that that's the way she views it, Is that</p> <p>H: {I don't think she'd ever admit it but yeah. I think that she knows that mistakes were made and more could have been done. Erm (2) it's so some of the other teachers who I'm (1) rather close to actually, erm being H's teachers, erm (2) one of them has actually, (1) very quietly, and an very sort of on the hush hush because</p>	<p>E feeling judged and isolated</p> <p>Voice of judged</p> <p>The relationship with first headteacher</p> <p>Voice of fairness and understanding. Partnership/dialogue</p> <p>Voice of fairness</p> <p>Teacher supporting H – disagrees with the exclusion</p>
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doesn't want to lose her job, said that she did not agree with the way that it happened. She didn't agree that E was excluded and they could have handled everything so much so much (.) better.

M: Mhm

H: Erm (.) and It's quite reassuring (1) from it for it to come from a teacher (.) to kinda go (1) for them to say no this wasn't handled right. And (2) it was it was, I don't know, like I say, it was reassuring really

M: {Ok

H: {to think that, yunno, this isn't in my head, this isn't me thinking they could've done more. This is someone who works there saying, we could've done more and

the teacher that (1) she'd (.) her teacher from the start of that year, had only just joined the school and she had some (.) she'd been brilliant in (.) the transition meeting before the holidays and she'd said right. She sat there with a notepad and she took so many notes, what does she like, what works, what doesn't she like, what can we do to help her calm down and she was amazing and she's, she was absolutely gutted that she didn't get a chance to really sort of (.) help and I was like I love you, you're a great teacher. ((sigh))

((laughs)) But she has been fantastic for me son so, so he's had both of these two teachers who are amazing

M: {Yeah

H: {Erm, so we've had some good come out of it.

M: So you've said a couple of times now I think that the relationship with the headteacher (.) you actually get on well with her now

H: {Yes

M: {what's different, what's changed, what's good (.) that wasn't?

Voice of supported

Voice of understood

Voice of blame

Feels support and compassion and relief

I hear H's isolation here as though she has somehow gone mad with it and maybe the relief that others feel the same way

School system discourse

Voice of appreciation and understanding

I wonder if H was gutted? And that is what is being said here. She was hopeful that E would be understood and sad that this didn't work out this way. The laugh here maybe again hiding the pain

<p>H: ((breathes out)) I think it was very (2) when E was there again, it's it's this feeling that, (1) it might all just be in my head to be fair, but</p> <p>M: {{{laughs}}</p> <p>H: {there's only so much that a headteacher can do (1) in yunno that they're allowed to do</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>H: {and sometimes you almost think (2) they want to kinda go oh sod the system I want to do this to help</p> <p>M: {Mm</p> <p>H: {but they can't. So they have to remain very professional with you but then ((breathes in)) we went through the exclusion which again was quite tense and then the governors meeting was, I think even she was anxious in that one because yunno but and we'd said to her afterwards says look it's nothing against you personally</p> <p>M: {Mhm</p> <p>H: {I need (.) to take this to the governors because (.) for E I need to make sure it's the right thing and (.) we could have fought harder but I had (.) anxiety problems as well which didn't help so I left my other half to do all the talking</p> <p>M: {Mhm</p> <p>H: {and he's fantastic at these things but I'm like no, no, no, no, no, could've done more. But (2) after that, after E sort of (.) was, the initial sort of (2) ((inaudible)) with it all being so full on, I'd sort of go in and they'd ask how she was, they'd always asked me how she was doing</p> <p>M: {Ok</p>	<p>In my head repeated again here as though being driven insane by it all</p> <p>Voice of fairness. Voice of knowledge of system</p> <p>School discourse</p> <p>Voice of relationship building</p> <p>Voice of disappointment/blame of self/distress</p> <p>Medical discourse</p> <p>Partner presented as supportive in face of difficulties H faces – he is left in control?</p> <p>Voice of blame</p> <p>Relationship with school and head after exclusion</p>
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<p>H: {Erm, I wasn't sure whether it was out of guilt or or whether it was actually something nice, I've no idea, paranoid all the time now. Erm (1) and I'd be quite happy to tell her when she'd had a bad day or when something wasn't going right because I kinda of (1) part of me wanted her to (.) know that this is because she's been excluded</p> <p>M: {Yeah</p> <p>H: {because you made that decision to exclude her things are now going really rubbish</p> <p>M: {Mhm</p> <p>H: {and that's partly your fault (1) and I wanted her to know it all</p> <p>M: {Yeah</p> <p>H: {but then (2) the more I kept doing this, it's like well, I'll tell her things are going really well then and she'd actually be really pleased. Erm, I'd go to her with a question about (1) something, anything, could've been anything to do with schools or (2) how something works and how (.) when behaviour support comes in or, or (.) how much Autism Outreach can actually get involved with school, anything random like that, and she'd give me as much information as possible. And now (2) it was In the last couple of months I think, I'd asked her for (2) if she knew anyone, or any sort of place that we could access sort of occupational therapy</p> <p>M: {Mhm</p> <p>H: {erm to try and (1) see if there's anything they could help us with and she actually sort of sent me a message saying look this place, erm, someone I know has used them before and they're really good and an so actually she's been quite helpful now. So, it's all kind of turned</p>	<p>H struggling to make sense of things. Madness again</p> <p>Voice of blame of headteacher</p> <p>H relationship with headteacher conflicted</p> <p>Voice of supported – knowledge, dialogue with school and sharing</p> <p>Institutional discourse</p> <p>Medical discourse</p> <p>Better relationship with the headteacher is better for her son</p> <p>Voice of supported</p>
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<p>from a little bit of a me kind of going you need to (.) feel guilty for all of this M: {Mhm H: {and ra ra (1) to a bit of a nicer rela(h)tionship so it's which is great for my son M: {Yeah H: {because obviously he still goes there, he's got another two years there, so it's nice that we can ((intake of breath)) get along (2) ((laughter)) M: Well it's H: {it was a bit worrying to begin with at first. It was like oh god I've got to go into this playground and everyone's going to know and an, yunno. I think that's partly why E didn't want to go back into the playground because god everyone is gonna look at me, I'm the kid that got excluded. Half the kids didn't even know about it, M: {No H: {until (1) H. H, obviously tells his friends and an. Even the kids in her class they didn't, they just thought she'd left, and (1) so they'd come up and say where's E? I've not seen E, what's E doing now? And I'd kinda go she got excluded and they'd go ((intake of breath)) REALLY! What did she do? (1) Erm she had a meltdown (.) and they're like oh (.) ok (.) fair enough ((laughs)) ((phone drops on floor)) ((inaudible)) M: So, did you feel that (1) kind of sense of stigma then as well? It's like you were saying about going H: {Mm (2) yes very much so. Erm there's been several times where E's obviously been kicking and screaming in in in the past and trying to escape from school, or going into school or she'd come out of school and something had, she'd had a really bad day and as soon</p>	<p>Voice of appreciation</p> <p>Voice of relief</p> <p>Voice of anxiety</p> <p>Voice of judged and isolation</p> <p>Autism discourse</p> <p>H had started to talk about everyone knowing after the exclusion – it sounded like she felt a sense of stigma to me</p> <p>H describes some of the difficulties</p>
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<p>as she walked out of that door she'd just go poow and she'd be angry and her fists were clenching and she'd be (.) scowling and growling and shouting and and H would have to kinda go and sit somewhere to the side and getting really upset because he's like oh god my sister's having a fit again. Erm and an me having to try (.) and calm her down enough and an so er it's, you kind of ((swallows)) almost forget that people are there (.) in that moment</p> <p>M: {Mhm</p> <p>H: {and then when you walk back into the playground it's like (1) it's like, whether you imagine it or not, people are stood there going oh god did you see that yesterday, did you see this happening, oh well maybe she just needs a bit more discipline, maybe this, and do yunno that sort of thing that (.) you imagine that everyone else is doing and they're (.) probably actually not (.) but everyone is kind of stood in corners whispering, judging and and it's (.) it's not very easy to walk into the playground. Especially when you have to stand and wait (1) for them to finish school and you're just stood there on your own and kind of going oh for god's sake, it just feels like all eyes are on you, yunno you're the parent of that kid that's naughty. And an it was never anything to do with her being naughty but (1) when they don't know they don't know and it's ((sigh)) it's not very nice</p> <p>M: No</p> <p>H: You kind of get to the point where you don't care anymore. You just kind of walk in and go problem?</p> <p>M: {{{(laughs)}}</p> <p>H: {bye, off you go. You end up getting a thick skin with it ((laughs)). It's like oh my days, it's it's awful</p>	<p>Voice of distress and difficulty</p> <p>Voice of isolated – other people there but not supporting</p> <p>This loneliness and isolation feeds into the feeling of going mad narrative Parents witnessing difficulties – judging H. Voice of judged Voice of blamed Socio-cultural discourse</p> <p>Voice of judged and isolated</p> <p>Voice of distress and isolation</p> <p>Voice of judged</p> <p>Voice of not understood</p> <p>Voice of pain and distress delivered with a throwaway line to hide pain also the comment thick skin and laughter Anger maybe not voiced here</p> <p>Voice of distress and anxiety</p>
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<p>that you've just got to really protect yourself cos if you expect</p> <p>all of these negative things coming then then you can (.) deal with it. Whereas if you go in thinking everything's all sunshine and rainbows then someone says something</p> <p>negative you end up a a blubbering mess on the floor.</p> <p>And ugh If you're trying to fight for (1) getting the right support then you've got to scream and shout otherwise</p> <p>they can say no no we're not doing that and you kinda go oh ok then and so well then you feel like your letting your kids down so , no, no, no, no, no, no, no.</p> <p>((laughter)) It's been a learning experience</p> <p>M: {It sounds like it</p> <p>H: {that's for sure</p> <p>M: {It sounds like it</p> <p>H: {Oh it's mad, absolutely mad.</p> <p>M: So, thinking about, obviously you've been through that experience now and part of this research is is hoping (.) to kind of inform policy and practice in the future (.)</p> <p>certainly in terms of the way professionals work. Erm (2) can you tell me what you think needs to change?</p> <p>H: Oh god ((laughs)) scrap the system and start again.</p> <p>No, erm, well it would be lovely if they could do that but it's not gonna happen is it. (2) Phrar, I hate politics</p> <p>but, but government (.) needs to stop (.) cutting (1) the funds and an (.) services and (1) because (2) everything is getting worse, it is, there's more and more children</p> <p>being excluded and (.) then the services just aren't there to either keep them in school or once they've been excluded to (.) help them to get back in school.</p>	<p>Voice of defender and need to protect self</p> <p>Voice of warrior</p> <p>Others are powerful</p> <p>Voice of self-blame and guilt</p> <p>Laughter and throw away line here again.</p> <p>Voice of knowledge and battle</p> <p>Madness everywhere – the situation and how it leaves you feeling</p> <p>H has knowledge of current social and economic climate</p> <p>Critical voice /angry with system – hidden behind the laugh</p> <p>Socio-political discourse</p> <p>Voice of despair – things won't change</p> <p>Voice of despair no services</p> <p>Voice of anger and blame</p>
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<p>Erm an it's rubbish and (1) I do feel sorry for anyone working in it (.) because they're (.) like we want to help, most of the time, they're like we wanna help, not everyone does</p> <p>yunno, but they can't because their hands are tied.</p> <p>Well we can't offer you anymore services so (.) here's six weeks of er some sort of play therapy to help (1) yunno and then (.) the kid's just getting into it, right no sorry you can't do that anymore we need to move on.</p> <p>Right ok. Erm, an even the NHS services, it's like CAMHS is so oversubscribed as well, so the mental health side of things. We've been (.) referred to them before and they've said no. We had them down in X area which was fantastic, surprising but, we had them in X area</p> <p>M: {Mhm</p> <p>H: {that was again that was eight weeks. Erm (1) come up here, (1) referred to CAMHS, they said no. Erm ((intake of breath)) and it wasn't until (.) she reached crisis point and said I want I wish I was dead (.) that they kind of went yeah ok now now we'll see you. Did it really have to get to that (.) to be able to get the support? Did it really have to get to the fact that E was excluded before we got all of these agencies suddenly involved? And they still can't do half the half the things that they need to to help. We're referred to s an s an blablabla, I keep wanting to call it something else, speech and language, they said no and (.) occupational therapy and they said no. And I'm like right ok, so so these things that were being refused are things she actually needs</p> <p>M: {Yeah</p>	<p>Voice of compassion for others</p> <p>Voice of unhelped/unsupported</p> <p>Voice of placated</p> <p>Voice of let down. Lack of agency. On a merry go round. Lack of partnership, lack of compassion</p> <p>NHS/CAMHS Oversubscribed Medical discourse Voice of unsupported</p> <p>Medical discourse Voice of blame and anger</p> <p>Voice of disbelief, despair. Emotional distress and blame H feels let down by a system that has failed her and her daughter Voice of disbelief – even when it's got as bad as it can they still can't help</p> <p>Medical discourse Agencies say no – still on a merry go round</p> <p>Voice of betrayal and blame</p>
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H: {because her communication skills (1) are er er a problem. Her with occupational therapy her coordination, her sensory needs

M: {Yeah

H: {there are so many little things (1) and if you work on the little things (1) then everything is like the saying about the look after the penny an the pounds look after

themselves

M: {yeah

H: {so it's the same with all the other things, you look after all the other little issues and the other ones get easier to deal with erm but there's just no funding there. And (1) teachers are ((breathes in)) so stuck, schools should I say, are so stuck because they're right. Because sometimes they have to (1) put the funding up (.) to apply for certain services to come in

M: {Right

H: {and obviously each child gets allocated a certain amount and then (.) children with SEN they get extra and (1) then after that obviously you have to apply for additional funding. Again, it's slightly confusing ((intake of breath)) that I'm not quite (.) fully aware of it. But (1) if they were only allocated (.) the money (2) with

the services they've got they can't apply for anymore.

They can apply for extra funding but whether they'd get it is a different matter. They have to then prove that

they've used all of the resources that they can (.) but then that's another what twelve weeks (2) in which time everything could escalate and go out the toilet.

It's (.)

Medical discourse

Financial discourse

H has hard won knowledge of wider contextual issues

Institutional discourse

Financial discourse

System is confusing and hard to navigate

Voice of bewildered, out of depth, insecurity and gaps in knowledge

See a lack of agency here and the emotional distress that goes with it

Voice of knowledge

Everything takes too long

Voices of anger, blame, distress and disbelief here

System Mad. System V those that need support

<p>the system's (.) mental and a lot of it's to do with the funding cuts and ((breath in)). I don't know if it would solve anything if they did throw a lot more money because (.) then you've got all these different pathways. (1) Which is another thing that I think is a problem (.) because when we first started out and said right (1) something's not right we need some support here, (1) erm bearing in mind we are crossing Xarea and Xarea borders here</p> <p>M: {yeah</p> <p>H: {because we started in Xarea here. So they said right, first port of call is school nurse, (.) school nurse then referred to (.) CAMHS, CAMHS then referred to paediatrician or (.) went from CAMHS, but we never got seen by paediatrician in Xarea because the wait time's ridiculous.</p> <p>M: {Ok</p> <p>H: {Moved up here. So, (.) given that we'd seen the school nurse and CAMHS already in Xarea, we went to come to Xarea and (.) they referred us straight to the paediatrician who accepted straight away, fabulous, fantastic, this is great, this is a brilliant start, things are going to be so much better ((intake of breath)) So we saw the paediatrician (3) but then we just saw the paediatrician (1) and (3) she didn't have the ADOS assessment (2) because we had enough evidence to er, you know, we'd done enough sort of. One thing I'm good at is doing my research (.) properly and evidencing it and we'd taken reports and (.) I'd taken lists and lists and lists and lists of all these different traits that things that (2) on their own might not be a problem</p> <p>M: {Mhm</p>	<p>Socio-cultural discourse</p> <p>Voice of confusion Lack of joined up thinking and support evident here onwards</p> <p>Seeking help -</p> <p>Pushed and pulled by a system</p> <p>Medical discourse</p> <p>Voice of let-down/ unsupported</p> <p>Voice of anger</p> <p>Thinks the system is going to work here when moves area – hope does not last long</p> <p>Voice of let down</p> <p>Voice of knowledge</p>
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<p>H: {Erm that, yunno, a lot of people (1) can (.) or can't experience blah, blah, blah, blah, blah ((intake of breath)). But put together with all of the others then you could get quite a good picture.</p> <p>M: {Mhm</p> <p>H: {Erm, so because of this evidence, (.) took that in, but we saw her (2) three times before we got any sort of, yunno, well what's going on with this (.) diagnosis? (1)</p> <p>Erm (2) and then we just weren't hearing anything back from the paediatrician. So I rang clinical psychology because she said it needed to go to a panel of and it needed to go to clinical psychology. Right fabulous, and me thinking she should probably be assessed by clinical psychology because so far we've only seen (.) paediatrician</p> <p>M: {Mhm</p> <p>H: {{{(Intake of breath)}} and she wasn't very engaging, E wasn't (.) engaging in the (1) she was being silly, she was masking (.) quite a lot,</p> <p>M: {ok</p> <p>H: {she was sitting spinning around on a spinny chair. Erm but (2) Clinical Psychologist said er no we've discharged her. (2) You've not seen her, how can you discharge her? Because the evidence again, we did such a good job with the evidence, (.) that they said yeah she's autistic, here's your diagnosis. (2) Right (.) what happens now? Well you can go to workshops and support groups. (2) Right but she's got all of these other little issues that we really need some support with</p> <p>M: {Ok</p> <p>H: {can you not refer us to all of these places? (1) No no she's autistic, it all falls under the autistic</p>	<p>Is this H dismissing her own knowledge?</p> <p>Voice of confusion, kept in the dark Lack of dialogue and support here</p> <p>Voice of ignored and lack of agency. Others doing the telling but seemingly not following up as H chasing the system here Medical discourse</p> <p>Struggle here?</p> <p>Autism discourse</p> <p>Medical discourse Voice of disbelief</p> <p>Discharged and told here's YOUR diagnosis. Them Vs Us battle, weight of authority.</p> <p>Seeks support</p> <p>Socio-cultural discourse</p> <p>Seeking support</p> <p>Medical discourse</p>
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spectrum. (3) Right, ok, so I think she might have dys, she might be Dyspraxic because she struggles with a lot of, (.) yunno things like that. Well it just falls under autism. So how do I get the support for these little things? Go to workshops. Oh ((intake of breath)) right ok. (2) Now if we would have gone a different route, and not given them so much evidence, (.) then she might have referred us to occupational therapy and speech and language and had an ADOS assessment and they could've found all these little things as we went along and then they could've gone yeah she's she's quite possibly got (1) Sensory Processing Disorder or Dyspraxia or (1) Cognitive Processing Disorder and then we'd get like (.) extra agencies to come in and dun dun dun. Then then they'd say right this is what we do with this and this is what we are doing with this, off you go. Fabulous, that's great. (1) But we don't have that. (2) And no-one wants to see us now (.)

M: {Ok

H: {because and even CAMHS, to a certain extent, they didn't want to know because she's autistic and autism and anxiety go hand in hand. So, her anxiety is probably just her autism. (.) So, (.) yes but now what do we do? (.) Go to workshops and support groups. ((Intake of breath)) Right (2) I can't access these (.) because she's been permanently excluded because of all of these issues so now what do I do? (2) Not a lot, (.) there's nothing, (1) you don't. There is no clear pathway, cos (.) when I speak to other parents who have said about their child's been (.) diagnosed with autism ((swallows)) they've gone oh well (.) school referred us

Voice of dismissed. Not listened to. Has diagnosis – job done as far as other agencies concerned. Rapid question and answer exchange here like a battle. Voice of authority pushing around and unhelpful.

Voice of regret

Voice of desire – what might have been

Medical discourse

Voice of let down and isolation
Despair, anger, blame, sadness

Voice of unheard and ignored

Seeking help

The Q and A in the narrative again here H Vs unsupportive agencies

Voice of desperation

Voice of disbelief, let down, lost

System not clear nor equitable

Voice of confusion

here and then then they referred us here and they referred us there and then this happened and then we got our (.) diagnosis and I was like (.) well how come your journey's been so

completely different? And I know everyone is, everyone on the autistic spectrum is completely

M: {Yeah

H: {different. (1) But how come there is no one set pathway? (2) and (2) at the very beginning it was a case of right you need to go to your school nurse, school nurse says go to your GP, GP says they can't talk to you about it you've got to go back to your school nurse ((intake of breath)). (1) You jump through so many hoops. And oh er in the very beginning it's er go on parenting courses. (2) Right Ok. Ok, that's fine, I'll go on these. ((intake of breath)) So I went on three.

M: Ok

H: I've done all the parenting courses. So, then you go and see another professional who says have you been on this course? Yes, three times. Oh right, ok, ok, right, and

then they kind of look at you as if to say yeah but did you do it properly? ((Intake of breath)) it's like seriously, they just don't give us the credit half the time. They don't

listen to parents. Professionals don't and and they, not always anyway. Some of em do, some of them are fantastic ((laughs)). I've got to say, my educational psychologist (.) is amazing, he is fantastic. Erm (.) which is (1) wonderful when you get the right professional (2) it's great and they listen

M: {Mm

H: {and it's even better. (3) And then they say yeah we'll try this and we'll try this and we'll try this and

Voice of confusion

Lack of dialogue and support.
Knowledge and power with others – who knows what, how they use this knowledge to pull push and dismiss. Battle – hard work, exhausting
Medical discourse

Voice of difficulty

Voice of blamed
Socio-cultural discourse
Voice of resigned and unhelped

Voice of exasperation

Voice of blamed

Voice of anger and asserting own agency and knowledge
Voice of ignored

System/Institution

H may be saying this because she is aware of my role

<p>then they kinda go right well we've done all we can do but and we don't know where to send you anymore.</p> <p>And it's like (.) now what do I do? (1) Now where do I go? (1) And (1) there's just no (1) clear path to follow and I don't know how to make that better. (.) And (1) I don't know what (.) It's like there should be a pyramid (.) of (.) right what sort of problems are you having? (.)</p> <p>Right, (.) Health Visitor, School Nurse, ((intake of breath)) GP, that's how it's meant to be, I understand that, that's great, right. ((swallows)) And then, ok this sounds like it's it's a bit more complicated so (1) then what needs to happen, but they're like, someone will say you need to go here and then they'll say no, no, no, you need to go back to this person and then I go right well we'll go over there and then they'll send you straight back to there where you started. And it's like (2) and no-one communicates. (1) They don't communicate with each other. You would think they would. (1)</p> <p>M: {Mhm</p> <p>H: {So right, this person is flagged up on our system if that child was under Social Services (3) every single little thing would be (3)</p> <p>M: {Mhm</p> <p>H: {written down. (.) Every person who had been involved in that child's life would be written down but half the time they've 've never heard of each other (1). And I'd say I thought you all did speak? and it's like yeah but only if there's a direct link or something.</p> <p>There's some sort of secret code</p> <p>M: {{{(laughs))</p> <p>H: {or something that no-one understands ever, that means that yes sometimes they speak to each other but other times they don't ((sigh)). It's like (1) I don't</p>	<p>Voice of unhelped H almost pleading here. Emotional, lost, Help Me</p> <p>Disbelief, anxiety, helplessness</p> <p>Medical discourse</p> <p>Voice of despair with system and its lack of clarity or sanity</p> <p>Push/pull – lack of agency. System no dialogue, communication or joined up thinking</p> <p>Voice of disbelief</p> <p>Voice of desire. Her voice of sanity?</p> <p>Institution</p> <p>Voice of desire</p> <p>Voice of disbelief</p> <p>Voice of confusion</p> <p>Voice of excluded</p> <p>Voices speak in isolation of one another yet seemingly in unison against H. Lack of power. Battle. Lost in a maze, system working against her</p>
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<p>get it. It's like we're missing a trick somewhere along the line and unless you know the system ((intake of breath)) then you don't know where to go (.) so you end up stuck (3)</p> <p>sitting there going (.) I need some help here. Well, have you have you had a MAT team? What's a MAT team? How do you get one of them? You speak to the MAT team, Oh no it sounds a bit too complicated for us or oh no the MAT teams don't exist anymore (1) well how come I've just spoke to someone from one then? Nothing makes sense. There's nothing that's clear at the minute. I mean the Children's Centres they're all being shut down. (1) Erm they used to be brilliant because they used to know, they used to know who you can go to (1) but they're getting rid of all the children's centres (.) So no-one can go right I'll go to my children's centre because I know someone there can help me or point me in the right direction. You can't go to them anymore because they've all been shut down because of the funding. (1) And it's so frustrating. Erm, yeah (.) so, I don't know what needs to happen (2) but something does.</p> <p>M: If you had a magic wand and we could wave it (.) what would it look like for you and E, you know, in terms of the process, what would have been different?</p> <p>H: ((Intake of breath)) That (1) all of the referrals (1) that we (2) that people had suggested in the beginning, (1) so pretty much everyone I've mentioned so far (.)</p> <p>M: {Mm</p>	<p>Voice of lost, unsupported, helpless Like H is asking for help in a vacuum Voice of desperation Communicating and asking for help and getting none. Question and answer in the narrative again here – isolation</p> <p>Voice of disbelief</p> <p>Voice of lost and anxious Institutional discourse</p> <p>Voice of loss Here was somewhere that used to help, did know – now gone.</p> <p>Voice of blame, critical Financial discourse Voice of lost, no agency or knowledge and despair Sense this is a voice that has no authority but does have personal knowledge through loss and lack of support</p> <p>Firm voice of desire and clear cut</p>
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<p>H: {would have actually gone, and not only would they have been gone, they would have been (2) accepted.</p> <p>(1) Now (.) that in there is a slightly (.) different issue because obviously some (.) people can't work alongside other people like ((intake of breath)) if you are under a paediatrician then sometimes you don't need CAMHS</p> <p>M: {Ok</p> <p>H: {so the paediatrician discharges if you need to go to CAMHS or bler CAMHS say no because, anyway. And so there's certain agencies that can't run along run alongside because they basically do the same thing.</p> <p>M: {Ok</p> <p>H: {Behaviour support and Autism Outreach (1) generally don't work (1) along (.) side each other, so you wouldn't have one from each at the same time.</p> <p>Erm, (.) so yeah that's fine. But (.) to have these options, to have the referrals (.) go through and also to be accepted would be wonderful but again then you're stuck in a system of (.) long waiting lists but yeah ((sigh))</p> <p>M: So there wouldn't be waiting lists?</p> <p>H: That would be wonderful, that would be absolutely fantastic</p> <p>M: {We've got a magic wand</p> <p>H: Yes magic wand, no waiting lists, let's see all of the professionals (2) that would help (2). But ignoring the system itself, I'd want it to make her happy. (2) I want her to find (.) joy in things again, (1) cos she's miserable. I look at photos (1) even from when she was at her most stressed when she was melting down (.) constantly. (1)</p> <p>And there's videos and pictures of her laughing and being silly and pulling funny faces and dancing around</p>	<p>Voice of knowledge</p> <p>Medical discourse</p> <p>Medical discourse</p> <p>Institutions</p> <p>Voice of knowledge</p> <p>Voice of fairness and understanding</p> <p>Voice of despair</p> <p>Socio-cultural discourse</p> <p>Voice of desire</p> <p>The effect of the exclusion on E</p> <p>This was really hard to hear and made me very sad. We see mother set against an inhumane system that has had a devastating effect on E</p>
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<p>(1) and if you take a photo of her now she's sad with her hood up, in her room, under a blanket, not wanting to move. It is (1) horrible. (1) I want her to be able to find (2) happiness, again. So, I don't care whether she actually goes to school or not, well I do because I want her to have an education, but ((intake of breath)) I want (.) her to have an education she enjoys.</p> <p>M: {Yeah</p> <p>H: For her to not be so depressed. I want her to play again because she doesn't play. She's not played for a (.) good couple of years. (2) I'd want her to be able to go to school and (.) to be happy and to moan about the fact that the teacher has given her loads of homework and, and (.) that she's not allowed to go out with her mates because she's got all of this homework to do and, d, d, I've made her stay in and (.) tidy her bedroom. But it's (1) it's not like that. (1) She's since she's been excluded she's (1) become so withdrawn and depressed (.) and it's heart-breaking and I just want her to be happy again. (1) I just want her to enjoy things (1). It's as simple as that really. (1) It's (1) bluh ((laughs)) as a technical term</p> <p>M: It sounds it</p> <p>H: {it's bluh</p> <p>M: {it sounds bluh. (.) It does</p> <p>H: {It's horrible. (2) And it's the exclusion just made things s so much worse than they needed to be (.) and we didn't get the right support (1) and if we would have</p>	<p>Voice of loss and desire</p> <p>Voice of loss and desire</p> <p>Medical discourse</p> <p>Voice of loss and blame</p> <p>Voice of loss and desire School discourse</p> <p>Voice of blame and distress</p> <p>Medical discourse</p> <p>Voice of desire and distress</p> <p>So full of emotion pain and anger can't express it in words and laugh brushes it away</p> <p>Voice of blame and injustice</p> <p>Voice of unhelped unsupported and let down</p>
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<p>got the right support it never would've come to this. But this is where we are now, it's all we can do let's keep pushing forward and shouting louder than everybody else and fighting for that support that It's (3) there somewhere you just have to find it. It's like finding a pot of gold at the end of a rainbow. (2) No that's not a good analogy because that's not real M: {{{(laughs)}}} H: {that's not real, so yunno. A needle in a haystack would be a good one because at least at least you know the needle's in there somewhere. (2) ((breathes out)) M: It's been a tough time. I can see it's been a tough time. (.) I think you're amazing, I think E's amazing and to have you as a mum that's out there there battling for her. (1) H: I'm not getting emotional (1)((laughter)) H: I'm not, no,no,no ((laughter)) M: Is there anything you (.) want to say that you kind of don't feel you've had the opportunity to say, anything else that you can think of that you think might be important? H: ((Phe)) I think I've covered it really, the system sucks, the system is so broken and there are so many kids that are like E that have been failed (.) or been lost in this broken system (.) and (2) it just needs to stop and (2) we need our kids to be happy, they're going to be choosing our nursing homes. ((laughter)) There we go M: Ok so (.) er I'll draw an end to the interview H: {{{(laughs)}}}</p>	<p>Voice of resigned Voice of warrior The battle continues Looking for something not there My emotions hidden here Voice of hope – it's elusive, there somewhere Have a sense that despite this H has no real trust or faith in the system – and why would she? Voice of blame, let down, failed, distressed, lack of agency as it keeps doing it and doesn't stop System Jokes and laughter mask the pain Institution</p>
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M: {Thank you so much.

H: You're welcome.