



University of Sheffield

'I'm not just a doll on a shelf': A qualitative study investigating post-16 students' experiences of having an Education, Health and Care Plan during their education

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Abstract

Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) were introduced into the education system in 2015 following updated guidance from the Children and Families Act (Department for Education (DfE), 2014) and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (DfE & Department of Health and Social Care, 2015).

EHCPs were implemented to support children and young people (CYP) with special educational needs or disabilities in education, creating a plan around the CYP, driven by outcomes and the support they require to progress. The plans were to be person-centred in philosophy, giving the CYP a voice in decisions, while embracing their families' views alongside educational, health and care professionals involved in their life (Frederickson & Cline, 2015).

To date, some research has aimed to investigate professionals, families' and educational systems' implementation of EHCPs (Boesley & Crane, 2018; Sharma, 2021). There is little to date of CYPs' experiences of having an EHCP. This research aims to fill this void by exploring these experiences with CYP who have reached post-16 education and are heading towards adulthood.

Adopting an interpretive phenomenological positionality, I sought to explore CYPs' experiences of having an EHCP, alongside what it was like to hear the information in the plans. Using semi-structured interviews and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis as a research method, the study sought to interpret their experiences, presenting an initial venture into what has happened for these young people, and how professionals can potentially learn from these findings.

Personal and group-level themes were identified, including the role of having a voice during their EHCP journeys, relationships and belonging, feelings around being an 'other', and the role the EHCP serves in feeling understood. Some inaccessible, troubling descriptions were highlighted in plans, alongside a sense EHCPs were creating a pathway to enter adulthood.

Recommendations are made at the conclusion related to findings that have implications for Educational Psychologists, educational staff, special educational needs professionals, CYP and families. A framework based on self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), a theme of the findings, linking to young people's progression towards adulthood is discussed.

Limitations such as the small sample size conclude the thesis. Future research opportunities are then proposed such as attempting to gain a better understanding of how EHCP outcomes are constructed and more participatory research with CYP with EHCPs as an important future avenue to explore.

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'Don't wait to do something'

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis explores the experiences of children and young people (CYP) who have had Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) during their education and have now progressed to post-16 study.

This chapter introduces the reader to the research topic and some of the reasons why I have selected this area of study, including personal interests relating to the topic. I also discuss the important reasons for carrying out this research and the significance of the findings for practitioners working in the educational field.

Education, Health and Care Plans

EHCPs were introduced following legislation brought about in the Children and Families Act (Department for Education (DfE), 2014) and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (CoP), (DfE & Department of Health and Social Care (DoH), 2015). EHCPs were introduced as a replacement for the previous statement of educational needs for CYP across educational settings (Frederickson & Cline, 2015).

In the CoP, it explains their purpose:

The purpose of an EHC plan is to make special educational provision to meet the special educational needs of the child or young person, to secure the best possible outcomes for them across education, health and social care and, as they get older, prepare them for adulthood. (DfE & DoH, 2015, p. 142)

These plans are still recent developments in the educational landscape. The CoP explains that most CYP with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) will be supported in mainstream education without an EHCP. However, an assessment period is initiated for CYP who are believed to require extra provision to progress and succeed in education, and if deemed necessary, an EHCP will be awarded to the CYP. This can lead to the plan providing extra statutory support within their educational settings for CYP, via extra funding, access to further provision, interventions or enhanced specialist support for example. (Frederickson & Cline, 2015). It can also support CYP accessing specialist education outside of their mainstream settings (where EHCPs are required for access), if this is seen as a necessary and beneficial move for the CYP (DfE, 2015).

The CoP outlines the sections an EHCP must have within it, these include detailing a CYPs educational needs, views and further sections discussed in subsequent chapters (appendix 1). However, each Local Authority (LA) in England, where EHCPs are initiated, can design

their own templates and there appear to be some discrepancies around thresholds on how CYP receive EHCPs, often leading to disagreements at various levels of how the SEND systems are being implemented nationwide (Cullen & Lindsay, 2019).

According to the latest official figures from the government, the number of CYP with EHCPs in England has risen every year since they were introduced, and around 473,255 CYP had EHCPs in England in 2022, a total that rose 9.9% from the previous year (DfE, 2022). To illustrate their uptake, when EHCPs were introduced in 2019 – the first year in which the previous statements of SEND were phased out – there were 353,995 CYP with them in England, a figure that has since grown by over 100,000 CYP in under five years. That trend has been consistent in terms of EHCP increases, with the numbers of CYP with EHCPs having risen year on year in all educational key stage groups.

Educational psychologists (EPs) are involved in EHCPs' application in that they have statutory duties to write psychological advice for CYP going through the EHCP assessment period (Buck, 2015). This has been a historic requirement since the Warnock report, a review of SEN support in education, which awarded EPs these statutory assessment duties in 1978 (Capper & Soan, 2022). EPs are regarded as specialised in supporting CYP with SEND, whether that be through highlighting appropriate provisions, working with systems around CYP or carrying out individual interventions, all while applying psychological knowledge to situations (Beaver, 2011).

The plans are named as they are because they bring elements of CYPs' life together in terms of their education, health and care needs, along with the professionals involved in these spheres. They propose to put the CYP at the centre of everything, embracing their views as vital, along with the views of their families, professionals and other service providers, when required, to create a holistic plan for the CYP as they progress through education (Frederickson & Cline, 2015). EHCPs include short- and long-term outcomes, or targets, that the CYP is aiming to achieve to build on their skills and knowledge as they approach adulthood. I will highlight more of the mechanisms set out in legislation regarding EHCPs in the following chapter.

My experiences

In this section, I will explain some of my experiences in order for me to be transparent about my interest in this area.

I am a former college lecturer, and in that capacity, I taught entry-level qualifications to post-16 students. Most of my students had what would be termed SEND, although this was

before EHCPs were introduced. Following my role as a lecturer, I worked in a SEND department in a LA, based in the short breaks team supporting CYP with disabilities into short breaks settings. In 2015, I joined the SEND educational team of the LA; this was at the beginning of the EHCP period and the start of the SEND reforms.

I was asked to join the team because I had worked previously in a team that promoted child-centred practice, and I was comfortable with gaining the views of CYP – having previously done so to create one-page profiles for them – which was at the heart of the SEND reforms. I worked in this team for two years, visiting educational settings to meet with CYP in both mainstream and specialist settings, gathering their views, meeting their families and writing EHCPs.

Reflecting now, I was not as aware at the time as I am currently about EHCPs and their role in education. Subsequently, I have returned to education myself, gaining a place on the EP doctorate course, and EHCPs have been almost omnipresent during my experiences.

This is also an emotive topic for me as my late father was the head of SEND in a local college, and I found his approach to supporting CYP with SEND to be impactful. He was a true advocate for social justice, treating everyone with respect and helping people reach their goals. My interest in how we, and the systems that are in place, support CYP with SEND in education, particularly when they approach and engage in post-16 education, is a result of his influence.

Rationale for study

This thesis explores young people's experiences of having an EHCP during their education, now they have reached post-16 education. I have a personal interest in this as a practitioner working in SEND education specifically, and believe it is an area worthy of investigation due to EHCPs' relatively recent introduction into educational systems, along with the paucity of research currently available. The thesis particularly focuses on YPs' experiences of having an EHCP, aiming to consider the process from the YP's perspective, what it feels like to have one, and what we can learn from the YP to improve our practice around these systems.

Gaona et al. (2019) outline that the introduction of the legislation represents a renewed opportunity for LAs and services to meaningfully engage with CYP leaving secondary education around their experiences of the new processes. To date, this engagement appears to be lacking, especially for this age-group of YP who have had EHCPs as part of their educational experience. It is up to researchers to address this gap in order to investigate whether the collaborative and participatory ethos of the legislation is being

adhered to, for example. The focus of this study is aimed at filling some of this gap, by actively collaborating with and asking YP about their lived experiences of having an EHCP.

Chapter 2: Critical Literature Review

Introduction

This critical literature review focuses on recent reforms to the SEND systems in England and how they have sought to support CYP during their progression through the education system and into adulthood. I focus on the introduction of EHCPs, legislation and agendas that attempt to highlight CYPs educational needs and provide guidance on how to achieve better outcomes for CYP with SEND. EPs' wider remit implemented in legislation – that is, working with CYP up to the age of 25 – is also reviewed.

After discussing the legislation, the review investigates previous research into EHCPs and relevant psychology, particularly concerning CYP with EHCPs who have moved into post-16 education. Currently, there is a relatively small body of literature on the topic as this is a new area for EPs.

The critical literature review recognises a gap in the research and identifies the questions that drive this study. I conclude by listing the research questions this study investigates.

SEND reforms and the 0–25-year-old agenda

One of the biggest developments regarding the role of the EP in recent years in England has been the expansion of their role in supporting and working with CYP up to the age of 25 (Apter et al., 2018). That change was set out in statutory guidance referred to as the 'SEND reforms' regarding CYP with SEND in the CoP (DfE & DoH, 2015), which followed the updated guidance laid out in the Children and Families Act (DfE, 2014).

Authorities were now expected to update their local offer to include support for people with SEND covering an age range of 0–25 (Frederickson & Cline, 2015). EHCPs were introduced as a replacement for the old system, where CYP received statements of SEND. It was the job of the LA to produce these plans for CYP following a period of assessment (Marsh & Howatson, 2020).

Under this new system of assessment of need, the legislation specified that the voice of the CYP must be at the centre of the process. It must include the views of their family alongside information regarding education, health and care support/provision required to help the child be supported and succeed (Frederickson & Cline, 2015). Whether this new approach to multi-agency working and support is happening, as set out in the CoP, is not yet clear, though the topic is beginning to garner more thorough research. Boesley and Crane (2018), in research involving Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs), for example,

suggested that access to health and care professionals was proving challenging for educational settings and that the plans were fundamentally education-led. Although this was a small-scale study, it did note that families and CYP now had a greater say, which was regarded as a positive.

The legislation required services, including EP services, to expand their work, graduated response and statutory responsibilities to include YP leaving secondary education (Apter et al., 2018). This was seen as a significant change in the landscape and scope of EP services and one that provided an opportunity for new ways of working (Keegan & Murphy, 2018).

This new opportunity for EPs and services to be involved in CYPs' post-16 education meant that the introduction of EHCPs brought with it a new way of working. The plans should develop and be updated as CYP progress through their education. Frederickson and Cline (2015) explain it as follows:

Where the child or young person is in Year 9 or above, the plan must include (in sections, F, G, H1 or H2 as appropriate) the provision required by the child or young person to assist in preparation for adulthood and independent living, in relation for example, to finding employment, housing and participation in society. (p. 65)

Accordingly, the plans are updated and provide clear outcomes for CYP as they progress through education (DfE & DoH, 2015). Reflecting on the introduction of EHCPs, I suggest perhaps this change in emphasis brought with it a new perspective. Services working with CYP have been historically focused on the 'now', regarding needs and provision, but through these plans, are instead directed to look to the future, providing CYP with the best chances and skills to progress into adulthood.

It appears this is a necessary development since publications in the past ten years have indicated CYP leaving compulsory education who fit into vulnerable categories, such as YP who have been in care, attended alternative provision or have SEND, are less likely than other CYP to be involved in education, employment or training (DfE, 2018). The term *Not in Education, Employment or Training* (NEET) has become a category LAs use to measure YP in these circumstances. This cohort of CYP are more likely to require additional support, and therefore, have an EHCP when compared to age-related peers (Frederickson & Cline, 2015). We may look critically at statistic-based research such as this, acknowledging that further variables must be recognised including socioeconomic background, access to services, systemic factors and austerity, in general, rather than the inherent 'within-person' narrative that headlines over-simplistic reports.

Studies have investigated varying risk factors relating to NEET, encouraging services and education providers to operate more preventatively rather than reactively (Ballo et al., 2022). This preventative philosophy seems to be incorporated into the ideals of the EHCP, particularly from year nine onwards (Cockerill & Arnold, 2018). The CoP emphasises educational settings and services working with CYP with SEND are to have high expectations of them and provide them with opportunities to progress (Frederickson & Cline, 2015). This includes progression to paid and non-paid employment, apprenticeship opportunities or higher education.

The SEND reforms and the 0–25 agenda have provided EPs and other professionals with opportunities for new ways of working, especially in post-16 educational settings and with YP as they progress into adulthood. It is time to further investigate how these processes are being implemented and whether EHCPs are providing the anticipated outcomes for CYP.

Preparing for adulthood (PfA)

The PfA agenda in the United Kingdom was introduced in 2013 and links to the updated guidance in the Children and Families Act (DfE, 2014). Bason (2018) explains that the PfA tool was “published by DfE to aid the development of EHCPs for children and young people with SEND” (p. 22). Subsequent guidance was introduced regarding pathfinders, along with further information to guide all people involved in the PfA on how it should work in practicality (Macdonald, 2015).

The guidance outlines four key areas that CYP with SEND should be working to develop, with support from educational settings and outside agencies:

1. Higher education or employment
2. Independent living
3. Friends, relationships and community
4. Good health

The guidance explains it has involved CYP in research, concluding these are the aspirations that most fit with their vision of the future.

The PfA agenda aligns with the CoP guidance stating that the process of planning CYPs’ future outcomes should begin during year nine reviews. Documentation for CYP with EHCPs should reflect their aspirations, along with provisions and outcomes needed to achieve these (appendix 1). At all times, the voice and views of the CYP must be central in the planning process, which is now a statutory requirement, as documented in the CoP (Ahad et al.,

2022; Pearlman & Michaels, 2019). However, Fayette and Bond (2018) describe this as a complex task and note the lack of research to date on whether these frameworks are being used effectively and improving outcomes for CYP.

Atkinson et al. (2018) query existing systems such as education, society and employment, suggesting they are not appropriately inclusive for CYP with SEND in a manner that encourages broad choice, the way the PfA suggests is possible. The new system in England regarding CYP with SEND has been criticised for continuing to push an individualistic 'medical' model rather than a 'social' one where societal barriers to participation are highlighted, as well as not being realistic in its ethos, continuing regardless of a lack of access in society for people with SEND (Robinson et al., 2018).

Seven years ago, Ofsted (2016) visited 17 post-16 providers in England and used a survey methodology to collect information about the implementation of the Children and Families Act (DfE, 2014). The survey focused mostly on learners with SEND and their progression and outcomes related to moving toward adulthood. The report, two years into the SEND reforms, was fairly damning of their initial implementation. In the summary section, it made points such as the following:

The provision of specialist, impartial careers guidance was weak in many of the providers visited. (p. 6)

The quality of provision for learners with high needs reviewed during this survey was often not of a high enough standard. (p. 7)

At this early stage of implementation, the requirements of the Children and Families Act 2014 had not been fulfilled in many local areas. (p. 7)

The report was scathing of the implementation of new practices drawn out in legislation and made recommendations around improvements if the SEN reforms was to succeed in hitting SEND learners' PfA targets. The targets included better links with schools around transition work for CYP and creating better opportunities for pupils with potential employers and charitable organisations. This appeared to encompass a wide remit for post-16 providers, advocating for a 'wrap around' provision, where settings bring together multiple people/systems involved in YPs lives to provide an individualised and shared understanding of the YP. Access to appropriate support that considers CYPs' past, present and future goals should be an aim of educational settings to help YP get to where they aspire to be.

If the system was working as intended, especially for CYP with SEND and EHCPs, then outcomes and progression towards adulthood would be documented and a plan put in place to reach those outcomes. The CYP, family and professionals would work in a joined-up

manner to achieve the goals set. However, it appeared the initiatives were off to a troubling start, although it should be noted that the report only inspected a select group of post-16 providers so it may not have been truly representative on a wide scale.

Educational psychology post-16 research

As mentioned, the venture into post-16 work has been a recent development for EPs since the SEND reforms. It provides new research opportunities and much scope for development. Currently, there is little research available, though certain areas have begun to be explored (Apter et al., 2018).

Atkinson et al. (2015) developed a competency framework for EPs and trainee EPs relevant to working with the 16–25 age group. In consultation with 26 EPs classed as ‘experts’ in the field, they defined six key areas in which EPs may develop their knowledge and practice to effectively work with YP and the agencies that support them:

1. Context
2. Legislation
3. Assessment
4. Interventions and outcomes
5. Development
6. Transition

The framework is useful in highlighting differences and areas of specialist knowledge the profession might develop including knowledge of the Mental Capacity Act and assessments around the Act. This covers a person’s right to make decisions for themselves, particularly relevant for CYP as they reach 16 and can legally make decisions independently, providing they are deemed to have the capacity (Davis, 2018). Along with the issue of informed consent relating to EPs’ work with YP generally, specifically as they reach 16, this then often means they are the ones legally consenting to EPs’ involvement (Davis, 2018a). YPs’ post-16 needs including employment pathways, assessment options and transition methods give us an idea of the areas EPs must consider while developing this new branch of practice.

A study by Damali and Damali (2018), asking EPs about their work in the 16–25 cohort, suggested that other areas of specialty the profession has historically developed, such as consultations and person-centred planning techniques, fit well in post-16 work. They proposed further frameworks for working with YP and the agencies/stakeholders around them. Although the frameworks appear robust and offer guidance, there seems a lack of voice from the YP at the heart of them.

Further research has explored beyond EPs, including the views of college staff, social care colleagues and health professionals regarding transitions to post-16 for CYP with SEND and EHCPs (Dunsmuir et al., 2020). This research highlights a mix of optimism and frustration at the processes involved. Enhanced communication between services, clear emphasis on long-term outcomes and keeping the CYPs' views at the centre are seen as positive. However, the bureaucratic nature of the paperwork, lack of options for work experience and some resistance in services to change appear to counter the positives.

If social justice in education is about empowering CYP to have their voice heard (Schulze et al., 2019), participatory research projects offer a chance for these voices to be truly heard. Giles and Rowley (2019) asked a group of post-16 learners to report to EPs, via a video of their focus group discussions, how they would like EPs to help them transition to adulthood and what is most important to them. All researchers in the project had previous involvement with EPs, and the themes generated included YP being heard, creating quality relationships and feeling respected. This type of research enables the profession to hear the voice of YP and allows EPs to critically reflect.

Further research has gathered YPs' views regarding the 16–25 agenda around transitions. Gaona et al. (2019) interviewed young people diagnosed with autism regarding their transition to post-16, finding recurring themes involving independence, ambivalence towards change, relationships and worries about bullying. The study used thematic analysis to highlight themes and advocated for further research into CYPs' educational experiences outside of diagnostic labels, such as autism, to further the literature.

Manning (2018) used interpretative phenomenological analysis, interviewing three YP with EHCPs. When interpreting their experiences before and after the transition to post-16, she highlighted four separate themes: self-determination, supportive relationships, college as enabling and experiencing change. Although a small-scale research project, it allowed YP to share their lived experiences. This type of research could give EPs guidance on how they could engage with CYP transitioning, and work effectively with educational settings, an area that is currently in its infancy and might have much to bring to the profession (Morris & Atkinson, 2018).

A study using a systematic literature review of qualitative research regarding YP who have left care and transitioned to other settings, including post-16, highlighted themes around mental health and how the psychology of transition processes may be neglected, causing potential barriers (Atkinson & Hyde, 2019). This study introduced the term 'instant adulthood' to the literature and suggested that YP in this cohort might benefit more from a process of gradual building up of interdependence rather than fast-paced independence. Here,

transition for YP is supported by services and relationships, with a YP moving towards independence when it is appropriate and they have developed the necessary skills. This links with the PfA, where independent living is one of the outcomes. We might query whether there is leeway for YP who struggle with reaching this goal, for example, due to previous bad experiences, lack of developed independence skills or non-supportive systems.

EP research into post-16 has focused on areas such as adhering to new legislation following the SEND reforms, frameworks for practice, multi-agency working, transitions and linking with the PfA agenda. Little research has so far focused on CYPs' experiences of having SEN and specifically an EHCP during their education to this point.

Psychology and models

Certain psychological theories and models were referenced during this review of post-16 literature. Self-determination theory (SDT) (Ryan & Deci, 2000) was a framework referenced frequently during the review (Atkinson et al., 2018; Cockerill & Arnold, 2018; Hyde & Atkinson, 2019; Manning, 2018). The development of three psychological strands of SDT – competence, relatedness and autonomy – is encouraged for a CYP to feel motivated, move towards better outcomes and achieve some level of independence.

SDT considers environmental/social factors that may hinder a person's progress in achieving these psychological needs and has been used across various areas including sports and education (Hyde & Atkinson, 2019). Manning (2018) suggests that assisting YP to develop skills highlighted in SDT enables them to transition through various stages of their life, particularly as they progress toward adulthood.

Bason (2018) queries whether there is enough focus on the practical skills CYP with SEND may need to develop to progress into adulthood. She references SDT alongside adaptive behaviours such as communication skills, domestic activities and economic activities that are important in developing independence, as has been suggested previously for this age group (Alwell & Cobb, 2009). Specific teaching of, and working towards, outcomes covering these skills through the use of EHCPs might help CYP to develop key independence skills required in adulthood.

These suggestions link well to the developmental psychological model known as positive youth development (PYD). In PYD, the five Cs – competence, confidence, character, connection and caring – are highlighted as key factors that enable adolescents to progress towards positive outcomes (Gestsdóttir & Lerner, 2007). The theory suggests self-regulation is required and recognises the contextual variability in YPs' lives as a big influence on their

development. It appears to sit in the strengths-based, positive psychology paradigms of human development, linking well to some of the more positive messages in the SEND reforms.

It was surprising that during the literature review, there were few references to PYD in the current research regarding post-16 work in England. A reason might be it is difficult to track the effectiveness of strategies and interventions implemented using PYD philosophies (Ciocanel et al., 2017), or that it is more historically associated with United States based research (Leman et al., 2017). However, it could be argued that the same applies to the PfA agenda, especially regarding the pathways outlined in the documentation. Alternatively, perhaps it is simply too early to measure the success of strategies and interventions based on PYD philosophies, in which case, it will be important for future research to investigate if they are producing the outcomes intended.

A key message of the SEND reforms was the need for CYPs' voice to be central to new practices. The CoP states that educational settings should work holistically, endeavouring to elicit practice that provides opportunities for pupils' voices to be heard and used to guide aspirations (Gaona et al., 2020). The guidance appears to suit EP philosophies around person-centred, humanistic principles in the way practitioners work (Beaver, 2011).

An example is a technique referenced in the post-16 literature, termed Providing Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH), which is widely used in EP practice. Its visual and progressive ethos fits well with this philosophy and the PfA/EHCP forward-looking agenda (Wood et al., 2019). Solution-focused techniques such as PATH are widely used and taught during EP training (Beaver, 2011). This appears congruent in terms of addressing problems CYP may be encountering and working jointly with other agencies involved with the CYP to bring about change, progress and positive outcomes.

Supporting an ecosystemic approach seems valuable in highlighting the systemic influences affecting CYPs' lives as they progress toward adulthood (Bronfenbrenner, 1986).

Acknowledging that people's worlds are inevitably affected by the systems they inhabit enables wider thinking around a YP progressing into adulthood and offers a psychological model an EP may use in practice (Beaver, 2011). Furthermore, this approach appears congruent when working with multi-agency teams, families and support services, as is a goal of the EHCP (Selfe et al., 2018).

Additionally, EPs' use of the person-centred planning (PCP) approaches in their work, alongside their knowledge of psychology, including adolescent development, suggests they could play a significant part in supporting CYPs' progression to adulthood. They are also well

placed to investigate how CYP with EHCPs psychologically experience this progression and what might be valuable or important to them.

Research and future research

Bason (2018) asserts that it is important to conduct innovative research focusing on whether EHCPs are making a difference in the lives of CYP concerning their progress to post-16 education and beyond.

Some suggest EHCPs are an artefact of old SEND systems and continue to develop a narrative of difference (Hunter et al., 2020). According to Hunter et al. (2020), statistically, the plans are not achieving the intended targets in terms of helping YP gain employment; they propose that, instead, the plans continue to champion a deficit model that is potentially harmful and inherently flawed. Thomas and Loxley (2022) have similar concerns that EHCPs are a repetition of failed systems of the past, just presented in new ways, serving to limit the inclusion of CYP with SEND in mainstream settings and wider society.

Robinson et al. (2018) are more hopeful of the EHCP ethos but refer to a lack of guidance and resourcing nationally to enable them to be implemented successfully. Those key barriers, alongside calls for better staff training and better integration of the planning process in schools before CYP arrive in post-16, constitute a theme of this systematic literature review.

Research that has been completed has tended to focus on educators', EPs' and other services' responses to the SEND reforms, while there has been little on the views of CYP. In one study that did target CYP, Webster and Blatchford (2019) used a qualitative methodology to investigate the school experiences of year nine students in mainstream education with EHCPs. The case studies were interesting and presented themes around the general pedagogy in supporting CYP with SEND. The researchers suggested that low expectations and reliance on teaching assistants for these CYP go against promoting inclusive practices in education.

Studies that have gained CYP views in post-16 research have often been focused on specific constructs, such as transitions from school to post-16 (Dunsmuir et al., 2020; Manning, 2018; Morris & Atkinson, 2018). Moreover, further examples have focused on YP in certain categories, such as those who have been in care, diagnosed with autism or noted to have social, emotional and mental health needs (Atkinson & Hyde, 2019; Daw, 2020; Gaona et al., 2020).

How CYP with SEND are supported (or not) in regard to their mental health needs during progression to adulthood is an area of research that appears to be developing (Atkinson et al., 2018). While other methods have been wide-ranging, the government departments have largely funded questionnaire-based studies about EHCPs. However, I believe those struggle to highlight real issues or potential narratives as they are overloaded with complex data (DfE, 2017).

The guiding principles of the CoP and the wider SEND reforms, including the PfA legislation, are that CYP must be heard, particularly from year nine onwards regarding their progression towards adulthood (Gaona et al., 2019). Some small-scale research has been conducted regarding CYPs' experiences of having an EHCP (Sales & Vincent, 2018). However, I suggest that the study in question was vague in how it sampled the five CYP interviewed and unclear in its conclusions around CYPs' level of involvement.

This review highlights a lack of evidence from CYP of how they are experiencing the SEND reforms. In a recent wide-ranging systematic literature review of EHCPs, Ahad et al. (2022) suggested a key theme was CYP seemingly not being significantly involved in EHCPs, leading the authors to surmise that "overall the increased involvement of children, young people and their parents in the EHCP process has appeared to have been only partially successful" (p. 15). Researchers have also refuted any claim that CYP who do not communicate verbally cannot contribute fully to EHCPs as innovative ways of making their views known have been developed (Pearlman & Michaels, 2019).

If we are to promote inclusive initiatives in mainstream and wider education, we must work with, hear and involve CYP with SEND in meaningful research (Bailey et al., 2015; Thomas & Loxley, 2022). As has been highlighted in the literature, 'tokenistic' practices to gather CYPs' views during casework or research do not promote meaningful dialogue or true involvement (Lundy, 2018; Boswell et al., 2021). Hart (1992) explained in his ladder of participation model that true participation for CYP means they should be asked, involved and their voices truly heard so that processes effecting their lives are democratic in principle. The CYP themselves are central to their education and should be central to educational practices, for example how EHCPs are being implemented and experienced.

Bason (2018) explains, "ultimately there is no point in changing legislation if these changes do not provide transformations and modifications in the organisational system" (p. 31). By listening to and engaging with the very people at the centre of the SEND reforms, those that have EHCPs, we can aim to gather valuable insights into whether they are working and what professionals, such as EPs, could do better to support CYP and enhance the SEND systems around them. In this respect, by engaging CYP in meaningful research opportunities, asking

them to share their experiences and aiming to understand them, we can more effectively advocate for their rights and empower them to contribute towards better, more meaningful outcomes (Lundy & McEvoy, 2011).

This review has discussed the SEND reforms, both in legislation and how they have been practically implemented (mainly by professionals); post-16 research; EPs' roles in the reforms; and psychology related to CYP with SEND progressing towards adulthood. A gap in the research that serves to be investigated is CYPs' experiences of having an EHCP during their education, what has happened and what it has felt like to have one. Also, whether it has been experienced as enabling in their journey toward adulthood, as the reforms intended. To fill that research gap, seeking to interpret YPs' experiences will be vital in evaluating the reforms.

Research questions

During the literature review, I noted that there is a paucity of research into CYPs' experiences of having an EHCP during their education. I developed the following questions as a result. These questions are relevant to the research topic and were discussed and refined with my research supervisor:

1. *How have mainstream post-16 students with Education, Health and Care Plans experienced education?*
2. *How have these young people experienced their Education, Health and Care Plans during their education?*
3. *What is it like for young people to hear the contents of their Education, Health and Care Plans?*
4. *What can professionals working with young people with Education, Health and Care Plans learn from these experiences?*

Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods

Overview

This chapter will give an overview of the methodological considerations undertaken during the initial stages of this research. It will cover various tenants of methodology, including my ontological and epistemological positionality, which, in turn, led to my selection of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) as the qualitative research approach used during this study.

I will discuss the approaches to research that I rejected, and why, before outlining the principles of IPA, along with the people who historically contributed to its introduction to research. I explain how I considered rigour and quality in my research, two important factors in ensuring studies such as this one are scrutinised and follow guidelines for research philosophy, which are necessary for studies to be both valid and valuable. Following with explanations around how I considered reflection and reflexivity during the research journey.

The chapter goes on to cover the procedural steps I undertook in this research. It discusses areas such as the chosen method of data collection, closely linking with IPA philosophies in research. Furthermore, it highlights safeguarding and ethical considerations in my research, the recruitment steps I took, my pilot study and how I conducted data collection. Finally, it covers how data were analysed and how I followed guidance to aim to produce quality research.

Ontological and epistemological position

Ontology in research refers to the study of existence and the experience of being (Corcoran, 2017). The way we position ourselves – our ontological view – has consequences for how we view reality as a whole. Epistemology, meanwhile, is concerned with how we gather knowledge; it is about what we can know and how can we know it (Rayner, 2011). When the two are combined, the philosophical position a researcher acquires influences how they go about their research (Willig, 2013).

A researcher's ontological perspective is often described as sitting on a continuum between two pillars of research philosophy (Robson, 2002). On one side a positivist or realist paradigm, which is an approach to research that suggests universal laws govern human behaviour. This holds that much like in the physical world, we, as humans, can observe these truths and devise ways to investigate and interrogate them (Kornuta & Germaine, 2019). It generally fits well with quantitative styles of research, which often use measurements and data to investigate their topic and follow a hypothesis-led model, where

people look to apply methods to prove or disprove scientific theories. This stance, also referred to as naïve realism, claims the researcher can objectively research humans and make claims about them through investigation.

On the other side of the continuum sit relativist approaches, which in their most extreme form maintain that it is our individual human consciousness that forms our reality, which is 'unknowable' to all but the individual (Robson, 2002). Experience is also bound to its context, meaning it can only be interpreted by the researcher and cannot be truly objective (Kornuta & Germaine, 2019). This epistemological position fits better with qualitative research methods, which often explore the human experience, or interpret or explain events, although they do not claim to fundamentally answer queries or provide the 'truth' (Willig, 2013).

Clearly, my research suited a qualitative style of investigation as it concerned young people's subjective experiences of EHCPs. Therefore, I ruled out a positivist positionality early on. With the mindset that I was adopting a qualitative method of inquiry, I became interested in Willig (2013) stating that "Broadly speaking, qualitative researchers can aim to create three types of knowledge...realist knowledge, phenomenological knowledge and social constructionist knowledge" (p. 15).

A social constructionist approach is concerned with exploring how knowledge appears to be constructed using tools such as language, and how that contributes to people's construction of reality (Willig, 2013). In that sense, it is not concerned with understanding what could be described as the 'true' experience of participants, but more with how humans play a role in creating categories and discourse via language, subsequently contributing to experience (Schudson & Gelman, 2022). Although this was a potentially interesting avenue for my research, I felt that this way of looking at the world did not fully align with my outlook.

Accordingly, I decided to adopt an interpretive phenomenological approach in respect of my ontological and epistemological positionality for this research. The approach corresponded with my view of reality and knowledge construction which I believe is fundamentally an interpretive undertaking. Interpretive phenomenology is an attempt to gain access to a participant's world, to determine their conscious experience of something, while accepting that is never truly accessible objectively (Willig, 2013). Nonetheless, you, as a researcher, are attempting to see through the participant's eyes, walk in their shoes and interpret what that might be like, while exploring a phenomenon in their presence. Finlay (2008) eloquently describes the paradox of this positionality:

The challenge is for the researcher to simultaneously embody contradictory stances of being "scientifically removed from," "open to" and "aware of" while also interacting with research participants in the midst of their own experiencing. (p. 3)

Phenomenology is philosophically focused on the lived, subjective experience of individuals (Beal, 2017; Robson, 2002). My research concerned CYPs' experiences of having an EHCP, and to consider those, I sought to explore what it was like to be the YP and how they subjectively constructed meaning. My aim was to gain insight into those phenomena through their experiences, and a qualitative study taking an interpretive phenomenological philosophical stance appeared best suited to this form of targeted knowledge production.

Willig (2013) places phenomenological approaches in qualitative study on a continuum sitting between realist and relativist epistemological research positions. She explains that this position seeks to explore people's experiences whilst also reflecting on and discussing the accounts of these people's experiences in a wider social cultural or psychological context, "Interpretive phenomenological research, therefore, seeks to generate knowledge about the quality and texture of experience as well as about its meaning within a particular social and cultural context" (Willig, 2013, p. 17).

This is important because this study explores how YP have experienced their EHCPs within their education alongside what it is like to hear the information in them, while interpreting and reflecting on what that experience might *mean* in the societal and cultural context in which they live. Reflecting, this epistemological positionality fits well with my research. It guided me to explore CYPs' experiences and thereby potentially valuably add to the literature on EHCPs, whilst at the same time enabling me to make recommendations to the profession, about how we can support or better understand CYP with EHCPs by positioning their experiences in a wider cultural context.

Foundations of phenomenology

Edmund Husserl is widely regarded as the first person to have developed phenomenological philosophies in psychology (Smith et al., 2022). His ideas opposed previous positivist thinking by attempting to explore how people consciously experience and interact with the world (Langdrige, 2008). At the beginning of the 20th century, he made the radical claim that intentionality exists, in that humans and objects cannot be separated since they interact to create a unique experience for the subject (Willig, 2013). Husserl believed this warranted a new way of thinking and a new approach to exploring and viewing the human experience, employing reflexivity in our work.

One of Husserl's ideas in pursuit of a phenomenological attitude was bracketing. He proposed the researcher must eliminate their preconceived ideas about the world and concentrate on the subject's conscious experience or interactions with the world without pre-

judgements, so they have 'bracketed off' their previous understandings in essence (Smith et al., 2022). This would lead to a pure exploration of how the subject was consciously experiencing the here and now, in Husserl's view, without value judgments. His was a complex philosophical endeavour, launching a movement in phenomenological psychology to integrate that practice into qualitative research. However, a critique of his view was that it was not possible for a researcher to depart from the very nature of conscious living since we cannot stand outside of our human experiences. Such a notion was supported by the ideological orientation of social constructionism, which suggests that human discourse itself creates things such as categories, rather than those being created through some type of 'natural' occurrence we can objectively sit outside of (Weinberg, 2014).

Martin Heidegger, a former student of Husserl, developed a slightly different version of phenomenology (Quay, 2016). His was a phenomenology moving away from his former teacher's transcendental approach and instead embracing a philosophy of intersubjectivity and hermeneutics, and one that introduced Dasein (a term relating to being in the world) (Smith et al., 2022). Heidegger did not believe that we, as conscious human beings who are immersed in the world, can ever 'bracket off' and study human experience without influence from the world we inhabit (Smith et al., 2022). He posited that it is our conscious experience – the way we relate to or understand the world and others – that creates meaning. Heidegger's intersubjectivity is a concept that accepts we are always attempting to make sense of each other and ourselves in a world we are 'thrown' into; it is a relational, interpretative endeavour.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty developed the phenomenological discourse further during the 20th century. His major contribution was to suggest that humans' physical interaction with the world is the very thing that contributes to our experience, which guides how we then create meaning (Felder & Robbins, 2011). We are a physical body and this affective nature of experience is fundamentally subjective, inaccessible to an outsider, but must be considered when we attempt to interpret others, or in research, analyse data (Smith et al., 2022).

Additionally, Jean-Paul Sartre contributed to phenomenology by adding an existential perspective to the literature that built on the previous philosophers' ideas. His was a view that individuals are constantly 'becoming' through a perpetual process of development, never fully formed or still (Smith et al., 2022). We are constantly experiencing the world in the context of history, social relationships and other phenomena outside of our control. Accordingly, Jones (2001) explains that, according to Sartre, all human behaviour reveals something.

Selecting a methodology

Having selected my epistemological positionality, it was important I selected a method of research embracing phenomenological principles for this study. During my investigation into appropriate methods, I considered three separate qualitative research approaches. I will briefly discuss the two I rejected and then explore my chosen method.

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021) is a well-regarded method in qualitative research based on recognising, organising and theming patterns in data (Willig, 2013). The researcher aims to unpick and discuss interesting themes by closely analysing transcripts from interactions such as interviews or focus groups. It has been used extensively across many areas, including health and social science research. Critics have queried whether thematic analysis veers too much into positivist epistemology, although Braun and Clarke (2014) have debated that proposal. Willig (2013) suggests that it may be more of a tool to use in qualitative research as opposed to a fully formed research method. In my view, it did not fit exactly with my research, where I aimed to explore participants' subjective experiences of having an EHCP. This tool may have uncovered interesting themes but I felt it would not have been compatible with my aims.

Grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) seeks to develop theory through a process grounded in the data gathered (Robson, 2002). The original authors proposed this as a new way of exploring data via a process that was developmental in its ethos. Researchers would interview participants about areas of interest/phenomena, code data and then revisit the topic with the participant to explore the information they had discovered. Willig (2013, p. 79) explains that it is essentially a 'bottom-up' approach to research interested in social processes, centred on developing theories through reflexivity and discovery. In the early 1990s, researchers' views of the theory diverged (Willig, 2013), yet it has nonetheless influenced research, especially with regard to health and social processes (Fassinger, 2005). My hesitancy in selecting this method was that in research, it is often adopted as a tool to categorise data, rather than explore the lived experience of participants (Willig, 2013). The time it takes to complete this type of study was also concerning; going back and forth between participants after coding seemed impractical in a time-bound project such as mine. Therefore, I rejected grounded theory during this stage of consideration.

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA)

IPA was the research method I chose to implement throughout my study (Smith et al., 2022). IPA accepts that it is not achievable to gain a true account of another person's experiences

and thus the researcher is employed as an interpreter (Willig, 2013). Humans are not passive subjects; instead, they are engaged in an ever-developing meaning-making existence (Brocki & Wearden, 2006). IPA explores their experiences and pays specific attention to “what happens when the everyday flow of lived experience takes on a particular significance for people” (Smith et al., 2022, p. 1).

IPA has three separate theoretical underpinnings associated with its application in research (Kacprzak, 2017):

1. Phenomenology
2. Hermeneutics
3. Idiography

Having discussed phenomenology above, I will briefly discuss the remaining underpinnings below.

Hermeneutics

Theologians originally used ‘hermeneutics’ in an attempt to interpret religious texts into everyday social discourse. Described as the “art and science of interpretation” (Robson, 2002, p. 196), it has been welcomed into qualitative research, where there is an unavoidable notion of interpretation. A researcher is fundamentally a vessel for interpreting research and participants’ experiences of phenomena.

Much like phenomenology, key philosophers have contributed to theories around hermeneutics feeding into IPA methods. Friedrich and Schleiermacher (1998) viewed hermeneutics as involving “grammatical and psychological interpretation” (Smith et al., 2022, p. 17). In simple terms, the enterprise is a craft involving the researcher interpreting data but also being aware of the wider cultural context in which those data were gathered. For example, in this research, I interpreted participants’ data (words) while also being cognizant of the context they inhabited.

In the hermeneutic field, Heidegger noted interpretation always involves a form of ‘fore-structure’, whereby the researchers have previous experience that cannot be totally bracketed off during interaction and analysis (Smith et al., 2022). In that sense, we must acknowledge that we cannot cut ourselves off from our history, experiences and biography as researchers. When conducting IPA, we must be aware that our history is present in the research and possibly creates an obstacle to interpretation. Furthermore, Gadamer (1990) contributed to the literature by suggesting that the interpretive, sense-making process when

reading text is influenced by our history and the present moment in combination (Smith et al., 2022). Our history interacts with the moment, creating a need for reflexive practice in research, where we are aware of our own possible bias in the moment of interpretation.

The 'hermeneutic circle' (Friedrich & Schleiermacher, 1998) refers to how we cannot make sense of things without having previous knowledge of them. In that sense, there is a circularity to our interpretations, as Willig (2013) clarifies:

We cannot understand the whole sentence until we have made sense of the parts (i.e. the words) that make up the whole (sentence). However, at the same time, we cannot make sense of the word's specific meaning until we have understood the sentence as a whole. (p. 86)

Hence, why, as researchers, we cannot displace ourselves from the picture. We are a part of the world and our interpretations have a circular quality, which we must recognise when embracing IPA.

Smith (2003) explains that there is a 'double hermeneutic' dynamic in the process of conducting qualitative, IPA research. The researcher is attempting to make sense of the participant's experience, and the participant is concurrently attempting to make sense of the phenomenon themselves. As such, there is an iterative nature to this interaction and subsequent analysis. Importantly, this acknowledges synthesising the dynamics of phenomenology and hermeneutics, a researcher conducting IPA essentially must interpret (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014).

Idiography

The third philosophical strand of IPA is idiography, which refers to the study of the particular (Smith et al., 2022). In IPA, this concerns exploring participants' experiences of something, recognising that those experiences are personal and particular to them. As such, researchers do not generalise the findings to a population of people, as they might with other research methods, but instead accept that there may be convergence and divergence in experiences, without suggesting a person's experience is anything other than their own unique perspective (Miller et al., 2018).

For this study, idiography guided me to understand it was important to analyse each participant's individual experience of being a YP with an EHCP, situating them in their world, before tentatively making wider points about the population, if appropriate (Smith et al., 2022). This underpinning meant I should be open to participants experiencing outwardly

similar events while being aware that they may interpret them in significantly diverse ways (Miller et al., 2018). Its idiographic underpinning means IPA celebrates the 'unique' in a way other methods often do not, which is a key reason why it is used in case study research projects.

Critiques of IPA and epistemological position

Willig (2013) refers to the role language plays in IPA, for instance, when analysing data from methods such as semi-structured interviews (as an example). Language itself precedes experience; it is the apparatus we have access to and that we use to describe, as best we can, something that has happened. Therefore, the representational validity of language is important as we use it to access the participant's experience.

This was imperative to consider in my research as I sought to collect information on YPs' experiences, considering language difficulties might have been present, words were still required to share their experiences (Pearlman & Michaels, 2019). I needed to be aware and accepting of that and mitigate any language difficulties during my research, for instance, by selecting participants who had reached certain academic levels in spoken English during their schooling as a selection strategy.

IPA is an iterative endeavour and relies on a researcher following a clear, transparent step-by-step research process and making assumptions based on thorough analysis. In that sense, the researcher makes the final judgments on what the data tell us about other people's experiences. Therefore, the findings produced by IPA are not of authentic first-order experiences, and it is important that readers are made aware of that. When conducting this study, it was vital that I was also aware of that, as the researcher, and that I was reflexive during all steps of the research. To that end, various tools are available to monitor reflexivity in research (Park & Mortell, 2020). In addition to using those tools, I also sought support from my research supervisor (RS), ensuring my work was rigorous and accountable throughout.

In summary, my overarching epistemological research position, as stated above, can be described as an interpretive phenomenological position, in that I expected YPs' true experiences and consciousness would be unique and inaccessible. I acknowledged that by selecting the IPA methodology, and felt content my chosen method aligned with my ontological position. I was keenly aware of Willig's (2013) proposal that people's interpretations are not 'free-flowing' but are communicated in a way that is inevitably constructed via social interactions between people. She explained that this constitutes a

symbolic interactionist layer and affects the outlook when conducting IPA research. The participant is the ultimate definer, and through interacting with the world/phenomena, they have developed symbolic representations of what these things mean to them (Kotarba, 2014). That was important to consider in this study as I expected my participants would have developed opinions and thoughts on EHCPs and education, for example, via their interactions in the world.

Quality in research

Qualitative research can be challenging, but it can open up avenues of understanding and insight that are illuminating and potentially important (Willig, 2013). Thomas and Magilvy (2011) list some important factors to be aware of when carrying out research in this paradigm:

- Credibility
- Transferability
- Dependability
- Confirmability

By upholding these areas of qualitative rigor and documenting how you have achieved these as a researcher you can claim to have produced a quality piece of research. This is important when offering your research out to the wider community, displaying accountability. Nonetheless, Willig (2013) clarifies that qualitative research is not as bound by reliability or representativeness as the quantitative alternative since it tends to use smaller sample sizes, often concentrating on specific phenomena.

Kacprzak (2017), when outlining how to produce high-quality IPA-specific research papers, sets out four criteria to follow when conducting a study and documenting the process followed, to remain on the path to producing a quality project:

- Sensitivity to context
- Rigour and commitment
- Transparency and coherence
- Impact and importance

Various details can be noted for each criterion, documenting the research journey, and if those are completed well, then Kacprzak (2017) proposes the study will be of high quality. I adopted this approach when conducting the study and provide the details of how my work complied with each criterion in the thesis.

Reflections and reflexivity

To ensure transparency of the processes during this research, I strive to be reflective and reflexive, qualities associated with producing high-quality, transparent qualitative research (Shaw, 2010). In interpretative research, it is accepted that there is no objective truth, rather conscious interpretations experienced by humans, and research around this paradigm benefits from reflexivity (Shaw, 2010). Reflexivity enables the researcher to show transparency and evidence of their experiences, together with how they might have affected the research journey. Willig (2013) explains that. “reflexivity is important in qualitative research because it encourages us to foreground, and reflect upon, the ways in which the person or the researcher is implicated in the research and its findings” (p. 25).

I reflect on how, as a person, I was implicit and a full part of this study. I acknowledge that my presence as a person is important, bringing with it all my history and identity, among other things. I believe it is important for the researcher to acknowledge and be aware of these dynamics, while engaging in reflection and charting their personal feelings associated with research.

I kept a paper research diary during this study, which I updated periodically, usually after significant events or following research supervision. If the thoughts are candid and open, keeping a diary in this way can be helpful in understanding your practice and where it could be developed (Shepherd, 2006). I consider it crucial to provide documentation for these reflections; therefore, I list the diary entries, along with the dates they were written, in the appendices. The notes convey my experiences, thoughts and challenges at different periods of the study, and I hope they add clarity and trustworthiness to this thesis, they are documented in my appendices.

Alongside keeping a reflective paper diary, I also engaged in regular supervision with my RS. Furthermore, informal sessions with fellow professionals who have produced research previously, and cohort colleagues with whom I formed a support group related to our chosen thesis methodology, were valuable throughout the study.

Method

The method used to collect data needed to correspond with my research positionality and with IPA, and, in general, there are preferred research methods corresponding to those (Smith et al., 2022). Since IPA espouses a philosophy that requires exploring people’s personal experiences, in-depth interviews are often applied to allow them to tell their stories,

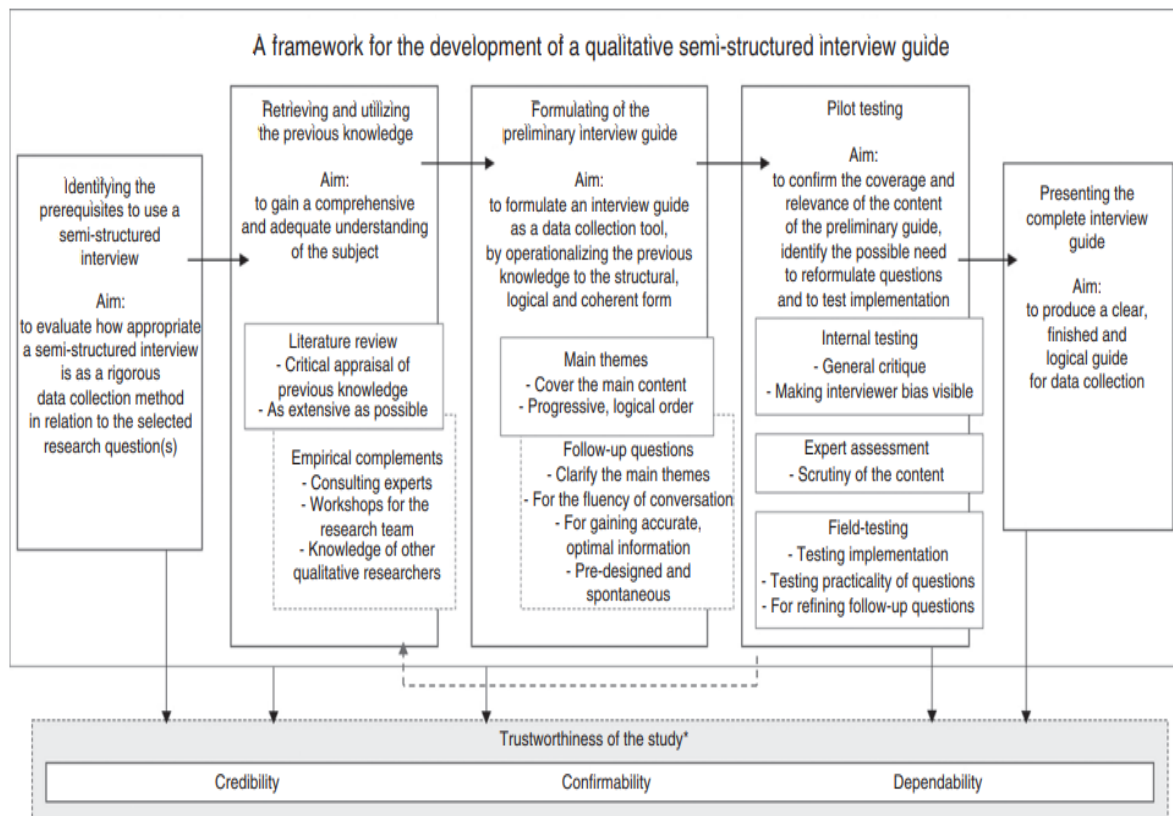
and for the researcher to use interview skills to gain an understanding of the participants' experiences of the phenomenon being investigated.

I chose to use semi-structured interviews as my method of data collection, one synonymous with IPA research (Willig, 2013). I developed questions that were open and encouraged expansive answers that illuminated participants' experiences along my line of inquiry in this study. I aimed to get a sense of what it is like to have an EHCP during your education, what has happened as a result of having an EHCP and how you have experienced the process. Alongside this, I aimed to explore what it is like to hear information from your EHCP. To fulfil such purposes, semi-structured interviews seemed an appropriate method.

It was important I developed my skills in semi-structured interview techniques, which included not only asking questions but also gaining trust and building rapport (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Smith et al. (2022) explain that this type of interview during an IPA study requires the interviewer to allow the participants to be open and expansive when answering, as well as develop prompting skills to apply when areas of potential interest arise. To help with this, a pilot study has been recommended as a useful approach to develop such skills.

Some researchers have suggested best practices when developing semi-structured questions for a qualitative analysis (Kallio et al., 2016). They propose using a structure that provides clarity and evidence of the work behind developing the interview questions, which adds rigour and trustworthiness to studies, and allowing the reader to see evidence of the stages of constructing questions. In that regard, I followed the five-stage process (Figure 1) when developing questions to use with participants in the study. My progress through the five stages is evidenced in the appendices.

Figure 1: A framework for the development of a qualitative semi-structured interview guide



Ethics

This study was approved by the University of Sheffield's Ethics Administration Department following a thorough application outlining the research topic (appendices 2 & 3). I abided by the British Psychological Societies (BPS) Code of Human Research Ethics (2021), which requires strict adherence to good ethical practice when carrying out research. This includes being reflexive during research and upholding four primary ethical principles:

- Respect
- Competence
- Responsibility
- Integrity

It was important and ethically correct that I, as the researcher, was aware of the institutions overseeing my research and their rules and regulations (Baker et al., 2016). Those included the University of Sheffield and the BPS.

Guillemim and Gillam (2007) emphasise the importance of reflexivity in qualitative research for sensing microethical dilemmas that may arise. Accordingly, I aimed to ensure I was

sensitive in this regard, for example, in my interviews with YP, it was important I considered scenarios that could have raised ethical conundrums and how I would respond in those cases (Baker et al., 2016).

It was important that I avoided any psychological harm to my participants. I was aware of my role in providing them with a safe space to talk about their experiences, while considering how best to support them if incidents arose, more of which I will reference below. During the interviews, I aimed to gain continual consent when discussing different topics and halted an interview if I believed the participant was in distress, with distress protocols in place to follow at that point, as is recommended in this type of research (Draucker et al., 2009).

I aimed to carry out the interviews in a setting that was comfortable for the participants and negotiated with them around that once they consented to take part. Being in a comfortable, familiar setting is beneficial when engaging people in exploratory interviews (Smith et al., 2022).

Ideally, I aimed to interview the participants in their place of study (college, for example) at a time that best suited them and that did not affect their learning. This required negotiation between participants, myself and my liaison in the educational setting. Flexibility and adapting to the participants' needs were important to create a scenario that would support us to engage in high-quality semi-structured interviews. A quiet, private room was ideal in this case.

Recruitment process

IPA studies often use small sample sizes due to the in-depth nature of the analysis and the idiographic dynamic of personal exploration (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). The approach adopts the stance of quality over quantity. Participants are homogenous in nature because the phenomena under investigation are something they all share, in this case, having an EHCP.

My aim was to complete this study in one year, the third year of my doctoral study. Given the short timeframe, I set a target of including 4–6 participants. Smith et al. (2022) describe that as a reasonable sample size for this level of study.

Potential participants were required to meet three criteria to take part:

- Be attending a mainstream post-16 setting
- Have an EHCP currently, and preferably have had that for at least four years
- Have the ability to verbally communicate at a good level

The final point was important as data was gathered through interviews, and the quality of communication has been acknowledged as a vital component of good IPA studies (Smith et al., 2022). To address the need for effective communication, I decided to recruit young people taking a level 1 and above qualification in post-16 education. This level of qualification requires a certain level of communication skills sufficient to support research, such as this study, using spoken language as the data collection method. I also discussed the communication requirement with the staff I linked with in post-16 settings, asking them whether potential participants had the necessary level of verbal communication skills.

Once I received ethical approval for the study (appendix 3), I began the recruitment process, I also created a personal recruitment flow chart to guide myself (appendix 4). First, I contacted a college that I had previously made links with, located in my placement authority. I could now discuss the study with them and ask if they would be interested in being involved. My contacts at the college were the SEN Inclusion Manager and the EHCP Coordinator. I provided them with my poster (appendix 5) and information sheet (appendix 6) and held an initial meeting with them to discuss the study and answer any questions. They said they would like the college to take part and explained they would share my poster and information sheet with potential participants to gauge their interest.

The second recruitment channel was via email. I searched for local post-16 settings in my area and found contact details for the SEN departments within those settings. I then sent an email (appendix 7) to four local settings, attaching my poster and information sheet. I received a few replies, and after further email correspondence, one local college was interested in taking part. I followed the same procedure as I did before and met with the Inclusion Manager in the educational setting to discuss the study, and again, they agreed to gauge the interest in participation.

The next part of the recruitment process began when my liaisons from the educational settings contacted me after speaking to potential participants. We set dates for me to visit and meet the YP so I could answer questions and build rapport before interviewing them. I met all potential participants before any interview was carried out. I ensured they had seen my poster and information sheet (taking copies along with me) and answered questions both about what would happen, and my research. I was clear they could pull out of the process at any time and would sign a consent form to take part in the interview. I also made them aware that as part of the consent process, my liaison from their educational setting would be sending their parents/carers an opt-out consent form (appendix 8), which they would return if they did not want the YP to take part.

Finally, I worked with each YP and liaison to arrange an appropriate date and time for an interview. These interviews would be held in a quiet, private area of the educational setting. I did not want to impact their studies and was happy to adapt to their schedule. I made participants aware that the interviews would last 30–60 minutes and would be recorded. I asked my liaison to book a room for us at the date and time agreed.

I was pleased that in both settings, my liaison from the staff had considered who would like to take part in my study, and crucially, YP who met the criteria. Of particular importance was that the YP needed to have a good level of verbal communication and comprehension skills to take part in an interview, and I was happy that the potential participants I had met could indeed go ahead with an interview. I reflect that meeting them beforehand was beneficial to me and to them as they had already spoken to me and would not be entering the interview feeling uncomfortable.

Participant information

Table 1 contains information on the five participants (and pilot participant) who agreed to take part in my research. It includes the pseudonym that each participant picked independently, the participant's gender, age, interview date, a brief description of their current course of study, how long they have had an EHCP, and their SEND.

Table 1: Participant details

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Interview date	Brief Profile
Jimmy (Pilot)	16	Male	14/10/22	Jimmy is a young person who has had his EHCP since he was 11 years old. He is currently attending a mainstream College and is in his first year attending this provision. He has a diagnosis of dyspraxia.
Bambi	21	Female	14/11/22	Bambi has had an EHCP since she was 15 years old. She has attended mainstream College since early in 2022. Bambi has a diagnosis of Friedreich's Ataxia. Bambi is doing level 2 courses incorporating a mix of subjects.
Spencer	22	Female	22/11/22	Spencer has had her EHCP for around 6 years. She is attending mainstream College doing an access to Higher Education course including studying sociology, psychology and law. Spencer has a diagnosis of autism and is partially sighted.
Luna	19	Female	28/11/22	Luna is currently in her third year attending a mainstream College, she has had an EHCP for 6 years. She has a diagnosis of autism and is studying for a level 2 qualification in vocational courses including floristry.
Rock	19	Male	30/11/22	Rock is in his third year at mainstream College enrolled in a level 2 ICT course. He has had an EHCP for 6 years. Rock has a diagnosis of autism and Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).
Felix	16	Male	06/12/22	Felix is currently in his first year at mainstream College. He is studying on a level 1 independent skills course and has had an EHCP for around 6 years. Felix has a diagnosis of autism and other health conditions including cerebral palsy.

Consent

Consent was obtained via various processes during the research project and at various levels. Informed consent during any type of research involving human participants is an ongoing, dynamic process requiring care and the researcher's reflexivity throughout (Klykken, 2021). I made clear to participants that although they may have given consent formally, they were free to withdraw at any point during the process.

To enrol a YP to take part in the research, once they had verbally agreed I developed and sent an opt-out form to parents/carers. If they did not wish for their child to take part they could let me know (appendix 7). Contact details were provided by the educational setting of the YP. It was made clear when obtaining ethical approval that although it was possible participants would be aged 18 and over, and thus could give consent themselves, I would still follow good practice and contact their parents/carers.

During an interview, before I began, I went through the information sheet on the study (appendix 6) with the YP and gained their verbal consent to participate once again. I then asked them to complete a consent form I had developed for the study (appendix 9), in which they ticked various sections and signed, and I explained anything they were not sure about. All these documents were attached during my ethics application and were said to be of good quality. The aim was to make them accessible and easy to understand for YP with SEND, and I believe the documents achieved that goal.

Pilot

Willig (2013) recommends initiating a pilot study in qualitative research to refine the interview questions (if using this method) and to reflect on any potential challenges. As a novice researcher using IPA and semi-structured interviews for the first time, I felt this to be a necessary step. It would give me an idea of whether my interview questions were exploring my topic of interest and how they needed developing. It would also provide an opportunity to experience being an interviewer and the challenges inherent in this role. Additionally, it would give me an opportunity to use the recording equipment. A pilot is recommended in the semi-structured interview framework I was following so it formed a quality assurance step to meet best practice (Kallio et al., 2016).

Pilot participant

I recruited a YP who met all the criteria for my homogenous sample through a colleague in my placement authority, after discussing my study with them. After receiving contact details for the YP's parents via email, I followed the same procedure as with my official participants. I met Jimmy (pseudonym) and his mother to explain my project and provide them with my poster and information sheet. I explained if Jimmy was willing to take part, this would be a pilot study, and I let him know his participation would be appreciated.

I provided Jimmy's parents with the opt-out consent form but they were happy for him to join the study. I asked Jimmy to sign a consent form before participating. I developed an initial interview guide and used this during the interview carried out at a time that was convenient for Jimmy in his family home. I had a copy of Jimmy's EHCP with us during the interview.

Pilot implications

The pilot was an important part of my research journey. It gave me an opportunity to reflect on and problem-solve how to overcome potential challenges ahead. As with all my interviews, I documented an immediate reflection outlining what happened, what it felt like and what I had learned (appendix 10).

One of the most important lessons I learned from the pilot concerned my interaction style. I needed to allow participants to tell their story and experiences and not try to fill silences. To encourage them to tell their story and experiences, my questions needed to be open-ended and supported by prompts/follow-ups to explore answers further. This was fundamental in getting to the heart of participants' experiences and embracing an IPA philosophy of inquiry. When conducting the pilot interview, I could feel myself become nervous at times when the interview was not going as I had anticipated. I needed to improve at directing the participant back towards the topic of interest, without stifling them or making the interview too structured.

The pilot was also valuable in prompting me to reconsider the structure of the interviews. I had a document listing the steps to complete in each section, for example, at the beginning, go through the information sheet again, discuss confidentiality processes and ask about a pseudonym. Following the pilot, I adapted those structures and ensured they made the participant feel comfortable, rather than overwhelmed by administrative tasks. I also considered the language used, which I needed to ensure was accessible and free of jargon, so participants fully understood the study and their role.

Following the pilot study, I finalised my interview schedule, including a distress protocol (appendix 11), and completed my semi-structured interview quality assurance framework (appendix 12). I was aware that my methods could still be adapted throughout the process; however, I felt I had a good foundation to begin with and was confident that this data collection method would accomplish my research aims.

Data collection

Data collection took place between 14th November 2022 and 6th December 2022. The opt-out forms regarding consent had been supplied to parents/carers and no one had replied that they did not want their child to participate.

Interviews were recorded using a dictaphone, backed up with a secondary recording using a laptop. I was supported by my RS when developing the interview schedule and followed guidance from the relevant literature relating to IPA practice (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith et al., 2022; Willig, 2013).

Part of the interview involved going through the participant's EHCP, as highlighted in my interview schedule (appendix 11). Accordingly, my liaison in the educational setting needed to provide a physical copy for the day of the interview. I ensured I sent them a reminder about that requirement before each interview.

I had met all participants in advance and begun developing a rapport with them. When we met again on the day, the first part of my interview provided a further introduction to the research project, followed by a support and process section (appendix 11).

I had agreed with my liaison in the educational setting that if a participant disclosed any safeguarding concerns, I would make them aware before I left the building, and I made the participants aware that was the case during the support section of my introduction. I also handed each participant a sheet of contacts for experts and services in mental health and support for YP (appendix 13).

During my initial meeting with participants, I had explained that a pseudonym would be used to enable anonymity in their interviews. This meant most of them came to the interview with a pseudonym in mind.

The final part of this introduction was the signing of the consent form (appendix 9). I found that going through the sections of the document before each interview worked well, and offering to explain anything they did not understand on the form, ensuring participants understood what was expected.

Semi-structured interviews

The process then moved to the interviews, the data collection that would inform the content of my research. Smith et al. (2022) provided advice on the role of an interviewer, and crucially, as an IPA researcher, how best to approach these interviews. I was positioned as a naive listener, attentive and entering the hermeneutic circle where my participants were attempting to make sense of their experiences. I found this advice to be vital as I progressed through my interviews.

Following the pilot, I wanted to ensure I was following an IPA – and specifically, a phenomenologically principled – line of inquiry. My aim, after all, was to gain a sense of what it is like to be them. To do so, I needed to be inquisitive and follow up on specific areas of phenomenological interest. With that in mind, alongside my interview schedule, I had a list of prompts titled '*going deeper*':

- Why?
- How?
- Can you tell me more about that?
- Tell me what that was like/what were you thinking?
- How did you feel?

These prompts helped me to follow up on answers and thereby delve deeper into a participant's world. They assisted me at points when participants found questions challenging to answer, for example. My experiences here were akin to the *reflection-in-action* and *reflection-on-action* dynamic described in reflective practitioner literature (Schon, 1983). After a few interviews, I felt I was improving at the process of interviewing. Following each interview, I documented an immediate reflection, which collectively displays my journey and thought processes during this section of the study (appendix 14).

Before recording the interviews, I asked participants for some brief biographical details. This helped to build up an understanding of the participants that supported the write-up of data. The information I obtained included their age, gender, educational history and current course of study.

During the interviews, I considered and reflected on how the participants experienced the interview process. Interviews such as these are interactions between two people, in this case, led by a person who did not know the participants before the process, someone who was essentially a stranger, a white male and a person without SEN. Willig (2013) refers to contextual factors and power dynamics that play out in these scenarios, which cannot be helped but must be taken into account.

As part of participant welfare procedures, I checked in with each YP once the recording had concluded to make sure they were okay. After each interview, I also checked in with my liaison in the educational setting to discuss any issues and answer any questions. I sent each participant a thank you letter to let them know how much I appreciated their participation (appendix 15).

Transcription

I recorded each interview using a dictaphone. Interviews were transcribed verbatim using a software package specialising in audio transcripts. After saving the recordings of the interviews on a password-protected university portal, I transferred the recordings into the software, which produced a text document.

The next step was to anonymise the transcripts by initialising all information that might identify participants, such as the names of staff members or their current educational settings, for example. I also replaced the YPs' names with their chosen pseudonyms.

Finally, I listened to each interview while going through each transcript and edited the latter when the audio did not match the document. This was beneficial to my study as it allowed me to re-listen to the interviews, immerse myself in the data and ensure all the transcripts were accurate.

Safeguarding

During this research, I was aware of my responsibilities to safeguard participants against potential harm. Willig (2013), in her summary of all types of research, states that "researchers should protect their participants from any harm or loss, and they should aim to preserve their psychological well-being and dignity at all times" (p. 26). Accordingly, it was important I was aware at all times of my role to prevent potential harm.

Research involving participants from vulnerable populations, such as those with SEND, can be both valuable, as it is a relatively underexplored area of study, and also ethically risky (Tangen, 2013). In that sense, a study of this kind may have beneficial outcomes for CYP who have EHCPs, but as the researcher, I needed to be aware of my role in keeping participants safe.

I considered my study to be low-risk in terms of causing psychological harm to participants. However, I explored YPs' experiences of potentially negative moments in their lives, along

with the descriptions of the participants in their EHCPs. Negative words were potentially used to describe them in these documents and it was important I was aware of this and reflexive at the relevant points during interviews. Striking a balance between exploration and avoidance of harm was a dynamic, in-the-moment scenario I considered when necessary.

When interviewing in educational settings, I ensured I was aware of the safeguarding leads so I could contact them if I felt a safeguarding issue had been discussed or if I believed a participant might need support. I also provided participants with a list of services that offer support, locally and nationally, before beginning the interviews (appendix 13).

As a researcher, I have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, for which I have a certificate that I presented to the educational settings I visited. My RS was the point of contact for anyone with concerns about myself. Contact details for my RS were included on the poster and information sheet provided.

Safeguarding data/anonymity

I ensured all participants' data were protected and there was no way of identifying them through the data collection process. I discussed this with participants before the interviews, making them aware of the ways I would protect their data.

This included asking them to pick a pseudonym that would be used to refer to them in the analysis, to ensure their name was not published. Consent forms were saved on a password-protected Google Drive on the University of Sheffield iCloud, which only I could access. All interview recordings were held on the same password-protected drive, and once transcribed, they were deleted. If participants discussed their family, educational staff or any other person during the interviews, the relevant names were anonymised, along with geographical settings that may have identified them.

Analysis

The process of conducting IPA of the data collected has been described as 'an inspiring activity, although complex and time-consuming' (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014, p. 6). Smith et al. (2022) highlight that literature discussing IPA does not recommend a prescriptive method of analysis; instead, the analysis should be an interpretive, flexible endeavour allowing the researcher to investigate the data creatively.

Smith et al. (2022), in their analysis section, recommend a way in which a researcher could structure their analysis, advocating for an IPA-specific way of working. As a novice researcher, using IPA for the first time, I felt it would be pragmatic to follow those steps as a framework to support my analysis (appendix 16).

I followed these analysis steps for each of my participants, taking time over the process and seeking support from my RS, when required, to assist and advise.

In a recent paper, Nizza et al. (2021) defined four requirements for a high-quality IPA study, which are more specific to IPA than those discussed earlier for qualitative research, in general (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Accordingly, in this study, I completed my analysis with all four in mind:

- Constructing a compelling, unfolding narrative
- Developing a vigorous experiential and/or existential account
- Close analytic reading of participants' words
- Attending to convergence and divergence

For each interview I conducted, I created a table covering the four requirements, providing evidence of how I achieved it through the IPA conducted; those tables are included in the appendices (appendix 29).

Analysis steps

During this section, I reflect on my progress through the stages and provide examples of my journey via documents and pictures. I also attach examples of my work for each stage in the appendices, although not every single document as that would provide an overwhelming amount of information. Instead, selected, varied examples from my five interviews are offered to demonstrate the rigour and transparency of my analysis undertaken.

Stage 1

Reading and Re-Reading

This stage is helpful as it immerses the researcher in the data (Smith et al., 2022), a process that had already begun via the transcription of each interview, wherein I had double-checked the verbatim accounts of participants in each printed transcript, ensuring accuracy.

Each interview transcript ranged between 30 and 47 pages once formatted in a landscape Word document with relevant tables. Reading over the text enabled me to begin thinking about what happened during each interview and how each one felt at the time, as well as relevant aspects of each interview. To support the transparency of my work, I have included the interviews in transcript form (appendix 17).

Stage 2

Exploratory Noting

During this stage, I began to explore the text in more detail. Smith et al. (2022) describe this as being close to a 'free textual analysis' (p. 79). I noted down areas of interest concerning the participants in an initial, exploratory way. During this stage, I was not considering the YPs' experiences in an interpretative sense; instead, I made notes on what was important to participants, the way they described things and the people they referenced, for example.

It is recommended in IPA texts that this stage can be completed in a handwritten fashion, for instance, with the researcher making notes on physical copies of the transcripts. I decided this would be beneficial to me and followed this principle. For each transcript, I introduced a table with three columns. I separated the verbatim transcript between the first two, one for the participant's answers and the other for my questions, and to the right-hand side was an exploratory note section where I recorded areas of interest.

After hand-writing my initial exploratory notes, I then computed those notes, which I found was helpful as it allowed me to double-check and revise them, as well as add or remove notes, using underlining or highlighting for emphasis, in a natural editing process. This stage felt extremely connected to the text and the participants' experiences, yet I also began to see themes as well as I considered the YPs' idiographic accounts.

Stage 3

Constructing Experiential Statements (ES)

During this stage, I began adding my interpretations to the participants' words. It was a stage that began to bring in the 'I' of IPA as I engaged more with the hermeneutic circle (Smith et al., 2022). I sensed a feeling of discomfort almost immediately during this stage of the analysis as I was weaving my ideas into the YPs' words, yet this was an important stage in bringing the IPA philosophy to fruition.

At the time, I toggled between the initial text, my exploratory notes and the ES to check and re-check I was constructing ES with a sound evidence base. I had added a column for the ES on the right-hand side of each transcript Word document.

At first, I had too many ES, meaning there was an excess of examples. I reflect I may have been nervous about 'missing' something. As I progressed I found the process easier and reminded myself I could always amend the ES, by going back to the original text.

During this stage, I began talking to friends and cohort colleagues who were using or had used IPA before. They lent support by checking my ES when they had time, and discussing their experiences. Around this time, I formed an 'IPA support group' with three cohort colleagues to exchange advice and talk through our progress and ideas about the ES stage.

Stage 4

Searching for Connection Across Experiential Statements

I now had a set of ES for each participant. This stage involves considering those in combination and exploring possible connections between the statements for each dataset (Smith et al., 2022). This was a creative process and also challenging at times.

I followed the same process for each participant of entering the ES from their transcript into a new Word document (appendix 18). I ensured each ES was accompanied by the initial of the participant and the relevant page number from their transcript so I could track back to the specific quote the ES originated from. I then laminated the pages of the new Word document and cut out each ES.

I mixed up the ES, as recommended by Smith et al. (2022), since they did not need to be linear in presentation anymore. It is beneficial if you discover a connection between an ES on page 1 and another on page 30, for example, as it adds to the themes that are appearing. Next, I laid out all ES for each participant, using a separate table for each participant and began the process of searching for themes (appendix 19).

This was time-consuming and often overwhelming with such a large number of ES. However, I began to see connections between the ES and clustered them accordingly. The clustering of the connections for each YP was creative and at times I would move ES between clusters.

Connections and themes were beginning to appear. I noted that some ES were quite similar and I physically stacked them on top of each other when this happened. I felt at this point that I was beginning to really 'do' IPA – it felt exciting but challenging.

Stage 5

Naming the Personal Experiential Themes (PETs) and Consolidating and Organising Them in a Table

Each of the ES clusters was given a title to separate them into distinct themes related to the experience of each participant (Smith et al., 2022). They were personal because they related to the interview text, experiential because they were interpreted as experiences and themes because they were no longer isolated and instead formed clear clusters for each YP. I began this process by documenting a physical representation of each PET (appendix 20). Another development was the emergence of sub-themes, which added complexity to the data, as recommended at this stage (Smith et al., 2022).

This stage of the process was challenging and I was aware some themes had a few obvious sub-themes while others did not, this meant some themes had many more ES than others. However, I was not worried because, in this type of research, not everything fits perfectly. This was a creative stage where I was still moving ES around and revising them, I would often go back to my original transcripts to double-check my work.

The next step was to fill out a table of PETs for each participant in a new Word document. I followed the recommendations of Smith et al. (2022) in that the PETs tables had the following:

- Bold, capital letters for a master theme
- Below that, bold letters for the sub-theme
- Below that, the original ES in normal text
- Below that, the original quote from the participant in normal text

This process took time, involving many revisits of the original transcripts to acquire quotes. The positive was I was again checking the quotes relating to the ES, which now related to the PETs. I produced a PETs table for each of my five participants (appendix 21). I felt positive this stage of the process had firmed up the experiences of participants, I could see the evidence themes were arising.

At the time, I also discussed my PETs with my cohort IPA group and gained advice from them about their strategies when developing PETs, which was beneficial.

Stage 6

Continuing the Individual Analysis of Other Cases

I completed stages 1–5 for each of my participants, repeating the same procedure each time. My process was to complete the first three stages for all participants before moving on to stages four and five. I reflect this was because I wanted to repeat the process of adding handwritten notes to the transcripts and sustain my focus on that action, before beginning the more technical aspects of IPA.

I maintained an Excel record for each participant of my IPA progress, and when I had completed a stage, I marked it off (appendix 22).

Stage 7

Working with Personal Experiential Themes to Develop Group Experiential Themes (GETs) Across Cases

At this stage, I had a table of PETs for each participant. Next, I zoomed out once more and looked to discover themes on a group level. Smith et al. (2022) are clear IPA philosophy is not about attempting to present a 'group norm', after all, one of its guiding principles is that it is an inherently idiographic endeavour. The exploration here more concerns convergence and divergence in the PETs; each individual has their own unique phenomenological experience, but patterns may emerge that reflect some convergence.

To locate the GETs, I printed out the PETs and initialled each of them so I knew the participant of origin. I then spread them out and followed the same process as in stage four, wherein I looked for PETs that were related according to themes and began to group them (appendix 23).

Some grouped together well, others were individual to the specific YP, not unusual when analysing individual experiences. I followed the same process for the sub-themes in the PETs to gain more ideas related to possible GETs (appendix 24). I found that GETs were emerging from this activity, and I felt confident in the sorting process.

Next, I began to refine my selections, moving PETs and PET sub-themes back and forth before settling on six distinct GETs. I did not find convergence for every PET, which was to be expected. I produced a table of overarching GETs with group-level sub-themes (appendix 25), as suggested in the literature (Smith et al., 2022).

I then created a GETs table incorporating participants' quotes related to each GET and sub-theme, so I could evidence which participants matched the GET and where it could be found on their transcript. I achieved this by using matching colour coding for the GETs table and each transcript (appendix 26).

This stage was a long but rewarding process. I was keen to adhere to IPA philosophies by staying close to the data – that is, the words the participants had used – and not looking for 'norms', but there was evidence GETs were present and could be accessed. As an example, 'voice' was highlighted as a theme; however, the YP communicated both positive and negative EHCP experiences on the theme. The use of GET sub-themes allowed me to

present 'voice' as one group theme, but then interpret the experiences as positive or negative (sub-themes) for the YP in the study.

Quality frameworks

Finally, I populated a table documenting how the analysis for each participant had met the requirements for producing a high-quality IPA study (Nizza et al., 2021; appendix 27). To support this, table 2 documents how I followed the framework, highlighting processes I undertook overall to create a high-quality IPA study in general, during each stage of my analysis (Kacprzak, 2017):

Table 2: Framework for high quality IPA studies for this research (Kacprzak, 2017)

Criteria	Conceptualisation of research	Conducting research	Working with data	Producing a report and its publication
Sensitivity to context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough critical literature review about EHCPs, SEND and post-16 • Formulated research questions based on gaps in literature with support from university supervisors/feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal profile and information sheet provided for potential participants • Met all participants prior to interviews to build rapport • Participants always aware they did not have to take part, continued ascent protocols throughout • Provide participants with support services and feedback to College link after each interview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used valid IPA literature referenced throughout • Kept pictures of analysis process for appendix • Explanation of analysis throughout • Highlighted metaphors and descriptive language • Adhered to idiography but aimed to create GETs alongside PETs tentatively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided brief pen pictures of participant for reference • Used quotes from all participant and could reference back to transcripts using page numbers • Interpretation of quotes provided in the analysis

Criteria	Conceptualisation of research	Conducting research	Working with data	Producing a report and its publication
Rigour and commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research questions based on the experience of participants so IPA appropriate • Methodology section outlines further reasons for choosing IPA, ruling out other options • Sample explained in the sample section, all had EHCPs and were in post-16 education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted to pilot interview to work on interview skills • Practiced informally with colleagues, doing interviews • Discussed interviews with RS • Recorded interviews using a dictaphone and laptop so I was not potentially distracted by one not working • Asked follow-up questions and prompted when appropriate to gain better insights into experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All themes and discussion points supported by actual quotes referenced in transcripts • Discussed themes in terms of PETs and GETs after thorough analysis, interpreted individual experience in write-ups as well as grander themes that appeared • Highlighted metaphors and idioms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All themes relate to actual quotes recorded in transcripts • Though interpreted all had grounding in the actual data provided • Themes were tracked via pictorial evidence and rigour explained more in sample chapter – steps followed adhering to IPA methods

Criteria	Conceptualisation of research	Conducting research	Working with data	Producing a report and its publication
Transparency and coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample chapter describes how participants were chosen and the processes followed • IPA literature highlighted in study relates to appropriate amount of participants required for a study like this • Literature around semi-structured interviews discussed relates to developing schedules and how to conduct this type of research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conditions, including site of interviews referenced in sample chapter • Reflection boxes in study highlight my thinking around development in the research process • Awareness of variables of participants discussed in literature, pen profiles inserted and idiography of individuals valued in IPA studies • Created positive relationships with adults at participants' settings throughout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection boxes in study highlight my thinking around development in the research process • Sample chapter includes detailed information on the process followed during analysis • Explanation in discussion and conclusions chapter about choices made throughout • Validity evidenced in 'High Quality IPA' appendix related to actual interview/analysis process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasons for participants taking part explained • Limitation discussed in final chapter • Table of participants included with brief pen picture • Structure of thesis follows a simple pattern of beginning/middle/end with interesting conclusions from the study

Criteria	Conceptualisation of research	Conducting research	Working with data	Producing a report and its publication
Impact and importance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear explanation of why topic is important to investigate in introduction and lit review • Lack of CYP experiences of EHCPs in current literature • Personal reasons for interest in the introduction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussed with potential participants why this research is important before taking part • Encouraged them to share their experiences when being interviewed • Thanked them afterward and sent a letter to let them know the value of their contribution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transcripts evidence participants engagement in interviews and thus the impact they can have • Metaphors and idioms highlighted as well as notable experiences interpreted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belief that this research has provided some new avenues and areas of interest to possible explore • Themes are varied and some relate to previous research but some I feel are very new and therefore valuable to bring to the literature • Compared and contrasted with previous literature throughout • The theme of perhaps feeling like an 'other' when having an EHCP in education is a new development of this study I believe

Chapter 4: Findings

Overview

This chapter takes the reader through important themes identified in the analysis of participants' interviews, noting the convergence and divergence of experiences related to the research. The aim is to explore and thus improve our understanding of what it is like to be a CYP with an EHCP during education, and what it is like to hear its contents.

The findings are inherently idiographic in that they are personal to each participant, phenomenological in that they focus on the lived experience, and interpretive because as a researcher, I interpreted YPs' experiences via the double hermeneutic dynamic, in a method that drew out themes. I believe findings are significant in adding to this area of research, and contributing to developments of practice that will improve the experience of education for CYP with EHCPs.

I present my interpretations herein, having documented my analysis procedure in the previous chapter. In stage seven of that procedure, I produced a table of GETs (Table 3) covering six overarching themes, accompanied by sub-themes for each of the six. The table provides example quotes relating to all sub-themes, with the relevant page numbers from each original transcript.

The final column denotes the participants interpreted as sharing the specific sub-theme. During this chapter, I take the reader through each GET and sub-theme, providing quotes and details of my thematic interpretation, together with what they may mean for the participants. I refer to the participants using their pseudonyms: Bambi, Luna, Felix, Spencer and Rock.

Table 3: Table of final GETs and group level sub-themes following analysis of interviews

Group Experiential Themes (GETs)	Group-level sub-themes	Participant example quotes	Participant's convergence/divergence in sub-themes
1. Experience of voice and involvement	1.1 Empowerment experienced from gaining a voice through EHCP	Spencer – “I get to be a participant in it, I'm not just a doll on a shelf and they're all talking about it around a table. I'm, I'm in on it and I'm at the table, I'm, uh, posing my views, I'm asking them questions, they're asking me questions.” p. 29	B, L, F, S, R
	1.2 EHCP meetings and being part of the conversation	Felix – “They've developed me massively, you know, they've helped me, uh, massively they've helped me really good.” p. 27	F, S, R
	1.3 Past negative experiences of not having a voice during education	Rock – “Even the schools I could have gone to would've been different if I just had a say in things.” p. 14	L, F, S, R
2. Feelings around being an 'other'	2.1 Having an EHCP/SEND in education and being compared to peers	Luna – “Whenever I try and explain to them, sometimes it's hard to say sometimes I'd say they do understand, but sometimes I'd say they don't, and I find it kind of really frustrating.” p. 22	B, L, S, R
	2.2 Acceptance of 'otherness'	Felix – “It goes to show that like people with, um, disabilities, people with, um, autism and, you know, they can, they can do what, um, normal people can do.” p. 12	B, F, S
	2.3 Strengthening systems for the future	Spencer – “She would know if someone else was to come in visually impaired, she would know how to, to cope and have those skills to be able to be comfortable.” p. 26	F, S
3. EHCP as a guide to YP	3.1 EHCP enables understanding	Spencer – “It's like a box, like a very big box and I'm in the box and it's like everyone can see like all the information's on the walls and everyone can see it.” p. 29	B, L, F, S
	3.2 Not feeling understood	Bambi – “That's the most important thing because if nobody understands you, then you can't get help.” 17	B, L, R
4. Experiencing support and relationships	4.1 EHCP enables staff/systems to adapt – meeting individuals' needs	Luna – “Well, and kind of without it, I wouldn't have had the help and that I had, um, in primary and secondary and now in college.” p. 25	B, L, F, S, R
	4.2 EHCP is a joint endeavour to create	Felix – “A lot of these people on there, on me plan with, they have like helped me and they've, and they've shaped me to where I am now.” p.26	B, L, F, S

5. Experience around YPs' progression	5.1 EHCP experienced as a path towards adulthood	Luna – <i>“To try and put me on that path and to get me into work.” p. 22</i> Felix – <i>“Important because, you know, especially for someone with, um, a disability, because, because, you know, I think, I think that having that like pathway to go and achieve.” p. 7</i>	B, L, F, S
6. Experience hearing the contents of their EHCP	6.1 Out-of-date and inaccessible language in EHCP	Bambi – <i>“Yes, it sounds like me, it's just put in a more filtered, an adult version.” p. 41</i> Rock – <i>“Yeah, the EHCP needs updating, when was the last time this was updated?” p. 24</i>	B, F, R
	6.2 Lack of awareness of the EHCP	Felix – <i>“Um, I've seen it, a bit, but not that much.” p. 9</i>	B, F, R
	6.3 Pride and positivity	Felix – <i>“I feel as if they're, I've passed them, which is, which is actually in a way, it makes me feel quite proud to know them targets when I were little I've passed them.” p. 28</i>	B, L, F, S

Experience of voice and involvement

The first GET concerns how the YP interviewed experience their involvement in the EHCP process, and wider education, along with how they have felt, or not felt, heard at times.

There were both positive and negative comments relating to this theme during the interviews, which were split into three separate sub-themes under the GET.

Empowerment experienced from gaining a voice through an EHCP

(Bambi, Luna, Felix, Spencer, Rock)

All five participants focused at some point on the importance of having their voice and views heard regarding their EHCPs. The focus on this I interpreted as indicating it is meaningful to them, and often leads to them feeling important and a part of the process. Felix and Spencer took a rounded view of having a voice, why it is important to them as YP with SEND and why it is important for all CYP like them:

“I think opening up, speaking out to people, especially with, um, educational needs is vital.” (Felix)

“So I think that having it is extremely necessary cause it does not just give them a voice, but it advocates for themselves, it gives them confidence, it gives them self-esteem.” (Spencer)

Spencer explained that having a voice makes her feel as though she is active, not placid or 'done to' during the EHCP process:

"I get to be a participant in it, I'm not just a doll on a shelf and they're all talking about it around a table, I'm, I'm in on it and I'm at the table, I'm, uh, posing my views, I'm asking them questions, they're asking me questions, so it's a, you know, it's a, in a group or a one-to-one, I'm included and that's one of the things that is important to me about it, is that it's not just something that's been said about a person, it's for the person by the person." (Spencer)

Spencer's *'doll on the shelf'* is an illuminating use of language. She may have seen or experienced treatment akin to that of a doll, a voiceless object that looks like a person but is essentially played with and controlled, leading her to this point where she is now treated as a person, feeling alive and active.

Bambi and Luna, meanwhile appeared to hint that at the point they are at now, they are feeling heard and asked for input, the outcome of a journey that has been won, which appears to be experienced as a positive:

"Yeah it doesn't happen now. They always let me talk and you always like make sure I'm listened to." (Bambi)

"Um, I've had to fight, um, I've had to virtually fight and just to get them to listen to me and when they finally do it's like a weight that's been lifted off my shoulders." (Luna)

The weight has been lifted from Luna's shoulders because she has a voice, the weight of previously not being given a voice may have felt disempowering for her.

Rock, when referencing different methods of gathering his voice to feed into the EHCP and wider education, described that it is now:

"Much easier, much more comfortable for me." (Rock)

Rock has been listened to and people have adapted to his needs with a person-centred approach, rather than assuming he can do things, such as give verbal feedback. He explained that he finds that challenging.

"Computers are definitely the, like the best way for me to communicate because it feels a lot more com uh, comfortable than just writing it up and just showing someone than having to talk to them face to face, because some people like me, especially, I don't really like attention." (Rock)

Finally, when reflecting on why having a voice is meaningful and how it makes her feel, Spencer explained:

“As a person it definitely makes me very, very, very independently empowered.”
(Spencer)

The repetition of ‘very’ in this answer suggests how important this factor is in allowing Spencer to feel she is central to the process, her empowerment is forged via her centrality within the process, which leads her to feel she is important and is heard. Her independence might then be strengthening because of this feeling, Spencer is progressing towards her next steps in life and gaining a sense of autonomy.

EHCP meetings and being part of the conversation

(Felix, Spencer, Rock)

Meetings about the YP regarding their EHCPs and their education were features of the interviews for three participants. Felix was extremely positive about meetings that discuss his progress, explaining:

“they’ve developed me massively, you know, they’ve helped me, uh, massively they’ve helped me really good.” (Felix)

They appear to not only be part of the process around EHCPs for Felix but also to have been instrumental in his development and progression towards adulthood.

For Spencer the meetings have been experienced as problem-solving sessions and a chance to have conversations about now and the future:

“Because in that way, it can raise any, uh, barriers or concerns that they may have regarding my learning, um, that may have been either missed or not addressed properly.” (Spencer)

Rock has experienced EHCP meetings, like Spencer, as a look at the now and also what is coming:

“They basically talk about what I’m like currently and like what the plans are for my future and, to refer, they go by quite fast.” (Rock)

For Rock they go by quite fast. It may be that the meetings for him are important, but the wealth of information is too much for him to process, meaning he possibly does not feel as engaged:

“They go by quite fast and I tend to forget them because it’s kind of blurry for me.”
(Rock)

EHCPs, in the legislation, have set timeframes for when they must be reviewed, and the review process, especially from year nine, should be focussed on the YP progressing towards adulthood. Having meetings appears to have significance, but for YP such as Rock they should be more practical and engaging, not just run-of-the-mill procedural tasks.

Past negative experiences of not having a voice during education

(Luna, Felix, Spencer, Rock)

All the participants had EHCPs for at least five years and for most of them, the EHCP had been a part of their secondary and post-16 education. Four of them expressed negativity in not feeling heard or being given a chance to have a say in the past.

Luna expressed a sense of helplessness in not being asked about or involved in her EHCP during her education at times:

“They just, and told me and kind of what was said and what and they were planning to do.” (Luna)

She might previously have felt like an outsider to her own life, experiencing times in which others tell her what would happen and she was not asked to provide her views.

Felix is now involved more and feels he has voice, but this has not always been the case for him:

“I never could before I came to here, I couldn't never of told them.” (Felix)

Perhaps not being given a chance to put his views across, or being catered to in a way that suits his way of communicating has disempowered him. However, this appears to be changing for him as he enters post-16 education.

Spencer has felt people have not been open to hearing her views as a YP with an EHCP and SEN:

“I have a lot of stereotypes that come with it and people assume...and I've had it like throughout life, where people have assumed that I can't talk for my own.” (Spencer)

The assumption that she could not speak for herself may have meant she previously did not feel acknowledged, or even trusted to speak for herself. People's assumptions may thus have affected her sense of self and her outlook on whether she can ever feel heard:

“It's that and if you've got that, then it's an issue when it's not and I think that that really affects self-esteem, self-confidence, um, and overall their ability to do lot of things.” (Spencer)

Rock has clearly experienced negative feelings around not having a say in his education and EHCP:

“Even the schools I could have gone to would've been different if I just had a say in things.” (Rock)

“You don't get to have a say in things and stuff. So many times in my life I've been forced to do things I don't want to do.” (Rock)

After Rock's interview, I reflected on how I had sensed his frustration at some exclusionary processes and experiences of past educational procedures, which may have felt troubling for him. He appeared to be saying that if he had simply been listened to, his experiences could have been better, he could have transformed negative scenarios simply by being asked. The experience of this lack of voice may have had far-reaching consequences for much of his education and how he feels about himself, adults and education.

Feelings around being an 'other'

A fascinating theme emerged from the interviews around how YP experience having an EHCP in their education and its effects on how they feel about themselves, often in relation to peers, with some YP experiencing a kind of 'otherness'. This had both positive and negative connotations to it, and three sub-themes are interpreted below.

Having an EHCP/SEND in education and being compared to peers

(Bambi, Luna, Spencer, Rock)

Four participants appeared to reference the challenges around being in mainstream education with an EHCP and SEN, compared to other CYP. Bambi appeared to experience this in her secondary education due to her disability:

“That's the names that I got in high school, that I were drunk and I were a puppet on a string, they were very nasty about it but it is just how you're seen. Most people don't understand that a disability can just be like you.” (Bambi)

It is noteworthy that in her experiences of school and education Bambi references her peers as 'they'. Bambi is perhaps separating herself from her peers because of who she is, which seems to justify placing herself in a different category of existence.

Luna, meanwhile, conveyed that during her formative years, she gained a growing sense of her apparent 'difference':

“I mean, and when I were little I didn't think and kind of anything of it and, but when I started to get a bit older, I started to question like, why was I being taken out?” (Luna)

Luna recalled feeling confused as to why she was being treated differently to her peers, in this case being taken out of a lesson. Her feelings perhaps linked to ‘ableism’ and what it is to be different in mainstream education when you are cast as an ‘other’.

Spencer appeared to have experienced people in her life assuming she was unable to do things because of her disabilities:

“It's a lot of people just assume that because I can't see, I can't do things.” (Spencer)

Such assumptions could have embedded a feeling of difference in her sense of self, casting her as a person who is ‘less than’, or who lacks abilities or aspirations.

Similarly, Rock presented his diagnosis of autism as a challenge to his progress:

“I'm not really keen on having autism because it massively affects the way I get along in life and I feel like it's gonna be like that for the future, as you grow older, I feel like you learn to cope with it more.” (Rock)

Although he is hopeful for the future his referencing of his difference suggests an educational system and wider society not designed or inclusive for CYP such as him.

Finally, Luna attempted to explain what her disability and what an EHCP mean to her peers:

“Whenever I try and explain to them, sometimes it's hard to say sometimes I'd say they do understand, but sometimes I'd say they don't, and I find it kind of really frustrating.” (Luna)

Explaining who she is and why she has an EHCP is presented as challenging for her, causing feelings of frustration. She is perhaps not understood as she would like to be, leaving her peers with the impression she is different, and that is how she has begun to feel about herself.

Acceptance of ‘otherness’

(Bambi, Felix, Spencer)

The EHCP for three participants appears to be a step in the right direction towards them and others with SEN being accepted as equals to peers without SEN. Felix voiced his optimism about what having an EHCP can lead to and what it means for him when he compares himself to peers without SEN:

“It goes to show that like people with, um, disabilities, people with, um, autism and, you know, they can, they can do what, um, normal people can do.” (Felix)

His reference to ‘normal people’ may speak to a sense of what he believes it is like to live without SEN. His hopes seem to be that he will be given the same chances as others and do the things they do. By achieving that he feels he is showing it can be done, and that he is just as capable.

Bambi referenced going through tough times but coming out of those and achieving:

“It just really awkward but when you get over it and you get over that hell, you feel a bit better cos you achieve something.” (Bambi)

She is achieving now, as she can and should be allowed to, with an acceptance of who she is, building on her strengths as an individual.

Spencer specifically referenced the EHCP and what it means to her:

“I like this because it gives me independence, dignity, and it allows me to be a person instead of an object.” (Spencer)

She is experiencing her EHCP as a tool to break free of the assumptions that surround her, as a person with SEN, and thus someone who is helpless and ‘done to’, similar to the static ‘object’ she referenced.

That sense of equality was mentioned again by Spencer when discussing herself as a YP with an EHCP:

“It gives me the right to live as an equal person, the right opportunities, so I’m not out-casted as that diverse person with special needs.” (Spencer)

Spencer has rights and should be given the chance everyone has in life. She appears to believe in accepting difference, and thus herself, as a diverse person in society. The EHCP may be a part of that journey of acceptance.

Strengthening systems for the future

(Felix, Spencer)

There was convergence between two participants who suggested EHCPs are important for the educational system as a whole. That their presence could positively impact future YP with SEN entering mainstream educational system.

Spencer described how she feels positioned to advocate for CYP who enter education and present similar to her:

“It allows me just in general to educate people alongside not just my peers, but elder tutors that may have taught me or maybe have taught someone else that's similar to me throughout the years.” (Spencer)

She is referencing how lessons have been learned from supporting her that can be carried over to support future students' teaching/support. She can assist the staff to provide better outcomes for future CYP:

“She would know if someone else was to come in visually impaired, she would know how to, to cope and have those skills to be able to be comfortable.” (Spencer)

Spencer seems to believe she can contribute to improving education for CYP who come after her, and that her experiences are important for strengthening the system.

Similarly, Felix suggested he might be a role model for other CYP with SEN. He can achieve, and by doing so, he is paving the way for others who have an EHCP:

“I think it's amazing because I think, you know, to go out there and then show people who you are... given me opportunity to go out there to share my, um, experiences and so other, uh, people, you know, you know, look, look, it's fine, it's okay.” (Felix)

He is making it 'okay' to be like him. His SEN should not be seen as a barrier, with opportunities and acceptance, anything is achievable.

EHCP as a guide to YP

The third GET that emerged during the analysis was participants experiencing the EHCP as a type of guide to them, which allows them to feel understood by staff in educational settings. I interpreted this as a positive experience that brought with it a sense of comfort, lessening anxious feelings for them. The opposite experience of not feeling understood was interpreted as negative for some YP, and that was directly related to their EHCP in different ways.

EHCP enables understanding

(Bambi, Luna, Felix, Spencer)

I interpreted four participants as converging on the notion that an EHCP supported them to feel understood. Luna and Spencer suggested that the document itself takes away the need to explain themselves to educational staff:

“As the teachers and tutors know and that I've got like a kind of additional needs and kind of without me and having to tell them.” (Luna)

“So I'm not there stressing about it or repeating myself or, you know, um, having to...physically...sort of go through that process of right, this is my name, this is what I need, da, da, da, because it's right here.” (Spencer)

“So having it documented in the EHCP does me a favour because then I'm not constantly repeating myself.” (Spencer)

It appears it is taking away a stress point of having to explain who they are and what they need. This may be experienced as a source of comfort to these YP since they feel known before going into a new setting, for example.

Felix shared a similar sentiment. During the interview he referred to people (such as me) knowing about him because of his EHCP:

“It's great that for this, you know, for people like yourself can see what, what, you know, other people need.” (Felix)

The EHCP for Felix is not just an explanation of him but also informs people of what he needs to feel comfortable and progress. This includes staff he works with closely and outside professionals, such as me (Educational Psychologist), who may come to meet Felix.

Moreover, Bambi conveyed a sense of feeling understood due to her EHCP, referring to incidents that have made her feel this way:

“But I'm guessing cos I'm on the system now, she's just looked into my case, so it's like straight away she like have a different, she adjusted to me straight off so it's good 'cos you don't feel any anxiety and distress.” (Bambi)

“The EHCP they like made sure it didn't happen again. That's why I think I can speak more to people because they understand me, because they know about condition and when they don't know it's like K (staff) goes in and talks to them.” (Bambi)

The EHCP may have been a tool in relieving anxiety for Bambi in these situations. Her feeling of being understood appears to provide her with a sense of calm, even if it may not have been part of the situation, her impression is that it was, which is important to her experience.

Spencer articulated what having an EHCP feels like to her:

“But now, but I do have it, and that for me is like the way that I would put, it's like, it's like a box, like a very big box and I'm in the box and it's like everyone can see like all the information's on the walls and everyone can see it.” (Spencer)

This powerful description suggests that the box described is Perspex, with important information on the walls in marker pen, Spencer feels understood because of this. There are no secrets and she appears happy this information is available to people who need it to understand her. I interpret this as making her feel comfortable and less anxious as she is not having to explain herself; instead, she is known, and her SEN is there for everyone to see. Illuminating, descriptive language of this kind gives a nice insight into Spencer's world. The positivity that can come around feeling understood via a process such as an EHCP is tangible for her in college. It is not a secret, but accessible for all. She is known, and she is important.

Not feeling understood

(Bambi, Luna, Rock)

The experience of being understood via the EHCP appeared to engender positive connotations around participants' educational journey. A divergent sub-theme appeared for three YP of not feeling understood and how that affected them. Bambi referred back to a time in which she did not feel understood, before her EHCP was in place:

*“Yeah it helps to be known. because it were like Chinese whispers in high school.”
(Bambi)*

The reference to ‘*Chinese whispers*’ invokes a feeling of secrecy and an ever-changing narrative around how people understand her. She may have felt disempowered and vulnerable to rumours because of this situation. She explains being understood is key to her feeling she can be supported:

“That's the most important thing because if nobody understands you, then you can't get help.” (Bambi)

Luna referred back to an incident in which she did not feel understood. She felt if her EHCP had been used correctly it may not have turned out that way:

“Uh, because I, because I don't want I kind of anyone to go through and what I went through with maths kind of last year, and where a teacher just blurted it out to the entire class, uh, he said that, he said that half of it is just maths, I mean, well, yeah, it is and there's some other stuff as well and if he had and taken the time and to

actually read it, then I don't think, I don't think that incident, um, would've happened.”
(Luna)

This experience is interpreted as Luna not feeling understood, but embarrassed and frustrated. Her EHCP is not only publicised but also used other than in the way she believes it should be, that is, as a window into her, and what she requires to succeed.

Similarly, Rock, touched on how his EHCP has not been used appropriately at times in his education and how it has been considered in some settings but not in others:

“Because every place I've been to, not every place abides by the EHCP, some places I've been to will pay more attention to it than others, but some, some of the places I've been to just simply, don't care about it.” (Rock)

“It's trying to make education more comfortable and easier for people who have special needs, because every place I've been to, not every place abides by the EHCP.” (Rock)

Rock seems to feel certain settings, and people in the settings, do not care about his EHCP, or attempt to understand him. Rock subsequently may not feel he is important or worthwhile, or may have gained the impression he is fundamentally different from others, and that provides justification for people not caring to try to understand him.

Experiencing support and relationships

The YP talked about the EHCP as something providing them with the help they required during their education. It appeared they perceived the EHCP as often necessary for gaining the assistance they believed they needed. The EHCP was also experienced as shared with other people in their lives, such as family, staff and outside services, for example.

EHCP enables staff/systems to adapt – meet individuals' needs

(Bambi, Luna, Felix, Spencer, Rock)

A theme that presented as convergence between all participants was that of the support provided by the EHCP. Luna believes this support provided has been a help to her:

“Well, and kind of without it, I wouldn't have had the help and that I had, um, in primary and secondary and now in college.” (Luna)

Luna may perceive that the EHCP corresponds to her receiving the unique support she requires, to progress in her education.

Felix intimated having specialised adult support has enabled the staff members involved to adapt to his communication and comprehension style:

“Because they try to explain sort of in a, in a way that you understand and you would get.” (Felix)

Staff members have become experienced at adapting to his individuality, thus enabling him to access his education.

For Bambi the staff team the EHCP provides in her post-16 education problem-solves when required, and considers her mental health as a part of her individual needs:

“If I have any problems, I've just had to, like, message on teams to J or to K (staff) and it's like they have my back or they send someone to have my back.” (Bambi)

“It's just me and J (staff) like to talk about that is kind of stuff so she is making sure I feel well, It's just to make sure I'm mentally well.” (Bambi)

There might be a sense here she feels important and adapted to. Staff have taken time to get to know her and that provides a level of emotional comfort.

Rock suggested the staff support the EHCP provides is more than simply academic. It has greater intrinsic value for him as he progresses:

“Definitely sounds helpful, but if I was to have one to one support, I'd be more for like, it'd be more for more my self-development than, uh, learning and helping me get work done.” (Rock)

Having consistency of support is also important to Rock, and that consistency has improved during his time in education:

“Yeah, it's happened here actually, especially like end of the year when they're still organising staff around and stuff, it's always staffing the lesson, but that's mostly gone now I've got the same staff now so okay.” (Rock)

Because adaptations have been made for Rock, such as having a consistent member of staff during his learning, he appears to feel settled and positive about his environment.

Spencer appreciates the support in multiple ways, but is especially thankful for the staff that help her, academically. This supports Spencer's development in multiple facets, according to her:

“And having that support within the classroom, having learning support sat next to me and teaching me and, and taking notes and being able to sit with a one-to-one

through the support of the an EHCP, which is provided by the college has definitely helped me as a person to grow and develop and change.” (Spencer)

These adaptations and pinpointing of her personal support needs appear to have had an effect that has made life feel easier for Spencer:

“It definitely, without a doubt does make our lives a whole lot easier in every aspect.” (Spencer)

“it is important because it's not just a document on a paper, it's a lesson in itself, that's the way I put it. It's something that can be used on a daily basis supporting others to support students.” (Spencer)

The EHCP appears to bring a sense of enabling appropriate support for these YP. It not only helps them academically but also helps with the provision of pastoral support. It is individual to them. Spencer explained that she feels it makes life ‘easier’ for her suggesting how valuable she believes it is in supporting her progression.

EHCP is a joint endeavour to create

(Bambi, Luna, Felix, Spencer)

Four participants suggested that having an EHCP is not merely about them but also about the people who are involved in their care and education. These are then experienced as something that is joined up, a feature that seems to be recognised as important. Felix, Spencer and Bambi appear to value everyone’s input into their EHCP:

“A lot of these people on there, on me plan with, they have like helped me and they've, and they've shaped me to where I am now.” (Felix)

“Having the EHCP plan and having everyone, um, not just write it but contribute to it from their point of view will allow them to bring together their point of view about how they think that I'm doing.” (Spencer)

“Yes me and my mom had to do it, our ‘sens’ to send it off to K (staff) and then when I found, like, came in last year, um, K sat down when me and my parents go through it again.” (Bambi)

Perhaps this joined-up way of working, with family and professionals provides an experience where these YP are not alone. Instead, people have a goal to help them achieve and progress in their lives. The YP is central but also feel there is a joint effort between them and others.

Luna recalled people who have been involved in developing her EHCP:

“It would be my mum and sometimes as my dad and kind of whenever he can get the time off work. Um, and then it would be, and teachers that I had, um, and then it would be people like from the council and stuff that kind of deal with, and kind of additional needs and stuff like that.” (Luna)

She has clearly been part of a joined-up, multi-agency approach to working as is championed in EHCP legislation. Although Luna remembers the roles of people, I wonder whether she has been fully informed of who from the council, for instance, has been involved in the development of her EHCP.

I gained a sense that Bambi feels this joined-up approach, and that is experienced in her current setting:

“This college is connected to each other, they don’t abandon each do ya know department, they all like link up at some point.” (Bambi)

I interpreted that the ‘linking’ of the college departments may comfort Bambi. Her protection and support from above are connected, not disconnected, and this could make her feel as though she is being supported well. Bambi might feel a calming sensation in her education because of this.

Experience around YPs’ progression

The fifth GET is YP experiencing the EHCP as something that enables them to get to the next stages in their lives. It is a tool that appears to bring with it a sense of progression for some YP and was described using interesting, descriptive terms during the interviews.

EHCP experienced as a path towards adulthood

(Bambi, Luna, Felix, Spencer)

Four participants suggested the EHCP itself is a key mechanism for them getting to where they want to go. Luna and Felix provide similar descriptions:

“To try and put me on that path and to get me into work.” (Luna)

“Important because, you know, especially for someone with, um, a disability, because, because, you know, I think, I think I that having that like pathway to go and achieve.” (Felix)

The use of the terms ‘path’ and ‘pathway’ suggests the EHCP is aiming to lead, or guide, them towards a destination. In this case, the destination might be work, further education or

independent living. This sense of it leading toward something is a key finding. It shows the YP believe this is all building towards something, and that the EHCP provides hope and confidence for these YP, it is future-facing.

Spencer takes a similar view, but expands the analogy, referencing a process of building:

“Because it allows that person to be informed of the things that I can do and the things that I might need help with and building on that they can know, and then they can build on that themselves.” (Spencer)

“So having those goals within the EHCP and allowing everyone to see them will allow them to build me as a person.” (Spencer)

The similarities between pathways and building create a sense that this is leading towards a goal, that there is a reason for this to be in place, it is not just about the now but about the future. Paths and building take time but one day you will reach something, a goal in the end (for instance, a home of your own or a job). The EHCP is an aid to achieving these goals.

Bambi believes she is progressing. In some areas she is beginning to achieve and is being pushed to continue to develop by staff:

“The first time you're doing something it is very difficult, maybe sometimes it takes quite a couple of times to get through work and then when you're over it you are like, Oh, I can do this now.” (Bambi)

“What K (staff) is trying to put into place is she's trying to push me out and do you know, make me go out with friends and that.” (Bambi)

Her experience is one of progress following difficulties, and of being challenged to meet targets in her EHCP, supported by staff. She is forward-facing, rather than consumed by past events:

“College may do you know went above and beyond to help me and support and, and it's just they knew about my bad past so they went above and beyond to try and do you know, make sure that's past.” (Bambi)

Finally Spencer is again on a path, taking a journey that her EHCP is enabling her to travel:

“My plan to ensure that my journey through education is smooth sailing. Um, 'cos at the end of the day, it doesn't just help me, it also helps further, you know, journeys.” (Spencer)

Once more, Spencer references a plan that is not only about her individual progress (journey), but also describes an EHCP as ideal in giving a sense of hope to other CYP who have them; they can progress to where they want to be.

Experience of hearing the contents of their EHCP

The final GET relates to YPs' experiences of hearing the contents of their EHCPs during interviews. This was part of the interview schedule that brought with it three distinct sub-themes that are quite varied, but I believe important to acknowledge. These concern YP knowing what is written about them in their EHCPs, how they have been informed of these plans and what their feelings are about them.

Out-of-date and inaccessible language in the EHCP

(Bambi, Felix, Rock)

An aim of the research was to have the participant's EHCP with us during an interview, go through it together, and gain a sense of what this experience was like for the YP.

Bambi made the following comment after hearing the information from her EHCP:

"Yes, it sounds like me, it's just put in a more filtered, an adult version." (Bambi)

Rock, when I was reading through it said:

"I'm not sure what it means by that." (Rock)

It might be that some of the language in the EHCP is not accessible to these YP. When the contents are in 'adult speak' or 'jargon' they are not privy to, even though it is their plan, they may feel excluded from it. The EHCP is essentially them, but it may be that the language in it and how it is presented stand as barriers to them understanding the EHCP, potentially leading to them feeling it is not accessible and not actually representing them.

Rock appeared to feel some helplessness as information from his past was included in the EHCP and not subject to change:

"I can't really contribute much since it's not like subject to change because it's just part of history, so I can't really like go back in time and change that." (Rock)

The EHCP contains lots of historic information, and it may have impacted Rock negatively to hear this recounted. He could have gained a sense his past is inescapable, and he may wonder how other people view him now because of this information. The historic nature led

him to say he *'can't really contribute much'*, which could represent a sense he is stuck, and it may not be worth him trying to contribute since his story is already written.

Felix appeared to have a similar experience with past and out-of-date information:

"Some are still true, but the, but the rest of them they've l'm way, way, um, ahead of that, I feel." (Felix)

"I'd say most of these targets that are on here, I think are, are well l'm well past." (Felix)

Information that is not up-to-date could engender a sense that the participants progress is not acknowledged in the EHCP. This could be dis-heartening to hear, if YP have put effort into their progress and want it to be recognised.

Finally, Rock noted something that is important to him and that he feels is important for people to know about him:

"I don't think it's really explained much in here, but, um, I don't have a very good attention span." (Rock)

A consideration is that Rock felt important information about himself has been missed, that could mean he has not been engaged in a way that has allowed him to contribute to the EHCP. A feeling of non-engagement may be experienced as dis-empowering for Rock.

Lack of awareness of the EHCP

(Bambi, Felix, Rock)

Participants knowledge of their EHCPs before taking part in the study is another theme. Felix was only somewhat aware of the document:

"Um, I've seen it, a bit, but not that much." (Felix)

Bambi appeared somewhat confused about what was actually going in the plan:

"It's tough to say, but stuff I don't know that's getting reported down, which I'm fine with, I'm fine with it." (Bambi)

Bambi said she was fine but still appeared a little surprised at information in her EHCP. This gives a sense that the EHCP and what goes in the document may not have been explained to YP properly. It might be experienced as a bit of an unknown and they may feel outside of the process as a result.

Rock explained:

“I wasn't that aware of it because I don't think schools or teachers or anyone makes it really aware that you have one.” (Rock)

Rock's comment seemed more blaming of the systems for not communicating with him about his EHCP. He also appeared to experience negative feelings about what is in the plan:

“I felt quite uncomfortable because I didn't know that, uh, everything I, I'd been through was documented.” (Rock)

He appears uncomfortable that his history and information were written down, and he may feel information in there is something he cannot now get away from. The negativity was palpable from him. Rock does not want people to take the EHCP as everything he is:

“But you should really take it with a grain of salt since this doesn't explain everything, like I don't want people to read that and like think oh, right, so he is like only socialise on his own terms, so that means he might only, like he might be like, want things or demand things, and it's like, that's not true. I don't want people to make assumptions based on just a little bit of info about me.” (Rock)

Rock is more than what is in his plan, and he seems to feel negatively about a scenario where people take everything in there as constituting immovable facts about him. The expression *'grain of salt'* suggests that when people read his EHCP, he would then like them to be critical of it, and get to know him, before judging him based on information in the document.

Pride and positivity

(Bambi, Luna, Felix, Spencer)

Four of the participants appeared to share a sense of pride in hearing information from their EHCP. Luna appreciated the more positive language in her EHCP:

“Um, it's better than how it sounded and when I were in a primary and secondary school already, uh, well in primary secondary school, it just, it used to focus and on the negatives.” (Luna)

Similarly Bambi gained a sense of how far she has come, commenting that this is a good thing to know:

“I'm building towards it, I just haven't completely got there, but when you look from where I started to today, completely changed that's really good.” (Bambi)

When hearing about the targeted outcomes, Spencer explained:

“I think to me they are important, I think it empowers me to achieve them.” (Spencer)

The process of hearing about the outcomes in her EHCP seemed to motivate Spencer and give her a sense of progressing towards her targets.

Similarly, Felix reiterated his pride in hearing about his EHCP outcomes, and knowing he is on the way to them, or has already achieved them:

“I feel as if they're, I've passed them, which is, which is actually in a way, it makes me feel quite proud to know them targets when I were little I've passed them.” (Felix)

Felix's pride presented as though it might motivate him and give a feeling he has progressed. He is on his way to the next steps, as he remarked:

“you know, you know, look, look, it's fine, it's okay, you're not on your own go and go and fly.” (Felix)

He is progressing and will be able to fly. His future is bright, and the sky is the limit.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

This chapter discusses the research findings, relating them to psychological theory and previous literature that feels pertinent. Among the new discussion points that have arisen in this research, some were not anticipated but are worthy of attention.

As a researcher, I am not aiming to search for 'norms' or 'grand narratives', in my discussion points. I am instead embracing the IPA philosophy of idiographic experiences (Smith et al., 2022). Crucially, I am also abiding by my ontological and epistemological positionality, wherein I am adopting an interpretive phenomenological stance. This approach allows researchers seeking to, "understand the meaning of an account of experience by stepping outside of the account and reflecting upon its status as an account and its wider (social, cultural, psychological) meanings" (Willig, 2013, p. 17). By adopting this stance, it makes it possible to explore, suggest and reference, how participants might experience their social world as 'real', in an intersubjective sense, through their experiences and via my interpretations during analysis.

Research questions

My research aimed to investigate the questions below, and I formulated my data collection and interview schedule with these questions in mind:

1. *How have mainstream post-16 students with Education, Health and Care Plans experienced education?*
2. *How have these young people experienced their Education, Health and Care Plans during their education?*
3. *What is it like for young people to hear the contents of their Education, Health and Care Plans?*
4. *What can professionals working with young people with Education, Health and Care Plans learn from these experiences?*

The first three questions will be discussed in this chapter, while the final question will be the focus of the following chapter, when I discuss implications for practice.

Through my analysis of the five interviews, six GETs were identified (Table 3):

1. Experience of voice and involvement

2. Feelings around being an 'other'
3. EHCP as a guide to YP
4. Experiencing support and relationships
5. Experience around YPs' progression
6. Experience of hearing the contents of their EHCP

Within each GET were sub-themes, some of which revealed convergence between participants, while others highlighted divergence, although they all sat under the overarching GET.

The discussion section of research papers offers the chance to connect findings and situate the work in larger literature. Smith et al. (2022) when referring to IPA-specific discussions explain, "here then you can engage in a dialogue between your findings and existing literature" (p. 116). They outline how this process can illuminate the findings in relation to the current literature and possibly add new themes if some are uncovered during the analysis.

Lewis et al. (2021) recommend a four-step process as a guide to writing quality, integrated discussions. I followed these steps as I developed my discussion. Some steps were less relevant to a study such as this, but I found it valuable to employ strategies in step three, "Drafting the main integrated discussion points" (p. 5), which advocates for the use of visual mind maps for each GET. I found this to be a useful strategy, enabling me to streamline and explore my thinking around each theme (appendix 28).

Overarching GETs are referenced in bold and sub-themes referenced in italics, with the latter highlighting valuable themes in themselves, worthy of discussion.

Experience of voice and involvement

Empowerment experienced from gaining a voice through an EHCP

Statutory guidance following the SEND reforms regarding CYP with SEN in the CoP (DfE & DoH, 2015), followed the updated guidance laid out in the Children and Families Act (DfE, 2014) enshrined into legislation that education providers, "must have regard to...the views, wishes and feelings of the child and his or her parent, or the young person" (Section 19).

This followed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which sets out that all children and young people have a right to express their views and opinions in matters affecting their lives (United Nations, 1989).

It is right therefore CYP give their opinions and thus feel they are being heard. The EHCP framework includes a section for the person's opinions (part A). The CYP should be involved and, as a result, feel as though they have a significant voice in their EHCP. This subject frequently came up during the interviews and was experienced in a variety of ways.

Ryan and Deci (2020) explain autonomy as one of the three components of Self-Determination theory (SDT), a framework that helps to foster intrinsic human motivation and psychological well-being. They describe autonomy as follows:

A sense of initiative and ownership in one's actions...it is supported by experiences of interest and value and undermined by experiences of being externally controlled, whether by rewards or punishments. (p. 1)

During the analysis there was a strong theme around participants feeling as though they were being heard, and thus were involved in decisions about their education and their future, leading to positive outcomes:

"I get to be a participant in it, I'm not just a doll on a shelf." (Spencer)

"I've had to virtually fight and just to get them to listen to me and when they finally do it's like a weight that's been lifted off my shoulders." (Bambi)

Having direct involvement and engagement may have given YP a feeling of autonomy, which they appeared to experience as important to them during their education.

Sewell (2022) explains that embracing voice in diverse communities, in a person-centred, creative way is humanising and democratic, fostering a sense of empowerment. CYP who have SEN should be treated as experts in their own lives and be given the opportunity to feel both included and heard (Mallett & Runswick-Cole, 2014).

Evidence collected in this study suggests this is important to YP in developing independence, empowerment and self-esteem. The participants, when they felt more involved, listened to and thus heard in EHCP processes gained a sense of involvement in their own lives. This correlates with previous literature around engaging CYP in democratic process leading to positive outcomes linked to empowerment (Lundy, 2018). Alongside the previously mentioned hierarchy of participation (Hart, 1992), or the more recently developed ladder of participation (Flowers et al., 2007) which posit that when CYP have more participation/voice, when it is not just tokenistic, it benefits them and the systems in which they engage.

This was interpreted as relevant to the YPs' experiences shared in this study. They explained experiencing having a voice as positive, significant, and improving their sense of

self. Bambi's, Luna's, and Felix's explanation of why it is crucial for people with SEN to be heard, support the idea that person-centred practice is empowering for YP during the EHCP process:

"I think opening up, speaking out to people, especially with, um, educational needs is vital." (Felix)

Past negative experiences of not having a voice during education

In a further finding I noted that there were divergences of some participants' experiences regarding voice in their EHCP journeys. At times in which they felt they were not involved, or given an opportunity to have a say, for example, Rock and Spencer, there appeared to be an experience of dis-empowerment. An uncomfortable external control on their lives and harm to their self-confidence:

"I have a lot of stereotypes that come with it and people assume...and I've had it like throughout life, where people have assumed that I can't talk for my own." (Spencer)

"Even the schools I could have gone to would've been different if I just had a say in things." (Rock)

Fayette and Bond (2018) discuss how some CYP with SEN are not asked about transitions during their education, often due to a perceived lack of ability to adequately engage them in processes by the adults around them. This often leads to poor outcomes as they progress to adulthood. For these YP, it is noteworthy that the experience of not having a voice appears to be negative.

Some participants in this study, such as Luna, Rock and Felix, experienced not having a voice at certain points in their education, particularly secondary education. However, it seemed this had changed in post-16 education, as Felix explained when talking about how he could not have discussed topics before transitioning to college:

"I never could before I came to here, I couldn't never of told them." (Felix)

Legislation states that from year nine onwards, as part of the PfA pathway for CYP with EHCPs, they should have involvement and be asked/heard regarding their transition to further education and adulthood (Bason, 2018).

It is important to focus on why some YP seem to have had experiences where this has not occurred and what has prevented them from feeling as if they had a voice throughout their secondary education. For instance, the cause may be a lack of awareness from education providers that this is a requirement, or it may be more must be done around how and why

CYP should be engaged when they have an EHCP. Alternatively, it may be there are good intentions to have these fundamentals in place but a lack of time, resources, or understanding of how to engage CYP. Post-16 may stimulate a sense of voice and participation and may be enabling (Manning, 2018) in ways that secondary education was not. Those are ideas to consider as an implication of this study.

People who feel silenced might experience a subsequent feeling of a loss of a sense of self. Silencing may directly negatively impact on YP who feel this, as experienced in other 'marginal' groups such as excluded young girls (Bradley, 2017). It may be argued that the necessity for CYP with EHCPs and SEN to be heard has greater significance, if we are to view them as marginal.

EHCP meetings and being part of the conversation

The method of involving CYP with an EHCP was highlighted, and how we initiate CYP to speak up and thus encourage their voice. The participants in this study had a mixed experiences in, for instance, annual reviews and meetings.

For some participants, such as Felix and Spencer, these offer a chance to talk about problems they might be experiencing and set future targets, as well as keep them informed and present an opportunity for them to communicate their views. Rock, meanwhile, experienced these meetings as 'blurry', suggesting that the chance he was given to use his voice was not adapted to him.

Sharma (2021) identifies a barrier to involving CYP in their EHCP journeys is the belief one-off annual reviews they attend are sufficient in gaining CYPs' voices. This suggests that methods of gaining their voice be implemented in more inventive ways, to enable CYPs' sustained involvement, and to support a feeling that CYP are being heard consistently. This aligns to other work to have noted that CYP are not being adapted to, or given choices in how they would like to contribute to EHCP meetings (Palikara et al., 2018; White & Rae, 2016).

In this study the YP shared their experiences of how meetings have and have not worked for them. Rock mentioned computers as a better, more person-centred way of engaging him since he does not feel comfortable conversing face-to-face. Rock had also experienced disempowerment in his education when he had not felt listened to or acknowledged. There is a clear correlation here and reflection to be had on the 'how' in engaging CYP in meaningful, person-centred approaches:

“Computers are definitely the, like the best way for me to communicate because it feels a lot more com uh, comfortable than just writing it up and just showing someone

than having to talk to them face to face, because some people like me, especially, I don't really like attention.” (Rock)

Using a range of resources, techniques and models to elicit voice is already a well-known part of engaging CYP with SEN (Damali & Damali, 2018; Frederickson & Cline, 2015; Newton, 2020). It is not just for us, as professionals, to decide appropriate methods, instead, we should engage the CYP in the processes, giving them a range of options to pick from and thus a defining role in how they would like to be heard. A predominantly verbal meeting, is clearly not always appropriate for CYP with SEN, and for some, it could effectively be exclusionary in dis-enabling them from having a voice (Dimitrellou & Male, 2020).

It is vital to encourage active involvement, supporting CYPs' views to be incorporated into their EHCPs. This is more impactful than simply, for example, outlining their likes and dislikes, which can be overly simplistic (Robinson et al., 2018). Our systems should be adapted to them, person-centred, and utilise their preferred methods of communication (Sharma, 2021).

Feelings around being an 'other'

Having an EHCP/SEND in education and being compared to peers

During the interviews a theme arose around the YPs' lived experiences of being in educational settings. This was an interesting topic to explore with them. All had attended mainstream secondary schools and were now accessing mainstream post-16 provisions. All had an EHCP and under this umbrella had some type of SEN. The Children and Families Act (DfE, 2014) put into legislation:

A child or young person has special educational needs if he or she has a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her (part 3, section 2.1)

For CYP with SEN, if it is believed and evidenced by the parties around the CYP that a further assessment is required to meet their educational needs, following this an EHCP assessment process is initiated and awarded if it is viewed as necessary by the LA (Frederickson & Cline, 2015).

Although it is not the aim here to unpick the legislation or speculate about SEN or the EHCP initiative as constructs, it is pertinent to the discussion to consider what it is like to have SEN and an EHCP during education, a topic that is currently under-researched (Bason, 2018).

During the analysis, I noted many of the participants appeared to have encountered forms of ableism in their experiences in education:

“People just assume that because I can't see, I can't do things.” (Spencer)

“The names that I got in high school, that I were drunk and I were a puppet on a string.” (Bambi)

Ableism as a concept arose from disabled rights movements and can be termed a sociocultural construction around what it is to be ‘able’, or ‘normal’ (Hutcheon & Wolbring, 2012). As a consequence of this a societal belief is produced around what it is to not be ‘able’, often connected to people who are seen as disabled since they sit outside of this ‘able’ body, or presentation of ‘normality’ (Mallett & Runswick-Cole, 2014).

This construction of ableism and what it is to be disabled is cultural and political in nature (Goodley & Roets, 2008). Williams et al. (2017) discuss SEN and working in education, focusing on what it is like when an assessment, and psychologisation culture pervades. Those who fall outside of concepts of what it is to be ‘normal’ at various developmental stages are positioned as “deficient human-beings, a position from which it becomes almost impossible to escape” (p. 2).

From this societal construct inevitably comes a sense of what it is to fall outside the standards society has set. Comparisons are made between humans around “normality and abnormality, success and failure, the functional and the dysfunctional” (Thomas & Loxley, 2022 p. 153). Surely this must be felt by CYP who are being labelled as having SEN; they are compared, assessed and subsequently ‘othered’ due to their failure to fit with societal and educational expectations thrust upon them (Goodley, 2012). Educated alongside peers that do not have these labels they may experience status frustration, as a result of their ‘otherness’ (Thomas & Loxley, 2022).

Comparison psychology based on social identity theory may also be experienced (Stets & Burke, 2000). This theory suggests humans form an identity based around categorisation; an in-group/out-group dynamic is developed, in which self-esteem and your sense of self may be affected negatively due to identifying yourself as an outsider. An encompassing sense of societal constructs and systems set up to categorise will inevitably support this socio-cultural arrangement. ‘Normal’ can be accepted but difference sits on the outside, it is vulnerable and requires specialist provisions, often leading to segregation (Mallett & Runswick-Cole, 2014).

A theme of this study concerned what it was like for these YP, to be categorised as having SEN, requiring an EHCP. Many times, I interpreted it as being a negative experience, with

the YPs' apparent differences not experienced as positive. Comparisons and assumptions are felt and made about what they can and cannot do, causing feelings of failure. Furthermore, being taken out of lessons, as Luna described, and away from their peers promotes a sense 'otherness'. Additionally, hurtful names are used to describe YP, such as Bambi emphasising a difference in them as humans. Rock framed his diagnosis of autism as challenging for him, in a system and society that may not set up for someone like him (Gainsborough, 2022):

"I'm not really keen on having autism because it massively effects the way I get along in life and I feel like it's gonna be like that for the future, as you grow older, I feel like you learn to cope with it more." (Rock)

These are important discussion points as they convey a sense that these YP have experienced challenges through their education, as a consequence of feeling different from their peers. The social comparison and their difference are consciously experienced. EHCPs may be seen as a positive step for the adults involved in the CYPs' lives but reflection is required on what this means for the CYP psychologically, on a day-to-day basis. Do they experience this plan as separating them from peers for example? And how do we better support them, their peers, and their educational settings if this is the case?

If having an EHCP creates a feeling of being an 'other', a person who is an example of a label or category (Devlin, 2017), it should be a consideration of those who create legislation, develop systems or provide mental health support to cultivate strategies to acknowledge the emotional or practical support these CYP require.

It may be not just about the CYP with EHCPs but also for their peers in education. Non-SEN CYP may benefit from intervention or explicit teaching about CYP with SEN, aiming to foster a sense of understanding and inclusivity. As an example, a child with autism and ADHD presented a video of himself, describing his neurodiversity to peers during school assembly, which appeared to powerfully impact how they subsequently understood him (Adhd Richmond, 2017).

Acceptance of 'otherness'

Some participants conveyed a feeling of acceptance at this point in their lives. Their 'otherness' was experienced as enabling them to access more support, often through the provisions provided by their EHCP:

"It gives me the right to live as an equal person, the right opportunities, so I'm not out-casted as that diverse person with special needs." (Spencer)

That allowed them to engage in an educational experience where they could achieve, though this was often when relating themselves to peers who did not have SEN or an EHCP:

“It goes to show that like people with, um, disabilities, people with, um, autism and, you know, they can, they can do what, um, normal people can do.” (Felix)

There was a sense of acceptance of who they are, but seemingly still striving to be like ‘normal’ peers, have the opportunities they have, reach milestones they reach. This social comparison narrative may add motivation for CYP with SEN (Kocaj et al., 2018). It suggests they are viewing the world through an ‘ableist’ lens, where accomplishment is compared to what their ‘able’ peers achieve.

If the EHCP, as Spencer suggested, is experienced as part of a process that is providing equality for CYP with SEN, so she is not outcast but supported, it gives the impression this might all be part of a journey to acceptance. For Spencer, it appears to enhance her feeling of inclusion, not segregation, championing her as an individual.

Previous research has suggested that teachers and SENCOs working with CYP with SEN feel pride in aiding their progress in attainment, creating positive relationships and advocating for them (Lin et al., 2021; Mackenzie, 2013). However, to my knowledge, little research has explored CYPs’ role in educational systems, and how they might feel pride in their work with adults.

Strengthening systems for the future

Spencer and Felix communicated a sense that they, as YP with EHCPs in mainstream settings, feel as though they are advocates for future CYP similar to them coming into education. They see that their SEN, and their profiles will help strengthen the systems for CYP coming later. In some ways they may feel they are beacons of hope, they perceive they are helping train staff, just by being themselves:

“It allows me just in general to educate people alongside not just my peers, but elder tutors that may have taught me or maybe have taught someone else that’s similar to me throughout the years.” (Spencer)

“She would know if someone else was to come in visually impaired, she would know how to, to cope and have those skills to be able to be comfortable.” (Spencer)

It was noteworthy that these YP feel they can be advocates for those who follow them, they upskill staff who support them now, to support CYP with similar needs in the future. A consideration is how education providers can engage these YP in advocacy roles to strengthen inclusion systems.

In essence, they believe they are a form of pedagogy, they are role models, they are impactful, and their 'otherness' is strengthening knowledge and practice in educational settings. Perhaps we focus too much on the present and near future for these YP with EHCPs, neglecting to ask them about advocacy roles.

EHCP as a guide to YP

EHCP enables understanding

A theme arising for all participants was around experiencing a sense they are understood. This was interpreted as a positive feeling, when they believed they were understood and negative when they felt they were not. It was of note that many of the YP referenced the EHCP as a guide to knowing them, as mentioned by Felix, Spencer, Bambi and Luna during interviews:

“As the teachers and tutors know and that I've got like a kind of additional needs and kind of without me and having to tell them.” (Luna)

“The EHCP they like made sure it didn't happen again. That's why I think I can speak more to people because they understand me.” (Bambi)

Not having to repeat themselves or explain their SEN was referenced as a burden lifted from their shoulders, often relieving anxiety. It may be that this is not always true, that is to say, we do not know if these YPs' staff do have an intimate knowledge of their EHCP, however, what is important is that it feels as if this is the case for the YP. It is their experience, and having this feeling is interpreted as comforting to them.

Previously, I referenced SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2020) in relation to autonomy and having a voice. This theme represents another of the three psychological components of SDT, that of relatedness or a feeling of belonging. Ryan and Deci (2020) explain that relatedness “concerns a sense of belonging and connection...it is facilitated by conveyance of respect and caring”. (p. 1). Sobitan (2022) suggests that for CYP in education, the experience of feelings of belonging can be motivational. It is influenced by both social structures and relationships in which it occurs, and it can be highly influenced by staff (Allen et al., 2018).

Research has suggested that for CYP with SEN, the feeling of belonging is important, leading to positive outcomes around attainment, behaviour and developing a sense of agency (Prince & Hadwin, 2013; Riley, 2023). Others claim the fight for inclusion and inclusive practices in education could lead to benefits associated with a feeling of belonging for all, if executed correctly (Slee, 2019), although some argue that the educational SEN

inclusion agenda should be re-imagined, if it is to truly engender a sense of belonging for all (Thomas & Loxley, 2022).

A neurological study, involving students of a similar age to these YP suggested neural regions associated with social connection and reward were active when participants felt understood, while social pains and negative affective areas activated when they had the opposite experiences (Morelli et al., 2014). Consideration of the link between a person's cognitive, emotional and environmental experiences has been proposed as a step forward for educational professionals, and critical neuroscience could bring a new way of considering such experiences (Billington, 2017). The EHCP may stimulate a sense of safety since it supports a belief that these YP are known. Feeling understood leads to a sense of belonging and comfort in their surroundings. The participants believe their EHCP is a window into them as individuals, or as Spencer described:

“A box where everyone can see what is on the walls of the box.” (Spencer)

The YP feel belonging and connection, which in turn provides psychological comfort as they go about their education.

Not feeling understood

Participants who described having experiences of not feeling understood, particularly in the past, appeared to associate those with negative emotions. Luna referenced being unable to get help if she feels she is not understood. Rock described feeling that during difficult times some schools have not acknowledged or paid attention to his EHCP:

“Because every place I've been to, not every place abides by the EHCP, some places I've been to will pay more attention to it than others, but some, some of the places I've been to just simply, don't care about it.” (Rock)

This strengthens the claim of a link for the YP between experiencing a sense they are understood and feeling as though they belong.

Frederickson and Cline (2015) explain that experiencing the psychological construct of belonging in education can lead CYP to feel they can progress, and test themselves in their learning. In this respect, it links to the Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1970), where a base level of belonging, care and understanding is required to build toward higher psychological constructs. Frederickson and Cline (2015) go on to explain research with CYP with SEND around belonging has not been as 'clear cut' (p. 221) as that on their peers.

This study suggests the experience of feeling understood may lead to a sense of belonging, perhaps via an expectation that staff in educational settings have read YPs' EHCPs. This

might support the impression there is a good understanding of them as individuals, decreasing their anxiety about having to explain themselves or feelings of vulnerability associated with being 'unknown'.

Luna's experience is of interest, she described a situation in which the contents of her EHCP were shared by a teacher, which made her feel uncomfortable:

"where a teacher just blurted it out to the entire class, uh, he said that, he said that half of it is just maths, I mean, well, yeah, it is and there's some other stuff as well and if he had and taken the time and to actually read it, then I don't think, I don't think that incident, um, would've happened." (Luna)

Samuels (2003) in an article about disabilities, discusses the parallels between the social identity of having a disability and that of 'coming out' for people who are LGBTQ+. They propose that, especially for people who have an 'invisible' disability, this process is inherently social, political and cultural:

Coming out, then, for disabled people, is a process of redefinition of one's personal identity through rejecting the tyranny of the normate, positive recognition of impairment and embracing disability as a valid social identity. (p. 237)

The process of 'coming out' as a person with a disability has been referenced before as a part of a wider journey of societal acceptance (Titchkosky, 2001). Luna was, in a sense, being 'outed' as a YP with SEN, and an EHCP without being in control. I consider whether we, working in education, are considerate enough of what it means to CYP to be labelled with SEN and given an EHCP.

A question arising might be: can we do more to support both the person with an EHCP, and the wider community in educational settings? CYP with EHCPs in a sense may be being 'hidden away', and finding themselves on a psychological cliff edge where they feel they are going to be 'outed', is this something we can be better at acknowledging?

Part of the process of accepting diversity and championing inclusion is about making systems accepting of all people, including those with SEN or disabilities. Perhaps Luna would have felt more comfortable if she felt understood by the staff and students at school. It could have been achieved if there had been a discussion about disability, SEN and why some students have an EHCP, on a more systemic level, through assemblies or taught sessions for example. Being informative rather than secretive about EHCPs and wider SEN culture is something to consider from this study.

Experiencing support and relationships

EHCP enables staff/systems to adapt – meeting individuals' needs

All five participants discussed the EHCP as providing them with support during their education, especially when referring to staff. Noteworthy was the experience of the EHCP as beneficial when it was adapted and individual to them:

“Well, and kind of without it, I wouldn't have had the help and that I had, um, in primary and secondary and now in college.” (Luna)

Bambi described requiring emotional support, and Rock similarly noted that he values the pastoral staff's support to aid his self-development. Spencer, meanwhile, spoke of how she values the academic support she receives as a result of the details in her EHCP.

This invokes a humanistic philosophy centred around the growth and development of the individual (Schneider et al., 2014). A person-centred ethos permitting a sense of adaption for these YP, and championing individual needs appears to make YP feel supported (Manning, 2018; Selfe et al., 2018).

The relational dynamic of support might aid YP in developing positive, healthy attachments that provide relationships, and emotional containment for the YP (Bombèr, 2007). It could be understood as creating positive relationships with adults, which are not only practical but also containing in a psychodynamic sense, where the support staff are containing their emotions or concerns (Bion, 1963):

“If I have any problems, I've just had to, like, message on teams to J or to K (staff) and it's like they have my back or they send someone to have my back.” (Luna)

Adult support is used to aid academic progress in their education, which is adapted and flexibly suited to their needs (Robinson & Stalker, 2008). Some research suggests CYP with SEN may place greater value than their peers on relationships with teachers and educational staff, possibly leading to improved engagement and academic outcomes (Pérez-Salas et al., 2021).

These YP, having progressed through education and reached post-16, clearly have a good understanding of the support they require. Their experiences have been important in shaping their impressions of the support required. This may relate back to them having an EHCP, which, in turn, provides access to this support, it is a tool enabling them to feel adapted to, and it offers them access to relationships that feel important.

Robinson and Stalker (2008) describe this nicely, highlighting what support CYP with SEN may require, “getting the right balance to ensure adult interventions are truly enabling seems to require a high level of awareness and sensitivity, as well as continuing negotiation with children on an individual basis” (p. 83). The final part is referencing children, though I suggest is just as important for CYP of all ages, for whom adaptations around support may provide further empowerment in a person-centred, impactful way.

EHCP is a joint endeavour to create

For many of the participants, a further experiential theme presented in relation to support in their EHCP. There was a suggestion that the EHCP was not just about them, it was, in fact, a joint endeavour, involving other family members, school staff and professionals:

“A lot of these people on there, on me plan with, they have like helped me and they've, and they've shaped me to where I am now.” (Felix)

“This college is connected to each other, they don't abandon each do ya know department, they all like link up at some point.” (Bambi)

There is a clear relationship with the Ecological Systems Model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), in which various systems and layers interact, and directly influence the CYP at the centre. The micro and meso systems are interacting in these experiences, perhaps creating a sense that these YP are not alone; instead they are part of a wider system, which is comforting.

Engaging in effective multi-agency work with CYP with SEN is a feature of the SEND reforms (Frederickson & Cline, 2015). The model promotes holistic ways of working, joined up problem-solving approaches and increased efficiency (Alexander & Sked, 2010; Selfe et al., 2018). Although there are issues with utilising the multi-agency approach effectively, making sure people are aware of their contribution and roles, for example (McConnellogue, 2011; Solomon, 2019), it has gained support from people working with CYP with SEN, such as families and educational support staff (Barnes, 2008).

Bambi described feeling as though college and the people there are ‘connected’ in her experience. Meanwhile, for Spencer, having people in her life contribute to her EHCP, and bringing in their points of view, appears important:

“Having the EHCP plan and having everyone, um, not just write it but contribute to it from their point of view will allow them to bring together their point of view about how they think that I'm doing.” (Spencer)

From the systemic perspective, the functioning of the systems around the YP appears important. Luna seemed to know the people involved, but was not sure of everyone's role,

referring to 'people from the council'. It might be that she was not clearly informed who all the people are, and the reasons for their involvement.

There is little research asking CYP with EHCPs what this multi-agency approach is like. Questioning along those lines may include how they feel it is best utilised or how it feels like as they progress through education, for example. Most of the YP interviewed in this study seemed to take comfort from how these systems feel connected, as highlighted in some previous small-scale studies with CYP (Harris & Allen, 2011).

Joined-up approaches are often implemented but then we do not ask the people at the centre what it has happened or how it was experienced. If we did, we could learn and thus provide improved support or implement methods in multi-agency practices that CYP feel are suited to, and beneficial for them.

Experience around YPs' progression

EHCP experienced as a path towards adulthood

The next theme noted during the analysis was participants suggesting the EHCP is enabling their progression towards their aspirations. It appeared to be a tool allowing them to move forward in their lives, and provided some of the more descriptive language during the interviews.

The CoP (DfE & DoH, 2015) outlines that section E of EHCPs should specify outcomes:

EHC plans should be focused on education and training, health and care outcomes that will enable children and young people to progress in their learning and, as they get older, to be well prepared for adulthood. (section 9.64)

Outcomes are a fundamental part of EHCPs, they are supposed to be linked to CYPs needs and future aspirations (Bason, 2018). Outcomes are refined and developed over the educational journey of the CYP, according to legislation. Part of the interviews included reading through outcomes that had been set for the YP in their EHCPs. This offered a chance for YP to discuss their experiences and how they viewed the outcomes in their plans.

In SDT the third psychological construct described as fundamental in allowing people to experience positive human development, and intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, is that of competence (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Essentially the belief is that as a person if you can experience success and grow, then you are more likely to achieve your goals (Atkinson et

al., 2018). This construct of competence is an area I believe is relevant to these YPs' sense of achievement and belief in themselves.

Some participants were eager to highlight their outcomes and how they were supported by staff to achieve them:

“What K (staff) is trying to put into place is she's trying to push me out and do you know, make me go out with friends and that.” (Bambi)

They also noted how important the outcomes are to them, and the positive impact they are having by encouraging them to strive towards their goals and develop as individuals:

“So having those goals within the EHCP and allowing everyone to see them will allow them to build me as a person.” (Spencer)

It may be that by having these outcomes/targets in their EHCP and achieving them, they are experiencing a sense of competency. This may be motivating, and impact YPs' willingness to challenge themselves and progress.

Along with feeling competence in their experiences having these outcomes can also boost their sense of self. Bambi referenced how things can be difficult at first, but after trying, and possibly failing, but then succeeding, she experiences a sense of accomplishment. Dweck (2007) developed a psychological theory around a growth mindset that has been widely utilised and researched with varying results in studies concerning CYP with SEN (De Carvalho & Skipper, 2020; Savvides & Bond, 2021; Verberg et al., 2022). It has been found CYP who show a tendency to embrace a growth mindset, as opposed to a fixed mindset, tend to welcome challenges and test themselves throughout education (Dweck, 2007; Zeng et al., 2016).

Clear, achievable outcomes in the EHCP and the YP reaching those outcomes, may foster a growth mindset, supporting YP to feel confident about taking on future challenges. Ultimately this might set them up for future success, which is impactful for YPs' sense of self. They are forward-facing and motivated to reach their targets and aspirations, and crucially, they believe they can.

The YP in this study offered interesting descriptions regarding their progress, using terms such as 'pathway', 'building' and 'journey' during the interviews:

“To try and put me on that path and to get me into work.” (Luna)

“Because it allows that person to be informed of the things that I can do and the things that I might need help with and building on that they can know, and then they can build on that themselves.” (Spencer)

These descriptions invoke a sense that the YP are progressing towards something. Some targets related to goals in the PfA guidance, community inclusion and employment were specifically mentioned by Bambi and Luna, for example. Spencer spoke of the outcomes as building her in a more holistic sense, thereby aiding her progression as a developing person.

Pearpoint et al. (1993) created the Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH) as a person-centred, visual method of creating future plans and goals for people and systems such as schools. Research has documented favourable outcomes when implementing the philosophy with CYP with SEN (Carpenter et al., 2023; Wood et al., 2019).

In this study the EHCP appeared to be experienced as a framework laying a metaphorical path for participants. The language used by these YP, backed by interpreting how the EHCP might be experienced for them, matches well with the types of approaches/tools that PATH provides. The EHCP is supposed to be outcome driven, aiding the CYP in reaching aspirations. The evidence here suggests YP are aware that is the case.

Experience of hearing the contents of their EHCP

Out-of-date and inaccessible language in the EHCP

Several sub-themes stood out during the analysis phase of the study concerning the participants' experiences of hearing information from their EHCPs. Some YP reflected about the information in the plan being confusing for them, they struggled to understand parts of it, and some information in the document appeared to be out-of-date:

“I'm not sure what it means by that.2 (Rock)

The language used in EHCPs creates a perception of who these YP are, and how professionals, who inevitably write these plans, view CYP who have them. Language has socio-cultural origins and is a tool for humans to engage with society, used as a type of symbolic instrument (Vygotsky, 1978). Language can be adopted to create identities. It is a complex, dynamic discourse that is of great interest to researchers in many disciplines, such as anthropology, sociology and psychology (Norton & Toohey, 2011).

The language used in the EHCP is important. If the EHCP philosophy is to work with CYP, bring out their voice and fundamentally include them in the creation of the plans, then the language in the EHCPs must be accessible and accurate.

Billington (2006) in his reflections on work with children, particularly children classed as vulnerable or with SEN, presented five questions professionals should reflect on when working with CYP, one being “How do we write of children?” (p. 8). This is important because documents about CYP are often shared during transitions or assessments, for example, with professionals, families and the CYP themselves. The narrative in the documents forges an identity for the CYP (Thomas & Loxley, 2022). If language creates meaning and identity, then it is vital when writing about CYP that it is accurate, up-to-date and truthful.

During the interview, Rock appeared troubled with information about him that was inaccessible or, historic and likewise, missing information he felt important to include. Bambi experienced the descriptions as ‘adult-versions’ of herself, and Felix felt some information was not describing him anymore.

“Some are still true, but the, but the rest of them they’ve I’m way, way, um, ahead of that, I feel.” (Felix)

These are first-hand accounts from CYP with EHCPs about the language used in them. It is incumbent on us, as professionals, to take this on board and improve not only the language we use but also the practice around writing EHCPs.

Goodley (2012) approaches the role of language, both spoken and written, concerning how it creates a discourse of how we identify and frame people, in a way that is never neutral but inherently influenced by social contexts and the very framework of language itself. This is especially true in creating language around SEN and people with disabilities, whereby a power dynamic may be created where professionals describe what is ‘wrong’ with CYP, furthering a sense of ableist societal discourse.

Words and language can have a limiting effect on such people. Philosophers have posited that we may come to understand ourselves through the discourse of language, propagated by institutional regimes such as education (Foucault, 1973). Cameron (2017) reflects that it is incumbent on professionals to consider how language they use to describe CYP can potentially have negative connotations, for instance, if we categorise and potentially limit CYP through our descriptions of them.

CYP are not only entitled to read these plans but are also supposed to describe and fundamentally be a representation of them. Future research and discussion might focus on

how EHCPs are developed and maintained, as well as the language used within them. In my professional experiences I am aware everything I write about CYP will be read by them or fed back to them. This places importance on the words used and how they are presented in documents such as EHCPs.

Lack of awareness of the EHCP

In respect to being aware of their EHCPs throughout their education it appears Felix, Bambi and particularly Rock were somewhat unaware of the plan and what it recorded. The CoP (DfE & DoH, 2015) makes clear that, especially from year nine onwards, CYP should be fully involved in discussions around their future:

As young people develop, and increasingly form their own views, they should be involved more and more closely in decisions about their own future. After compulsory school age (the end of the academic year in which they turn 16) the right to make requests and decisions under the Children and Families Act 2014 applies to them directly, rather than to their parents. (p. 126 section 8.13)

The participants in this study are in post-16, which means they should be aware of the pathways, outcomes and aspirations set out in their EHCPs. During the interviews, it appeared that some participants did not have the knowledge of their plan the CoP emphasises:

“I wasn't that aware of it because I don't think schools or teachers or anyone makes it really aware that you have one.” (Rock)

Rock expressed feelings as though his education settings and staff have not made him aware of his EHCP and that he would not like this document to be considered as a reflection of everything he is:

“But you should really take it with a grain of salt since this doesn't explain everything, like I don't want people to read that and like think oh, right, so he is like only socialise on his own terms, so that means he might only, like he might be like, want things or demand things, and it's like, that's not true. I don't want people to make assumptions based on just a little bit of info about me.” (Rock)

Rock might feel it has been kept from him, a type of 'secret' document used to monitor him in some ways. This would go against the philosophy of EHCPs being inclusive, person-centred plans, used to empower CYP who have them, and positioned as central to decision-making during their education (Frederickson & Cline, 2015). The scenario would link to proposals

that CYP with SEND feeling somewhat hidden away, out of sight and akin to a kind of secret (Allsopp, 2019; Samuel, 2003).

CYP being unaware of their EHCPs has been flagged and researched previously, notably in a Department for Education survey about participation in EHCP plans (Adams et al., 2017). In this study, there was a high proportion of surveyed CYP explaining they were unaware of them, thus possibly removed from work to develop their outcomes or future aspirations.

CYP involvement in making decisions about their education can have far-reaching benefits when it relates to engaging in wider society once they leave education, for example making decisions about future employment or where want to live (Sharma, 2021). It is incumbent on professionals to not only make CYP aware of their EHCPs but also actively involve them in their EHCPs production, especially from year nine onwards as they approach adulthood.

This study suggests CYP may not always be aware of their EHCPs. Perhaps how EHCPs are presented to CYP should be a future consideration. Are they explained in a way that is accessible to the CYP for example? Are they aware of what is documented in them, and perhaps as importantly why certain information is logged? Securing these variables is fundamental to promoting inclusion and engaging CYP in their EHCP process.

Pride and positivity

A final sub-theme that emerged when reading through the plans with the participants was some experiencing an apparent sense of pride, especially when hearing outcomes they believed they had achieved.

Luna felt the language used in the plan was presented more positively than it had been previously. Bambi was positive about her progress from where she started. Spencer and Felix similarly expressed a sense of pride and motivation around what they had achieved and where the plan might be taking them in the future:

“I think to me they are important, I think it empowers me to achieve them.” (Spencer)

“I feel as if they're, I've passed them, which is, which is actually in a way, it makes me feel quite proud to know them targets when I were little I've passed them.” (Felix)

This may be experienced as a motivational factor for YP, whereby their progress is tangible and they are focused on what they are aiming to achieve when they leave education.

Motivation has been discussed previously in this study and is linked to the psychological construct of the Hierarchy of Needs, where personal motivations may increase as you progress through the stages (Maslow, 1970), and SDT, where extrinsic and intrinsic

motivation is linked to having positive associations with the three psychological constructs (Ryan & Deci, 2000). How individuals learn and how they use motivation in their learning have been of much interest to researchers and educators (Sorrentino & Higgins, 1996). Some psychotherapy practices propose that the motivation to change potentially leads to better outcomes for people, as studied through approaches such as motivational interviewing (Arkowitz et al., 2015).

For CYP with SEN, the role of motivation and how they experience success is currently under-studied. Kocaj et al. (2018) suggest that CYP with SEN may benefit from individual feedback about their progress because of the competitive environment of education. Social comparisons to peers are potentially detrimental if they believe they are not at a similar academic level. CYP can lose the motivation to try if this sense of negative comparison is experienced. Individualised feedback, adapted in a way that promotes their achievements is highlighted as an effective way of motivating CYP with SEN (Kocaj et al., 2018).

An interpretation of mine was that some YP experienced pride in hearing they had progressed, and met outcomes. It might be if this feeling of pride that accompanies academic progress and achieving outcomes is fed back to CYP with EHCPs, it could be motivating and impactful for them in a multitude of ways.

During the interviews, I interpreted that this was new information to some participants. It may be that educational settings are not accessibly communicating the progress the CYP is making. If they did this, it could be important for helping CYP with EHCPs perceive exactly where they are, what they have achieved, and what is coming next. That could boost their motivation and evoke a feeling of pride in their achievements and progression:

“You know, you know, look, look, it's fine, it's okay, you're not on your own go and go and fly.” (Felix)

Research questions table

Table 4 outlines which GETs and experiential sub-themes answer the study's questions. Some appear in multiple sections but are congruent with the questions' themes.

Table 4: GETs and sub-themes corresponding to research questions

Research Questions	GETs and Sub-themes related to specific questions
1. <i>How have mainstream post-16 students with Education, Health and Care Plans experienced education?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Past negative experiences of not having a voice during education</i> - <i>Feelings around being an 'other'</i> - <i>Having an EHCP/SEND in education and being compared to peers</i> - <i>Acceptance of 'otherness'</i> - <i>Strengthening systems for the future</i> - <i>Not feeling understood</i>
2. <i>How have these young people experienced their Education, Health and Care Plans during their education?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Empowerment experienced from gaining a voice through EHCP</i> - <i>EHCP meetings and being part of the conversation</i> - <i>Having an EHCP/SEND in education and being compared to peers</i> - <i>EHCP enables understanding</i> - <i>EHCP enables staff/systems to adapt – meet individuals' needs</i> - <i>EHCP is a joint endeavour to create</i> - <i>EHCP experienced as a path towards adulthood</i> - <i>Lack of awareness of the EHCP</i>
3. <i>What is it like for young people to hear the contents of their Education, Health and Care Plans?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Out-of-date and inaccessible language in the EHCP</i> - <i>Lack of awareness of EHCP</i> - <i>Pride and positivity</i>

Chapter 6: Conclusions, limitations and future recommendations

Introduction

This chapter makes particular reference to the fourth research question:

What can professionals working with young people with Education, Health and Care Plans learn from their experiences?

Recommendations for professionals are made below as a result of carrying out these interviews with YP who have EHCPs, analysing the transcripts and discussing the findings in the previous chapter. I also outline limitations of this study and make further recommendations for future research that will be useful to extend the findings of this work.

Conclusions

This research had the goal of interpreting YPs experiences of having an EHCP during their education, having now arrived in post-16 education. I set out to gain insight into what had happened for them, and how they experienced it, both during their education and when hearing the contents of the EHCP during the interviews, with the aim of highlighting any themes or significant talking points arising.

The study highlighted a diverse set of experiences for these YP with EHCPs, and it also noted some distinct group themes that appear important. I benefited from using IPA methodology, where convergence and divergence are celebrated (Willig, 2013). It allowed me to reference individual accounts alongside more general experiences of the participants, without relying on quantitative methods of classifying findings. This freedom was at times challenging, as it allowed for a seemingly infinite number of interpretations and themes, but it was also freeing in a sense, as it meant I was not desperately searching for a type of 'group norm'.

There was a clear theme around the YP having a voice in aspects of their education, being included in the construction of their EHCP journeys and ultimately feeling, or not feeling heard. I have described it as having a voice, though accept this is a term that is complex and cannot easily be categorised, especially in research with CYP (James, 2007; Facca et al., 2020). These cited articles explore the challenges and complexities that relate to child voice as a concept, how in research it might be represented and why it is challenging to find a type of 'best practice' related to voice. I interpreted that when the YP in this study felt they were being heard, were active participants in their EHCPs and thus had a say in their education, it felt overwhelmingly positive for them.

The opposite experience, that of not being heard or engaged appropriately, brought with it negative experiences, highlighting a theme of apparent lack of involvement of CYP with EHCPs, previously referred to in studies (Cochrane & Soni, 2020). This suggests that a person-centred, humanistic construct of involvement, voice and feeling they are being actively engaged is important in allowing CYP to feel a sense of autonomy.

In addition, adapting to the YPs' style of engagement was important, that is, not just taking a 'one-size fits all' approach, but instead making sure the YP were given options for how they could contribute to annual reviews of their EHCP. Furthermore, ensuring they were consulted on whether they believed academic and/or pastoral support from staff would help them, and how they would ideally like that to be arranged. To truly promote person-centred practice we must be inclusive and ask CYP, as the very people that are experts in themselves (White & Rae, 2016), for their insights into how they would like to be involved, and what would benefit them.

I believe this is significant because it might seem having a voice is an obvious outcome for YP with EHCPs, but it is essential that it is coming from actual experiences of these participants. Of note was the apparent experience that during their secondary education there was a theme of YP not being as involved, or feeling heard, compared to when they entered their post-16 education. This indicates that practices in secondary education must be improved and developed to effectively involve CYP in their EHCP. This is particularly important because of the PfA agenda for CYP with EHCPs, beginning in year nine, to subsequently support their transition into adulthood, where they will naturally take greater control of decisions in their lives.

Throughout the research a link could be made between the YPs experiences and that of the theoretical framework of self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Atkinson et al. (2018) explain that "to be self-determined enables individuals to engage in goal-directed behaviours and thus steer their own outcomes" (p. 222). The three key components; competence, relatedness and autonomy, are regarded to be necessary to foster feelings of determination and optimism. It follows that these YP, who are all sixteen years old and above, value such constructs, and they enable them to feel motivated in their education, and wider lives, when experienced positively. As YP move closer to maturity, actively talking with them about how professionals may assist and concentrate on the three areas of SDT, providing related opportunities which could be transformational. This should be actively incorporated throughout their education.

For some YP in this study there were themes around their experiences of having an EHCP, and thus labelled as having SEN while progressing through education. One of those was the

apparent experience of feeling as though they were a kind of 'other', especially when comparing themselves to peers. Education and society have set up systems that rank, assess and fundamentally divide CYP into categories (Williams et al., 2017). One of these categories is SEN and another is requiring an EHCP. Conclusions from this study highlight that we are not good at exploring, acknowledging and adequately supporting CYP who have EHCPs and the educational systems for those CYP.

The 'extra support' that the EHCP may provide also comes with an implicit message that the CYP are outside the realms of what settings can support, and thus need this plan, in a process whereby they are 'othered'. The need for consideration of what it be these CYP, and how we, as professionals, can help and support CYP is a key conclusion from this study. Educational settings must better understand the social and psychological experience that comes with having an EHCP, psychologists are well placed to develop thinking around this area.

The YP in this study reported an experience of feeling understood due to their EHCP, this was interpreted to be a positive, removing their need to constantly explain themselves to staff or professionals. Divergence appeared when participants did not feel understood, thus experiencing negative emotions, which were often related to the feeling that staff had not read, or abided by their EHCP. This was an interesting finding, suggesting relationships both in educational settings and outside, when positive, contribute to instilling a connected feeling to their progress, experienced as comforting and important. These YP gain a sense that they are not alone. Instead, they can feel understood and have relationships, people are connecting with each other (staff, family, professionals) to create a sense of unity and psychological safety ensues.

Further conclusions were that the language used in EHCPs is sometimes not understandable for the YP and historic information, especially about negative incidents, appeared to be felt as not relevant. YP might not want to be judged by past events recorded in EHCPs. There was some surprise at the contents of the EHCPs, as well as some YP appearing unaware they had one, a scenario that has been previously noted (Daw, 2020). Processes around explaining what an EHCP is and what information goes in one must be better considered, especially with regard to discussing with CYP who have them. This would inherently provide more transparency with CYP, and we could learn more about what is important for YP to see this included in their EHCPs.

A final conclusion relates to how YP appear to view, and often describe, their EHCPs as advancing them on a pathway, or forming part of building them towards the future. There was a sense of pride for some participants in believing they had exceeded outcomes and

were moving further down this path. I believe this could be presented to CYP with EHCPs in a more accessible, understandable way, as opposed to it being documented in a plan, which is computer-based and not readily accessible to the CYP. Implementing a more interactive, visual and accessible format of EHCPs, so that CYP are aware of their 'pathway', would be of benefit. As part of this reformatting, it would be advantageous to set out why outcomes are deemed important. A crucial consideration is how important it is that they can celebrate their progress, providing this to CYP with EHCPs could increase their motivation as CYP progress through education.

Limitations

This study was a small-scale research project and thus had a small sample of five YP who have EHCPs, therefore, it is necessary to accept that the experiences are specific to these five participants. In this sense, it cannot be claimed the findings necessarily extend to the wider population of CYP with EHCPs, however, this is widely accepted in qualitative methodology, and especially in IPA (Smith et al., 2022).

Although my interview schedules did go through a process of quality assurance (appendix 12) aimed at providing transparency in my research, I accept that my questions and prompts may have led participants into certain subject areas. This means that answers may have been shaped by questions I asked, and not as free-flowing as I would have liked at points during the interviews. I view this as a necessary limitation because though I was interested in all the YPs experiences of life and education, I had to keep to questions mainly related to my research areas of interest.

I attempted to keep my questioning related to the YPs experiences, how they felt, and what events meant to them for example, as is recommended when using IPA. Occasionally, I felt the questioning was challenging for YP to comprehend and answer. Searching for these experiential points may have been something the YP had not experienced before, and I was aware this may have been difficult for them in the interview setting. It was an unusual situation for them, although through initial rapport building and attempting to make them totally aware and comfortable in the situation, I believe I combatted some of these potential issues.

During the study, I have aimed to be reflective and reflexive, providing my thoughts and reflections at certain points, provided evidence of the analytical process, and I used pictures and documents to display transparency in my work. However, I accept that I was an active participant in interview interactions. It is impossible for me to completely shut off, or bracket

my previous experiences as a human-being. As such, I am a participant in the process. The YP and I perhaps had different expectations, and we may hold different views on what is important. In this type of interview, such complexities around dynamics can be challenging (Potter & Hepburn, 2005).

The interpretations of interviews are inherently from my perspective, which is part of the double hermeneutic process advocated in IPA studies (Smith et al., 2022). Throughout, I have attempted to manage this by talking through and defending my findings with my RS, the IPA group created in my university cohort and by discussing them with professional colleagues working in Educational Psychology. During these interactions, I have explained my interpretations, and at times altered, or expanded after these discussions. Using grids developed and recommended for qualitative and IPA-specific studies (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011; Kacprzak, 2017), I have tracked my research journey, using criteria I believe present evidence this research is a quality study (appendix 29 & table 2). I have also attached extracts from my reflective diary to demonstrate reflexive practice in this research (appendix 30).

I consider that if I had more time or opportunity, I could have presented my findings to the participants, as gaining their opinions on the themes interpreted may have been beneficial. I could have included elements of participatory research, viewed as positive, particularly for marginal groups such as CYP with SEN, as it encourages co-production in research areas that directly affect them (Fleming et al., 2023). On reflection, as a novice researcher. I held to a fairly linear structure of research, supported by texts and colleagues so as to feel comfortable in my work.

Recommendations

The following recommendations link to the findings and discussion points developed in this study. I have split them into short sections and have referenced where there are professionals or individuals related to the specific recommendations. The recommendations are tentative, but I believe they are important to consider in supporting, including and actively engaging CYP in their EHCP journeys.

- CYP with EHCPs must feel heard and involved during their education. This requires positive practices around gathering their views regularly and, as importantly, in a style/practice that suits them individually. This should not be confined to an annual review meeting once a year but should be individual to them and creative. It is also important that this philosophy is embraced as early as possible during their education

so they experience being heard and have an active influence on decisions made about them. For example, the type of support they believe they require should be discussed with them, calls for more academic assistance or pastoral staff support provide good illustrations of this need from the study. EPs are well placed to highlight inclusive practices and ideas that raise CYPs' voice and champion their active involvement with EHCPs.

- Educational settings should consider how they promote inclusivity and whether they should be more active in discussing SEN, disabilities and EHCPs with staff and pupils. This may help to alleviate an experience of the 'other' that CYP with EHCPs may develop while in education. If these factors were less 'hidden' and more openly discussed and accepted as part of the diversity of pupils it may alleviate the negativity that CYP with SEN experience. Settings discussing and acknowledging different sexualities, races and religious backgrounds, for example, should also consider including disabilities and SEN, so there might be less stigma around them, losing this 'hidden' narrative that may pervade. They should also consider wider advocacy roles for CYP with SEND. EPs, SENCOs and other teams involved in SEN might offer training or advice on a systemic level about how this could be approached and implemented.
- In educational settings SENCOs, teachers and other staff should actively make time to read through CYPs EHCPs and take notes of points that are significant for supporting the CYP. They should let CYP know they have the EHCP, and have read through it, but they are also aware it is a document updated yearly and finding out about them as a person, in the moment, is just as important. Fostering a sense of belonging and understanding is important.
- Language used in the EHCPs should be thoroughly checked and considered, and altered if deemed necessary. There should be consideration around the CYP reading the plans, as is their right, so thought must go into how they are described, language used and details of historic events that may not be required. If the EHCP is forward facing it would do well to highlight strengths, and areas for development, not historic details that may not be relevant. SEN professionals who write the plans should consider this when writing EHCPs.

- CYP should be aware of what an EHCP is for and who will be involved at the earliest point. One-page profiles of professionals such as EPs, Speech and Language therapists or Social workers, as an example, could be provided for CYP with EHCPs, so there is a better understanding of their roles in supporting their education and what they do. Efforts have recently been made to provide CYP with information about what an EHCP is through interactive means such as YouTube videos (Educational Psychology Reach-Out, 2022). Services should consider further ways of explaining EHCPs to CYP in ways that are accessible early in the process.
- Achieving outcomes and celebrating progress for CYP with EHCPs should be engrained in the process of feedback. Students who are aware they are progressing and as importantly what these outcomes are leading towards, progressing to adulthood or academic achievement, for example, may be more motivated and experience feelings of competency as they develop. Using visual strategies such as PATH (Pearpoint et al., 1993), documentation that involves an actual path or building blocks, or developing accessible outcome checklists for CYP should be explored. Feedback should not be confined to once a year, instead, SEN professionals could work with educational settings to provide and develop ideas to celebrate the success of these CYP regularly.
- Throughout this study there has been a link to SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and CYP experiences of being in education. Findings suggest that developing the constructs associated with SDT is positive for YP. As set out in the legislation these post-16 participants should have targets related to the PfA agenda. Table 5 highlights how the four pathways laid out in PfA might relate to psychological constructs in SDT. All three are not in every section; instead, I have selected the ones that relate well to the individual pathway title:

Table 5: Table linking PfA pathways to psychological SDT constructs

PfA pathway	SDT construct (bullet points are examples)
Employment	<p>Autonomy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being aware of own skills and values they can bring to job roles/reflecting on own experiences/developing own interests and potential areas of employment related to interests and skills <p>Competency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Searching for jobs via interactive websites/applying for jobs and creating a CV/practicing interviews/Taking part in work experience <p>Relatedness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to work with others and resolve conflicts when required/knowing whom to go to when requiring advice/forming positive, beneficial relationships
Independent Living	<p>Autonomy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a say in where they see themselves living in the future/choosing options and exploring alternatives <p>Competency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowing how and where to get information about independent living/displaying and developing skills that will benefit them when living independently
Community Inclusion	<p>Autonomy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making choices about what they would like to be involved in their community/feeling confident in knowing what is available and important to them <p>Relatedness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forming links in the community with other people when possible/having a support network that is beneficial/systems and professionals working with CYP to support inclusion
Health Pathway	<p>Autonomy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making decisions around health and what services are important to access for the CYP/researching health related amenities and activities in local area <p>Competency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being able to book appointments with health professionals independently/taking advice and carrying out recommendations afterward

- Because pathways are closely related to the psychological SDT constructs a recommendation is for settings to closely monitor and record what they are supporting with or putting in place for CYP with EHCPs, to develop these specific areas. Atkinson et al. (2018) developed an SDT-interdependence model in relation to supporting CYP in care. I would advocate embracing a similar model when supporting CYP with EHCPs as they progress toward adulthood. I have developed a simple example which could be used to track what systems are doing to promote autonomy, competency and relatedness for CYP on their EHCP journey (appendix 31). I would advocate sharing it with CYP, families and professionals and updating it alongside EHCP information as part of good practice.

Future research

Regarding future research, there is still much to learn about EHCPs, their functions in education and CYP experiences when having one. Participatory research in which CYP work in partnership with SEN professionals to develop practices, problem-solve and construct new versions of how an EHCP might operationally work may be valuable. CYP presenting their work to educational professionals, especially those working in SEN, might be beneficial in better understanding how to develop EHCP practice.

It may be important to study the roles that outcomes in EHCPs play in CYPs' education and if they are valuable to their long-term progress. It would be interesting to know how they are constructed, who has the final say in them being developed and how these processes might be improved in the future.

Finally, I believe there is much more to be explored around one of the key findings of this study, that of having an EHCP and the relationship to possibly feeling as though you are an 'other', specifically in mainstream education. Case studies, longitudinal studies, or ethnographic research might be valuable in attempting to further explore this dynamic for CYP with EHCPs. We should seek to learn more about how this potential experience might manifest, and how we can support CYP/settings in these cases, potentially on a more systemic level. There is value in gaining a better understanding and acknowledging our roles in creating systems that separate CYP, even when they are in the same settings, and how this relates to CYP's experiences and the wider inclusion agenda in education.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: EHCP sections outlined in CoP

Section A	The views, interests and aspirations of the child and his parents or the young person
Section B	The child or young person's special educational needs (SEN)
Section C	The child or young person's health care needs that relate to their SEN
Section D	The child or young person's social care needs that relate to their SEN
Section E	The planned outcomes or outcomes sought for the child or young person
Section F	The special educational provision (provision which 'educates or trains is not health or social care provision it is educational).
Section G	Any health care provision reasonably required by the learning difficulties or disabilities
Section H	Any social care provision that must be made for the child or young person under 18
Section H2	Any other social care provision required that is related to their SEN
Section I	The name of the school or other institution to be attended, and the type of that institution (or just the type if no specific institution is named)
Section J	Details of how any personal budget will support particular outcomes and the provision it will be used for
Section K	Copies of all of the advice and information obtained as part of the EHC needs assessment

Appendix 2: Ethics application

1. Aims & Objectives

My research is interested in children and young peoples (CYP) experiences of the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) process. Focussing on how they have experienced their education with these plans. I would like to explore how they view these plans, which are based on their educational and aspirational pathways in retrospect now they have completed their secondary education. If they believe, they are/have contributed positively to their future as they have progressed towards further education and adulthood.

EHCPs were introduced as part of legislation set out in English Government acts. In particular, The Children's and Families Act (2014) and the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice (CoP) (2015) were part of what was known as the SEN reforms in education a little under a decade ago. It was promoted as a shift in culture and legislation around CYP described as having SEN in the educational system.

Part of the reforms was the abolishment of statements of SEN and the introduction of the EHCP for CYP who were thought to require it (usually through an allocation process at local authority panels consisting of educational professionals). They are called Education, Health and Care plans because they are anticipated to be a collaborative document covering the CYP educational, health and social care needs and what support or professionals they might need to be involved in these separate areas to support their progression.

The EHCPs, in government legislation in The Children's and Families Act (2014) and the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (2015), are described as a plan to support CYP in education and their lives in general. Described as child-centered and a break away from the more deficit-driven model of the previous system, which tended to only highlight deficits/disabilities a CYP may have related to learning (Frederickson et al., 2015).

EHCPs are allocated when mainstream educational settings, after a period of assessment, meetings and reviews cannot adequately meet the needs of a CYP with the resources normally available to them.

For the CYP who have been allocated an EHCP their journey through this process could include assessments regarding their learning, social needs and health. It includes regular reviews with school staff, family and outside services such as Psychological Services or Speech and Language teams. It will outline regular interventions in their educational settings outside of the 'normal' classroom experience, for example a reading or social skills intervention or the allocation of a Teaching Assistant to support them in their learning.

The plan includes a description of the CYP's perceived strengths and difficulties. Linked to the areas of difficulties are outcomes the CYP is aiming to achieve along with the support/provision that is intended to help them meet these outcomes. A clear focus on the CYP aspirations and that of their family/guardians is also incorporated.

There is clear guidance in the legislation that CYP who have these plans are involved in the process. Their voices/views are central and there is the development of outcomes in partnership with those that support the CYP. This is outlined in legislation and becomes especially important as the CYP reaches year 9 of their education. At this point, the preparation for adulthood (PIA) agenda begins, which states that outcomes in the plans for the CYP should be targeted toward adulthood. Being aspirational for CYP with SEN is central to the SEN reforms.

I would like to explore areas such as whether they have felt empowered and central to guiding the outcomes in these plans and what it might represent to them to have a plan such as this. There is little current research asking the actual YP who have been allocated an EHCP about their experiences of this process and deeper exploration of how they have engaged or maybe have not, in this person-centered ethos the EHCP claims to incorporate.

This is important because it can inform us as Educational Psychologists in how we engage and work with CYP who have EHCPs. It may also be valuable for other professionals involved to understand what YP think about it as someone who has this plan, what they find valuable or ways in which they have experienced positive and negative aspects of the journey. It will be valuable to families, educational providers and SEN professionals to reflect on their involvement in this process for example.

To summarise the aim of the study is to try and gain a better understanding of what young peoples experiences are in education when they have an EHCP and all that goes along with having a plan like this. How they have felt, what has happened and who has been involved for example. I believe this is important because of the current lack of the CYP voice in this field of research, it is an avenue that has not yet been explored and requires investigation.

Current research questions -

How have young people experienced their Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) journey through their education?

What can young people's experiences of their EHCP journey teach professionals about how they can involve themselves in the process effectively?

2. Methodology

The methodology I am planning to use will be Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). IPA is both a qualitative and phenomenological methodology that is concerned with how individuals attempt to make sense of the world, focused on their unique, subjective experiences. IPA seeks to gain an understanding of how people ascribe meaning to their experiences in the context and is interpretive.

IPA accepts the impossibility of ever truly gaining access to another person's experience but attempts to interpret their experiences via the researcher. This process is known as a double hermeneutic, wherein the researcher is looking to make sense of the participant's attempts to make sense of their experiences.

IPA is also interested in people when experiences take on significant importance in their lives and how they engage with and interpret that. In this case I would suggest a CYP being allocated an EHCP to support their education, outline support needs and guide them towards constructed outcomes of profound significance to those who have them. A methodology that encourages interpretive, open-ended elaborative inquiry and is exploratory in its ethos fits well with the research questions and area of inquiry.

The method I am aiming to gather data will be through semi-structured interviews with YP who have been allocated an EHCP. This method is often used in IPA studies and is seen as an appropriate way of carrying out this type of research which has an interpretive lens. It will allow me as a researcher to explore topic areas of interest and allow participants to elaborate, allowing for other potential avenues of inquiry to emerge.

The topics/areas I will aim to explore during the semi-structured interviews will be –

- Their experiences of education generally as a YP with an EHCP, is it something they have been aware of and how for example
- Their involvement in the plans, what has happened, how they have been engaged and how they have contributed to the plans, have they felt empowered or marginalised for example
- Exploration of their experiences of the support put in place for them during their education due to these plans
- How it has felt to be a person who has a plan such as this in relation to peers who do not for example
- Which professionals and adults have been involved in their EHCP journey and how has this felt and been experienced for them

- Their thoughts on EHCPs as a YP who has one and in what way do they think it has played a role in their education

I will also have the YPs EHCP with us in document form during the semi-structured interviews as a prompt. This will be beneficial in allowing the participants to engage in a meaning-making process in the interview and enable reflections on the content of the plans. This will include the ways they have been involved and whether the descriptions and outcomes reflect and represent them as the person the document is about. When using IPA Smith, Flowers & Larkin (2022) advocate the use of prompts to develop conversation and allow participants to consider past experiences. During the interviews, we will look through and discuss the participants views about the document together at the beginning before leading into semi-structured topics and questions.

Interview schedule

0-5 minutes

Introduction, asking participants whether they are happy to participate, going through info sheet and signing the consent form (if not signed before). I will ask them to pick an appropriate pseudonym to use in the analysis.

5 – 10 minutes

I will ask participants for biographical information this will be their age, previous educational provider and current area of study.

10-20 minutes

Ask participants to look through EHCP together, encourage them to comment and I will help read through with them if necessary.

20-45 minutes

Go through semi-structured questions about YP experiences of having an EHCP through their education. I will encourage participants to expand on answers and heavily focus on what happened and how they experienced/felt about and feel about it now they are reflecting on it.

45-55 minutes

Ask if participants have any further questions or require any more information. Provide them with support services contact if they require it. Make sure they have my contact details on a debrief document if they need any further clarification.

55-60 minutes

Thank participants for their time and reiterate how grateful I am to them for taking part.

Interviews will take place in person in the participant's educational providers building, this will be negotiated with the setting as to where will be appropriate/accessible. Interviews will last 1 hour maximum and there will be one interview per participant. Those present at interviews will be me and the participant. This is what I anticipate however once a participant is interested in taking part in discussions beforehand we can jointly decide if having a family member or staff member present would be appropriate in individual cases.

Plan B if in-person interviews were not possible for any reason would be to offer the interview to take place online at a convenient time for the participant using University approved software.

Analysis of the interviews will be carried out with support from my research supervisor. I will follow published procedures around the techniques used in analysing data in IPA research. There are various steps to follow that have been published which provide guidance around validity and reliability regarding this type of research. This scrutiny and rigour will be documented throughout my research write-up.

3. Personal Safety

Have you completed your departmental risk assessment procedures, if appropriate?

Not applicable

Raises personal safety issues?

No

I do not think there is any personal safety risks to myself as a researcher in this research. If any risks do develop I will discuss with my research supervisor and gather advice if necessary.

Section D: About the participants

1. Potential Participants

There will be a set of criteria for participants included in this study. I aim to recruit between 4-6 participants and the criteria will be –

- They will be in a mainstream post 16 setting, i.e College, Sixth form
- Have an EHCP and preferably had one throughout their secondary education
- Be able to verbally communicate and take part in an interview such as this. Smith, Flowers & Larkin (2022) in their discussion about IPA say in this method it is important to have articulate participants who have verbal communication skills. In this respect I will talk to the settings I am advertising my study and from this I will decide on an appropriate level of study for potential participants are enrolled on. For example level 1 upwards in terms of qualifications may be an appropriate cut-off point.

Because the participants will have an EHCP and therefore have been put under the umbrella of having Special Educational Needs (SEN) may come into the vulnerable category. For example they might have social, emotional and mental health needs, have a diagnosed condition such as autism or other disabilities for example. It is anticipated the YP may fall into the vulnerable group but I believe it is justified for this research because they are the sample I require to fulfill the study. This is due to the current lack of research from CYP who

have EHCPs and their experiences of the process. During my literature review I was able to find research/opinions of families and professionals on EHCPs but little if any about the actual people with EHCPs, it will have value and to the literature in a clear and relevant way to have their voices heard.

2. Recruiting Potential Participants

The initial stage of recruiting will involve me contacting post 16 settings in my placement authority to ask if they would be interested in being involved. This will be via an initial email explaining my project and asking if they would be interested in taking part. I will offer a face-to-face meeting or online once they have shown interest in participating.

After this I will ask them to display my advertisement poster, which is attached and will have my contact details on along with anyone in the educational setting that would be my link. This means potential participants will be able to contact me and I can answer any questions regarding the research and link with them beforehand. The poster will be displayed physically in the setting or if an online version is possible this will be used. If they are interested in taking part I will then offer them the chance to look at the information sheet and go through it with them either on the phone or in person if appropriate.

During this period I will work with a staff member in the educational setting who will have a relationship with potential participants and follow their guidance on engaging with them and appropriate strategies to communicate, provide information. This person will be an Inclusion Manager, Special Educational Needs Coordinator or equivalent in the setting. I will then offer a small group session to answer questions from potential participants. If participants are then willing to be included in the study we will move to the consent phase of the project.

During this period I will be clear about the intentions of my study, provide further information if required and answer any questions.

2.1. Advertising methods

Will the study be advertised using the volunteer lists for staff or students maintained by IT Services? No

- not entered -

3. Consent

Will informed consent be obtained from the participants? (i.e. the proposed process) Yes

Consent from participants after the initial recruiting process will be sought via a consent form attached which I will ask them to sign. The consent form will be explained to participants by myself and the link person in the College and kept on record. Any questions or queries will be answered throughout the process and participants will have my contact details if they want to discuss further.

My research will be involving young people who are 16 years old or older. In terms of consent that would mean if I were to use BPS guidelines, they can give consent and take part without parent/carer involvement (assuming capacity).

However, the University of Sheffield code of ethics, guided by the UREC states that young people under the age of 18 require parent/carer consent. I will follow these guidelines and if a young person under 18 is interested in taking part I will contact their parent/carers via phone call in the first instance to make them aware of their child's interest, talk to them about the project, what it will involve and answer any questions they may have. I will offer to post or email the information sheet if they would like to look at it and give them my contact details.

Finally, I will post or email parent/carers an opt-out form (attached below). If they decide they do not want their child to take part after further consideration I will ask them to send the form back signed and dated. I will have a deadline on the form of two weeks after sending and if it is not returned by then I will take as informed consent from parent/carers for their child to participate.

If a young person wanting to take part is 18 and above they will be able to give consent without parent/carer consent, providing they have capacity according to the 'Gillick' or 'Frazer' competency tests. I will liaise with the young person's setting around this as they know the young people best, regarding whether they feel contacting parent/carers would be appropriate. On balance, I think it would be beneficial for me to contact parent/carers and anticipate doing this for every potential participant even if they are over the age of 18.

During the process of research consent for participants will be ongoing and I will make it clear that just because a participant has signed a consent form they are still free to pull out at any time without issue. I will make this clear throughout our time together and make my language accessible and understandable around this, with support from setting staff if required.

4. Payment

Will financial/in kind payments be offered to participants? No

5. Potential Harm to Participants

What is the potential for physical and/or psychological harm/distress to the participants?

I will be carrying out interviews with my participants. There is potential they will be asked to discuss negative experiences from their past or topics that may cause them some psychological distress. I will be aware of the potential for this to happen and manage this in ways set out below.

How will this be managed to ensure appropriate protection and well-being of the participants?

As a researcher, I am currently a second-year TEP and have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check carried out through Sheffield University which I have a paper record.

The objective of the project is to gain a sense of YPs experiences and in this sense it could cover topics during interviews that cause participants to reflect on potentially negative experiences and cover topics that are difficult for them to think about. For example going into discussions about their needs, disabilities or difficult moments in their lives. They will also be asked to look at (in their EHCPs) and negative descriptions of themselves from professional discourses they may not have previously had access to. It is highlighted in EHCP legislation that the movement is about empowering CYP and them being central to all processes, with their voice and views at the centre. It would then be expected that information and assessments about them are accessible to them. So things written about them should enhance their empowerment and participation in their progression. It will be important as a researcher I am aware of this and am open to hearing their views and emotions in a supportive, empathetic way, especially during interviews. I will reframe interpretations if appropriate and make them aware that their input is important and could be influential.

It will be important to make sure they know that as a researcher I will not be able to change anything for them and my role is limited in this way to dispel any expectations. I will adopt empathetic, respectful approaches in interviews and use an open, honest style allowing participants to feel comfortable, building rapport beforehand will be part of this. My interviews will cover topics relevant to the research and I will ask participants to expand on answers when appropriate.

There is a possibility taking part in this study could affect participants' relationships with young people and educational staff or families for example. This might be if we talk about these people's roles in their experiences. If so I will offer a follow-up session with participants and the people referenced to talk about any issues brought up, aiming to find solutions and resolutions if required.

I will end an interview without hesitation if I feel a participant is too distressed to continue. All participants will be welcome to withdraw at any point and this will be emphasised throughout.

Further ways I will consider potential harms and attempt to limit them include –

- Providing participants with information before interviews about what EHCPs are if they would like to find out more, I could provide links to the Code of Practice which is the legal act that outlines what they are and how they should be implemented with children and young people
- Make the interview times flexible according to the participant's availability so it does not conflict with their education, i.e. not in lesson or study time
- The areas where interviews take place will be private and not accessible to other people during interviews
- I will make participants aware before of my role in safeguarding them and let them know that if they disclose anything that potentially covers safeguarding issues I will have to let safeguarding officers in the setting aware afterward
- I will have information to give to participants before and after interviews about support services they could access in their setting or nationally if they feel they need to access them due to topics covered in the interviews. This will be counselling and psychological services in Colleges or wider mental health specialists including the Samaritans or Child Line.

I will make participants aware of how valuable their input could potentially be to myself and the wider culture. I will make sure they know how much appreciate their time and will send them a conclusion letter, personalised to them to let them know how thankful I am for their participation. I will also offer a debrief with myself if they require it and ask participants how they would like to be fed back in terms of findings from the study.

6. Potential harm to others who may be affected by the research activities

Which other people, if any, may be affected by the research activities, beyond the participants and the research team?

None anticipated.

What is the potential for harm to these people?

N/A

How will this be managed to ensure appropriate safeguarding of these people?

N/A

7. Reporting of safeguarding concerns or incidents

What arrangements will be in place for participants, and any other people external to the University who are involved in, or affected by, the research, to enable reporting of incidents or concerns?

Participants and staff at educational settings I will be in will be informed of who to contact if they have a complaint or concern about the study. This will include my research supervisor and head of department. I will provide them with this information on their information sheet with email addresses and phone contacts.

Who will be the Designated Safeguarding Contact(s)?

Research supervisor Sahaja Davies and the head of department for my course Tony Williams.

In the place where interviews will be happening (College for example) I will have contact for Designated Safeguarding Lead in the building.

How will reported incidents or concerns be handled and escalated?

Incidents will be handled and escalated in line with the University 'Preventing Harm in Research and Innovation (Safeguarding)' Policy as published and set out on the University of Sheffield website.

Section E: About the data

1. Data Processing

Will you be processing (i.e. collecting, recording, storing, or otherwise using) personal data as part of this project? (Personal data is any information relating to an identified or identifiable living person).

Yes

Which organisation(s) will act as Data Controller?

University of Sheffield only

2. Legal basis for processing of personal data

The University considers that for the vast majority of research, 'a task in the public interest' (6(1)(e)) will be the most appropriate legal basis. If, following discussion with the UREC, you wish to use an alternative legal basis, please provide details of the legal basis, and the reasons for applying it, below:

- *not entered* -

Will you be processing (i.e. collecting, recording, storing, or otherwise using) 'Special Category' personal data?

Yes

The University considers the most appropriate condition to be that 'processing is necessary for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific research purposes or statistical purposes' (9(2)(j)). If, following discussion with the UREC, you wish to use an alternative condition, please provide details of the condition, and the reasons for applying it, below:

- *not entered* -

3. Data Confidentiality

What measures will be put in place to ensure confidentiality of personal data, where appropriate?

Participants that take part in the project will be offered pseudonyms to be referred to during data analysis. I will ask them to pick a pseudonym and this will enable them to not be identifiable in the write-up. I will be asking participants to provide some brief biographic details during the early stages to create a pen picture of them, this will include age, gender, educational history (mainstream or specialist for example), year when EHCP had been allocated to them and description of SEN. I may also be referencing information in their EHCPs (which they will be fully informed about). At no point will I use their real names or details that could fully identify them though. It will be important to have some information about participants to add context to the potential analysis of their EHCP journey and I believe this is justified. I will verbally inform participants that while I will protect their identity as far as I can it may be possible for them to be identified from these anonymous pen pictures and again if they are worried about this they will be able to withdraw.

4. Data Storage and Security

In general terms, who will have access to the data generated at each stage of the research, and in what form?

The only people who will have access to the recording of interviews and participant details will be myself and my research supervisor. We will be aware of the passwords and make sure they are not distributed at any point. All data will be titles with pseudonyms chosen by participants to protect their identity.

What steps will be taken to ensure the security of data processed during the project, including any identifiable personal data, other than those already described earlier in this form?

All recorded data will be confidential, and names will not be recorded and will be identified by pseudonyms. The interviews will be recorded using software on a laptop and/or a mobile phone. The recordings will be stored temporarily on password protected and encrypted computer/mobile device before being uploaded to the University of Sheffield's server. Files will be saved in the name of the pseudonym. I will be using a transcription service (data processor) provided by the University of Sheffield. Once the data has been analysed it will be permanently deleted. The only people who will have access to the recording will be myself and my research supervisor, we will be aware of the passwords and make sure they are not distributed at any time.

Participants will be informed of the storage of data and how I will do it, I will encourage them to ask more questions if they require further information.

Will all identifiable personal data be destroyed once the project has ended?

Yes

Please outline when this will take place (this should take into account regulatory and funder requirements).

All recorded data and information about participants will be deleted and destroyed as soon as analysis of data has taken place.

Section F: Supporting documentation

Information & Consent

Participant information sheets relevant to project?

Yes

Document 1106506 (Version 2)

All versions

Participant information sheet

Consent forms relevant to project?

Yes

Document 1106507 (Version 2)

All versions

Participant consent form

Additional Documentation

Document 1106508 (Version 1)

All versions

Poster to advertise

Document 1108862 (Version 1)

All versions

Opt-out form for parent/carers

External Documentation

- not entered -

External Documentation

- not entered -

Section G: Declaration

Signed by:
Matthew Robinson
Date signed:
Thu 23 June 2022 at 20:15

Official notes

- not entered -

Appendix 3: Ethics approval letter



Downloaded: 29/06/2022
Approved: 29/06/2022

Matthew Robinson
Registration number: 200112781
School of Education
Programme: Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology

Dear Matthew

PROJECT TITLE: A qualitative study to ask about and explore young people's experiences of their Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP) journey
APPLICATION: Reference Number 046304

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 29/06/2022 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 046304 (form submission date: 23/06/2022); (expected project end date: 31/08/2023).
- Participant information sheet 1106506 version 2 (30/05/2022).
- Participant consent form 1106507 version 2 (30/05/2022).

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.

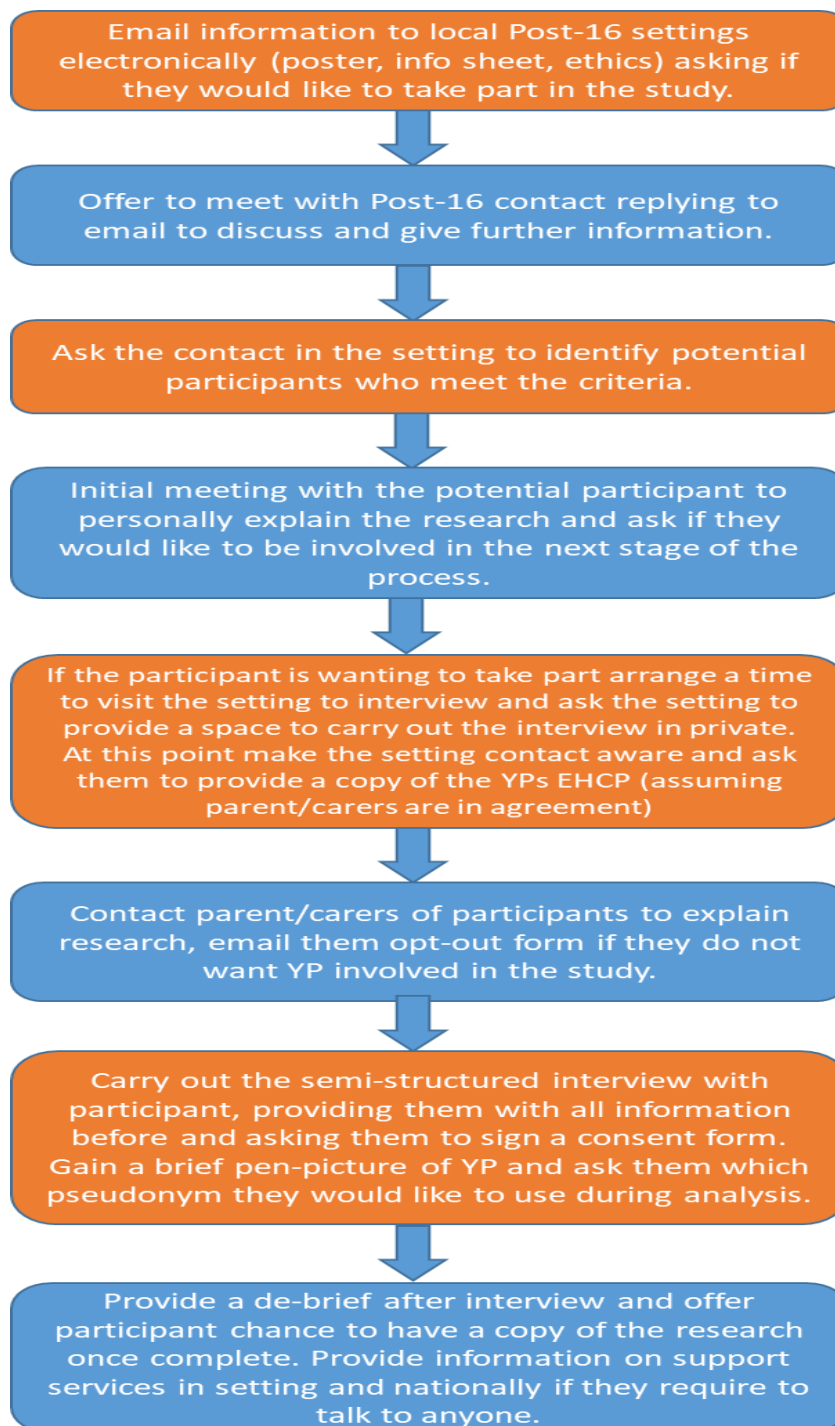
Yours sincerely

ED6ETH Edu
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: Flow chart for recruitment





Take part in a research project



Help us by telling us about your experiences of your Education, Health and Care Plan journey

About this project

What is the study about?

This study is about asking you about your experiences and thoughts about having an EHC plan through your education.

You would take part in an interview with me in a place and at a time that is best for you.

Why participate?

Some of the reasons you should participate -

- So you can have your voice and opinions heard!
- Your feedback could contribute to better outcomes for young people in the future
- To help educational settings better understand your experiences

Your Voice!

Who can participate?

Anyone who has an Education, Health and Care Plan can take part in this study.


I would be happy to meet before we do the interview to ask and find out about how you would like it set up and I will adapt this.

Interested?



Contact:
Matthew Robinson - Trainee Educational Psychologist
email - mrobinson7@sheffield.ac.uk
phone - 07814068084

Appendix 6: Information sheet for participants



Information Sheet

What's the study about?

This study is being run by Matt Robinson, a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP) at the University of Sheffield.

The aim is to try and gain a better understanding of young people's experiences of the EHCP process and their journey through education.

Why me? and what will happen?

You have been asked to take part ^{*} because you are someone who has an EHCP and have valuable insight to tell me about.

You don't have to take part but if you do I will ask you to sign a consent form which I will talk through with you when you sign :)

If you do take part -

- I will meet you before to tell you more
- I will ask you about yourself and for some information about your history
- You will take part in a recorded in person interview session with me
- It will take about 30-45 minutes
- I hope to have it in your educational setting
- I will ask you about your EHCP, which we will have with us, and your experiences during your education
- If we cannot do it person it might we do it online

What will happen with the recordings?

Firstly you will not be identified, I will ask you to pick a pseudonym (alias) so your real name is not used in the write up of the study.

The recording of your interview will kept on password protected University software. Only me and my supervisor will hear it. It will be deleted once I have finished with it.

Findings from the study will be written up and may be presented to educational settings or in journals in the future. Your participation will be valuable in helping us better understand your experiences. You will be able to read all about the study on completion.

Anything else?

If you want any more information or want to make a complaint at any point below are the email and phone contacts -

Researcher: Matthew Robinson - mrobinson7@sheffield.ac.uk

Supervisor: Sahaja Davies - t.s.davies@sheffield.ac.uk

Department Head: Anthony Williams - Anthony.williams@sheffield.ac.uk or 0114 22298119

Appendix 7: Email to settings

Hello,

I am a student at Sheffield University, currently studying to be an Educational Psychologist. I am carrying out some research on young people who are of College age experiences having an EHC plan throughout their education.

I wondered if your organisation might be interested in taking part or advertising it on your forum? I have attached my info via a poster/info sheet. It would involve an interview with the young person and I would gain consent from them and informed consent from parents/carers.

Happy to chat further if needed if you do want to get involved, I hope the study might help us support young people with EHCs by gaining their views.

Many thanks

Matt

--

Matthew Robinson,
Trainee Educational Psychologist,
University of Sheffield

Appendix 8: Parent/carer opt-out form



OPT-OUT FORM

Dear parent/carer,

Your child has expressed an interest in taking part in my University research project titled –

'A qualitative study to ask about and explore young people's experiences of their Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP) journey'

As part of the project your child will take part in an interview with myself at their educational setting which will last around an hour. I will be asking them about their experiences of education as a young person with an EHCP, what has happened, and how they have felt about their experiences.

They will be fully informed of all parts of the process via an information sheet and discussions with myself, they will be able to opt out any time and will sign a consent form to take part. Their identity will be fully protected and they will not be named in any of the write-up.

If you would like further details please do contact me on the information below.

If you **do not want** your child to take part sign below and send back to your child's educational setting or email me by (date 2 weeks from current date) –

If not I will assume you are giving consent for your child to take part and thank you for that.

.....
My child's name is -
Date -

Project contact details for further information:

Researcher – Matthew Robinson E-mail – matthewrobinson7@sheffield.ac.uk

Phone number - 07814068084

Supervisor – Sahaja Davies E-mail – t.s.davies@sheffield.ac.uk

Appendix 9: Participant consent form



Consent Form

A study to explore young people's experiences and views about their Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP) journey

By signing below I agree that –

	Tick if yes
I have been given an information sheet about the project and have been offered further explanation if I have asked for it	<input type="checkbox"/>
I will take part in the project and everything about the interviews and how it will happen has been explained to me	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand and have been told that taking part is totally up to me, I know I can withdraw at any time before my interview is submitted for research	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that my personal details will not be revealed to anyone outside of the project	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that only the researchers involved and named below will have access to my data/interview recording	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information from my interview can be used in publications, presentations and other materials as long as it is anonymous when it is presented	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree to assign the copyright I hold in any materials generated as part of this project to The University of Sheffield	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name of participant –

Signature -

Date -

Project contact details for further information:

Researcher – Matthew Robinson E-mail – matthewrobinson7@sheffield.ac.uk

Supervisor – Sahaja Davies E-mail – t.s.davies@sheffield.ac.uk

Appendix 10: Pilot reflection

Jimmy – 14/10/22

In the room I felt comfortable with Jimmy, meeting him the week before was beneficial. In developing rapport, you allow the participant to become comfortable in the environment and that could lead to more detailed, descriptive accounts of experience.

My interview style will need to develop as I go through the interviews. I felt nervous when Jimmy could not answer questions and tried to fill the silence at certain points. I noted this as I listened back, I will learn from this. Looking for times in which participants can elucidate answers, and getting a sense of how phenomena felt for them is important. Remembering this will keep my study as close to IPA values as possible.

The interview lasted around 22 minutes, possibly too short. The transcript is around nine pages long so there is data to explore. I need to be better around helping participants expand on answers, this is a reflection of mine. When going through EHCPs I cannot be nervous in what I do and do not select to read, this is all part of my study, i.e. the experience of hearing the details in the EHCP. This is fundamental to what I am seeking to explore, I will become better at this.

I am noticing that as a practitioner it is becoming more common for me to think in an IPA way. As an example, I am constantly thinking about what it must be like to be children I am working with, even asking that question during consultations. IPA in that sense is starting to influence my practice; I am enjoying this strand of the research journey and wonder how I will feel by the end of this process.

Appendix 11: Interview schedule

Interview Schedule

Introduction

- Explanation of the interview – go through poster and info sheet
- Purpose to hear your views as a YP with an EHCP, valuable views to give on this, and delighted to hear from you
- No right or wrong answers just interested in what you say
- Take as long as you want and I may ask some obvious questions at times
- You can stop at any time and let me know if you feel you need to move on or have a break

Support and process

- Confidentiality protocols
- Contact for people/services to talk to if you need to (separate sheet)
- How I am gathering data (recorded device, encryption when stored)
- Ask what pseudonym they would like to use
- Create a little pen picture – age, previous school (mainstream?)
- Sign the consent form
- If ready begin recording

Distress Protocol

- If researcher believes participant is experiencing distress during interview, physical or emotional stop interview immediately (including recording devices)
- Discuss situation with participant, if they give permission and appear to be feeling better begin recording again, with reassurance that it can stop again if required
- If participant does not want to continue or researcher believe it will be distressing to them halt interview, provide emotional reassurance and accompany participant back into setting, informing link person of the situation so they are aware
- Double check participant has support services information, contact parent/carers if consent given

Big question(s) rapport building –

Can you tell me about what you do now at College, how is it going?

How has your education gone so far, what have you enjoyed?

First half – going through the EHCP together

First of all, as you know you are doing this interview because you are a young person who has, and still has an Education, Health and Care Plan, how aware are you of this plan?

Possible prompts:

What have you known about it during your education?

How have you been involved, what has happened for you?

What is it like to have one? The experience

How do you feel about it?

Read through the plan – Questions may naturally occur -

What was it like to contribute to the plan, what happened?

How did it feel for you?

What was the experience of having your views gathered for it?

How has xxxx provision felt for you?

Are these outcomes important, tell me about them?

Who has been involved in your plan and how has it happened?

Have the things I described happened?

What do you think about them?

What has having this plan meant for your education and why?

Second half – Reflecting in the room

What did you think about your EHCP?

Possible prompts:

How did it feel to go through your plan like that?

How did it feel to hear these descriptions of you in the plan?

What does it feel like to have an EHCP during education?

What do think of the content of the plan?

Do you believe it has been important to you and tell me why?

Could you hear your contribution to the plan, how have you been involved?

Does it reflect your experience?

Do you believe it has helped and tell me how?

Is what it sets out in the outcomes important to your progress to adulthood and how?

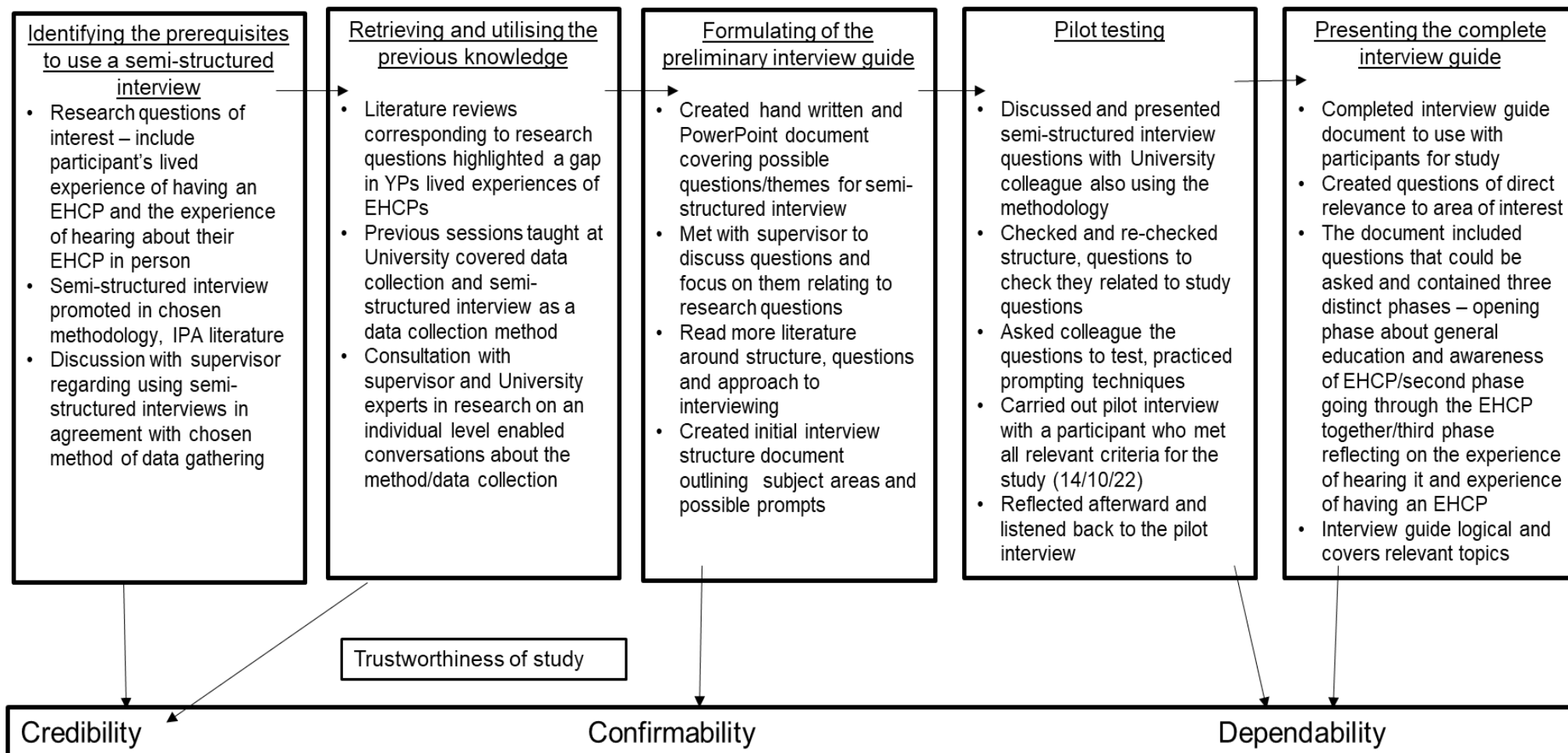
What are your thoughts on the outcomes?

What do think about the EHCP plans?

Anything you feel could be changed to improve them?

Appendix 12: Interview schedule quality assurance framework (Kallio et al., 2016)

A framework for the development of a qualitative semi-structured interview guide



Appendix 13: List of services for participants

[Young People Counselling - Relate Counselling - relate.org.uk](http://www.relate.org.uk)

www.relate.org.uk

Counselling Lets Teenagers Talk About How They Feel, Separate From School And Home Life. Children And **Young People's Counselling** Is For Any **Young** Person.

[Find Your Center](#) · [What We Do](#) · [About Us](#)

[Free Support For Under 25s - Support For Young People](http://www.themix.org.uk/confidential/help&advice)

www.themix.org.uk/confidential/help&advice

If you're under 25 & need help, The Mix is here to support you with anything & everything. The Mix helps **young people** in the UK with any & all problems. Get in touch for a chat. Email.

[Become A Volunteer](#) · [Get Support From Our Team](#) · [Get Info And Advice](#) · [Find Out More](#)

[YoungMinds - Improve Mental Health](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

www.youngminds.org.uk

Committed to making sure all **young people** can get the mental health support they need. Discover information, advice & support for **young people** affected by mental health.

Doncaster specific

01302 734100: between 8:30am and 5pm Monday-Friday. 01302 796000: outside the hours of 8:30am and 5pm Monday-Friday. 01302 737777: for urgent calls.

Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing

www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/children-and-young-peoples-emotional-health

[Kooth for Children & Young People](http://www.koothplc.com)

www.koothplc.com

Kooth is an anonymous site which helps children and young people to feel safe and confident in exploring their concerns and seeking professional support

Appendix 14: Reflections after each participant interview

Bambi Reflections 14/11/22

Bambi was very chatty and keen to discuss her experiences about her education in general, what had happened and what it has meant to her.

The reflecting back towards her experiences in high school was more about her as a young person experiencing health difficulties, though that is something and I will look at that during analysis.

I wonder if Bambi has had much knowledge of her EHCP in general, we went through it in the room together. Lots about how she links the EHCP to support, i.e. taxis, staff and that is something she values.

The interview lasted over an hour and Bambi had a lot to say, I need to make sure I am prompting when needed and not interrupting. I need to stop saying 'yeah' as it splits the text up when transcribing, be comfortable with silence and focus on experience.

I think I am getting better at this type of interview and will continue to develop my style throughout the process. I feel I am building rapport, allowing participants to feel comfortable in the room.

Spencer Reflections 22/11/22

This was the most comfortable I have felt carrying out an interview, Spencer was brilliant at giving long, detailed answers. Prompts were working to allow her to reflect and expand on answers. Focused on her experiences, not so much on what she is thinking about things, for example.

During this interview I did not interrupt as much, i.e. saying 'yeah', and it allowed Spencer to expand on answers. I am also becoming more comfortable with the style/structure of the interviews, I see it as being split into three separate parts.

The IPA style is now constantly on my mind, noticing experiential aspects of the participant's experiences and prompting around that. Of big interest is their involvement in the plans, how provision has felt, and their view on outcomes.

I am wondering if when going through the plan it is possibly too much talking by me, though it is hard to talk when you are reading directly from the document. I will consider this during my subsequent interviews.

The interview lasted around 45 minutes, could have gone longer but unfortunately, we had to move out of the room. This is a challenge working in an environment you do not control (College). Because Spencer is partially sighted it made sense to keep the room close by, there is a balance between accomplishing my research and working with the settings. She did say she would be happy to talk again if I need her to, though I think just having the one interview at a certain moment is important.

As I have completed more interviews I am noticing the idiographic nature of the young people's stories more. IPA has three key philosophies and this is one, it is obvious that I cannot generalise, that these are individual experiences at certain moments in time. Though I will eventually look for themes across data I will treat each analysis as an individual experience. An initial reaction is Spencer used a few metaphors/idioms at the end of the interview to describe how she views herself/things, it will be interesting to interrogate this during analysis.

Luna Reflections 28/11/22

Luna appeared a little nervous before the interview, though a challenge of these interviews is assessing whether this is how the YP would normally present or whether the interview was causing anxious feelings. I tried to help that situation by connecting with her beforehand, asking how she was getting on and letting her know she did not have to do the interview. She told me she was actually looking forward to doing it and her Mum was especially eager for her to have her 'voice' heard.

The interview lasted a little over 30 minutes and was good I believe. I sensed that at the beginning Luna has a specific incident relating to her EHCP she wanted to 'get off her chest' so to speak, and she did. I would never stop anyone explaining something and this is maybe linking to psychodynamic processes as me as a container of participants projections at times. I was eager to get us back on track though and guided her through the sections and questions.

A slight issue with this interview was that Luna's EHCP was quite short and had lots of crossed-out sections, so it was quite challenging to read at times. This meant I verbally stumbled at times during the interview.

Luna was quite short with answers at times, so I was using all my newly developed prompting and expanding skills to really get her to describe her experiences, how certain situations felt and what happened. Often asking obvious questions is so important because you cannot transcribe implied words, it has to be said for it to be real!

I enjoyed my time with Luna, I felt of the participants she has had a mix of positive and negative experiences relating to her education and her EHCP. I could feel her uneasiness about being 'different' from peers at times, which I think weighs heavy on her at times.

Rock Reflections 30/11/22

This was an interview that had its challenges but was ultimately worthwhile in that the words Rock said and his experiences will be fascinating to analyse. Rock has a very stoic presentation and I could sense straight away that his style is to be open, honest but also quite abrupt with his answers. As the transcript will show Rock by far has experienced the most challenges during his education in my opinion. He has been in and out of many schools and feels his treatment during these times has been negative.

Rock's EHCP had a narrative of negativity in it, a lot of it was about him being 'challenging' and someone who suffer mental health and anxiety. As I was reading it I could sense myself self-editing at times, the EHCP had a vast amount of information in it and I could not actually go through it all in the time we had. However, it was important for me to read 'bad parts' so I could get his views and experiences of situations and this actual experience of hearing things afterward as part of my study. I feel I did this, though Rock was stoic I was not sensing he would suddenly get up and leave or become distressed at any point.

Rock gave some great answers to questions about his EHCP journey and involvement, I was able to prompt him and allow him to expand at times. A funny moment was when I asked him about something and he abruptly said 'I don't understand', this is teaching me to keep my questions short and to the point!

This was a significant interview for me I think, it felt a little challenging at points but meant I worked through things and problem-solved in the moment, inquiring about something different if I felt we were going down a 'dead end' topic.

Rock at the end of the interview actually told me he had more to say about ways to encourage and engage YP with SEN to have a voice (he felt via computer would be better for him) so I turned the dictaphone back on and asked him this question on tape. He was also eager to know what happens next and whether his interview would lead to anything positive for YP with EHCPs, I told him I really hope so and thanked him for his time. This was an important interview in my research journey.

Felix Reflections 06/12/22

Felix was my final interview of this process and took place in a different setting from the rest of the participants. I feel much more confident carrying out interviews than I did at the beginning of this study, I feel that I know now when I should be prompting, digging more (metaphorically) and allowing people to expand on answers. I have also stopped saying 'yeah' so much which is positive.

Felix was very chatty and open to discussing his experiences, I discovered early on that I needed to allow him time to consider questions and keep them very simple for him to allow him to comprehend and formulate an answer. Felix did stutter during his answers, as will be evident on the transcript he repeats words and takes time to answer. I was aware of this dynamic early on and I hope I made him feel like this was not a problem, he could take all the time he required to answer.

I really liked Felix, his story and his optimism for his future was infectious at times. He has his own podcast which I am eager to find out more about but was aware that it was going slightly off topic, though really interesting. His awareness of his EHCP appears to have increased as he has progressed to College, and his praising of support and help he has received because of it will be interesting to analyse. His was a more optimistic interview, I have really gotten the sense during this process that each individual's experiences are unique and that will be fascinating to analyse.

At the end of the interview Felix was quite emotional and thankful that he had the opportunity to talk about himself, his journey and what he thinks. During the EHCP section, where we went through his, he was especially pleased to hear he had achieved some of his outcomes. His thankfulness made me feel a little emotional at the end.

Appendix 15: Thankyou letter example (sent to all participants with real name on)

Hi,

I just wanted to write a letter to sincerely thank you for agreeing to take part in my project and for giving me the time to take part in an interview.

Your willingness to answer my questions, explain your experiences of education and your wider life was very much appreciated. It was wonderful to talk to you about these topics and I hope you enjoyed having this time together.

Your involvement in this research is so valuable, hearing what has happened to you and gaining your honest answers about this I am hoping will lead to me being able to present an important piece of research about what it is like to have an EHCP. Hearing your views about this, as a person who has an EHCP, is absolutely vital to us gaining further understanding of this and hopefully making positive changes to the system.

Thankyou again and if you have any further questions please contact me via the information provided on the information sheet I gave you. I would be happy to share my findings from my research with you when I have completed the project.

Sincerely,

Matt Robinson - Year 3 Trainee Educational Psychologist

University of Sheffield

Appendix 16: IPA stages (Smith et al., 2022)

Stage	Process
1. Reading and Re-Reading	A process involving immersing yourself in the data collected. After recording, interviews will be transcribed. This process is an exploratory initial step that allows the researcher to begin to highlight narratives and initial understanding of the participant's experiences.
2. Exploratory Noting	Developing initial exploratory notes about areas that appear interesting and relate to experience. A table or numbered tool can be implemented to support this. Comments and themes may begin to emerge while analysing the semantic content of the data at an exploratory level.
3. Constructing Experiential Statements	Selecting data that is fundamentally experiential in context and provides a deeper understanding of the participants sense-making/experience. This involves fragmenting sections of the text so the researcher can get closer to their experiences, maybe focusing on particular sections. Here you are becoming more of an interpreter of experience and beginning to bring your own psychological perspective to analysis.
4. Searching for Connections Across Experiential Statements	Developing a system in which you begin to link experiential statements together. This allows you to highlight interesting patterns and avenues to explore the participants experiences. The researcher is drawing together experiential statements (perhaps in a table) to find interesting patterns relating to your areas of investigation
5. Naming the Personal Experiential Themes (PETS)	For each participant, a table is created using the experiential statements of interest. Bold headings are used, along with titles to describe the characteristics. Page numbers/line numbers are referenced to provide guidance as to where to find the statements.
6. Continuing the Individual Analysis of Other Cases	IPA is idiographic in emphasis and puts forward the case that everyone's experience is unique. The analysis should be thorough for each individual case and follow the same steps in a study. This research aims to have 4-6 participants so this is highly relevant. Emphasis on analysis being individual to each case and attempt by the researcher to not be influenced, or to 'look for' patterns in data from previous analysis.
7. Working with Personal Experiential Themes to Develop Group Experiential Themes Across Cases (GETS)	The researcher makes an effort to highlight similarities and differences across the data gathered. Comparing the PETS is one way to carry out this stage. It might be that a type of 'master themes' are found and explored. Embracing that IPA is not about finding 'norms' across participant groups but about exploring individual experience is still emphasised, however, this can be a rewarding part of the analysis, leading to insights that can be explored in the write-up.

Appendix 17: Interview transcripts for all participants

Bambi interview – 14/11/22

Experiential Statements	Interview Text	Exploratory Noting
	M: Bambi, what are you doing at college at the moment and how is it going for you? What are you thinking about it?	
Bambi not like others, she requires something different to suit her needs. p1 – B	B: I am currently on a tailor made course doing like arts and fashion, trying to make our big business because basically I'm too disabled for a normal job, but I don't wanna sit around and do nothing.	Big expectations, aspirations for the future . 'disabled' description of herself Wants to achieve
	M: I think that's, that's very nice. You seem like a very active young person anyway, so that makes sense, doesn't it?	
	B: I ain't active (laugh) I sleep a lot, sleep a lot.	
	M: What hobbies do you mean?	

	B: Um, like making, well, not making printing on t-shirts and having buying (?). Yeah. Make sarcastic things about do you know my disability?	Very aware of disability Making light of the situation via humour
	M: Yeah.	
Using humour to make herself and others feel comfortable with her disability. p2 - B	B: I can walk at minute so I made a top for myself that said it takes skill to trip over flat services and I did one for my friend that's in a wheelchair, it says I have evolved past the need for legs.	Humour again Connecting and working with friends
	M: Good that's very good. I like that	
	B: It makes it more like funny for us, happy for us	Humour and the need for this
	M: Yeah, uh so normalized, just make it joke, like, make jokes and things like that.	
	B: Yeah.	
	B: Cos' it's depressing conditions, so why not just laugh at it?	Depressing to have this condition
	M: Sounds like a good idea.	

	<p>M: So what I'm interested in, so you've to high school, you've been to sixth form. This is a big question again, we'll get more specific, but what have you felt about education so far? How has your education journey been?</p>	
<p>During secondary school Bambi was bullied, upset about this and feelings of 'less than'. p3 - B</p>	<p>B: My education if you asked me a couple of years ago, it would've been good and then it went complete shit. Hmmm, my high school weren't good. They're like instead supporting you they picked on you for being different, even before about like I was having issues with disability. It was like anything different they picked on you, like your hair been died or something like that. No, it was like, no. But before that, before it went to you need to a uniform and everything it were very loose. Like there were people walking around with</p>	<p>Bad experience of secondary education</p> <p>Bambi is different from others</p> <p>Being picked on by others because of her difference/disability</p>

	blue hair, which weren't allowed when I got to year 10 so yeah.	
	M: What did that feel like for you, do you think?	
In secondary education, Bambi felt trapped and had no freedom. p4 - B	B: It feels like horrible cos' the year before me, you could have gone out at dinner times and everything, but when I got to year 10, it stopped. So it became a prison in high school, like you were expected, you were expected to stay in and have dinner, but the queues were so long that sometimes you went without food, do you know because I'm a picky eater, there were no food that were to my taste and they wouldn't make an exception for you at all, they just lefty you to it so there were plenty of times I went without food. That's	School was like a 'prison' More bad feelings about school, it was not a happy time for Bambi
	M: Sounds like an experience	
	M: So now that's school, now you're here. So one of the reasons, so the	

	<p>reason why we're doing this interview is because you haven't education, health care plan which we have with us right here. Just interested what do you know about this plan? What is your experience of this sort of plan?</p>	
<p>EHC felt new, like a fresh start and something to support Bambi. p5 - B</p>	<p>B: I only had it coming into college. I didn't have it in high school I got told do you know the person that sorts out the disabilities and everything? Is supposed to do that for you? She were new to the job and she didn't have any teaching on how to do it, she said she did need it because most people, people normally come in with it and I just were just like, someone can get paralyzed the next day what you going to do then? They're gonna be disabled aren't they</p>	<p>EHC started when she came to College. Told about the EHC by someone at College. The person did not know much about EHC, she came to College without it</p>
	<p>M: Interesting so you've had it since you've come to college? I think I read it was like a few years ago, maybe 2020 it</p>	

	sort of started becoming a thing, Is that right?	
	B: It started really when I was 16.	Talking about her condition
	M: Yes is that your, do you mean, your disability or your condition?	
Because of events out of her control people viewed her differently, she was no longer who she was before. p6 - B	B: I had a seizure at 16 and then Friedreich's ataxia, which I always had, I born with it, I developed some issues when I were younger, like my voice. But they always, always told to my parents nothing were wrong with me and they would have a class full of me because I were a good student and I were a teachers pet. It were only the fact that I was slow and my speech was slow. But when I got older, I started to develop do you know my balance were going off in high school. Then at 16 I had a big seizure that ended up in me having to go to hospital and since they didn't find out what were wrong with me and they	Big events in Bambi's life, her seizure led to multiple health difficulties. Before this she was a 'good' student, a 'teacher's pet'

	<p>were willing to give it up. But my mum said, no, you pointed out a few things wrong with it, which we had been saying for years so I want it investigating now.</p>	<p>Mum was thinking something was wrong, family</p>
	<p>And it took years and years, but at 18 I got diagnosed with Friedreich's ataxia which nobody knew about. But I found out I had that seizure because my body were doing too much and it just completely gave out. And after that point I started thinking a lot and going all why, the collapse and then balance started going off and then I couldn't walk with without (?) and the minute I'm like, do I go for free more? Do I go for wheelchair? Because I can't walk enough now, so it's a bit of a toss-up up.</p>	<p>Physical difficulties and deterioration involve her condition.</p> <p>Good memory of impact and things that have happened.</p> <p>Narrative of her difficulties.</p>
	<p>M: So you've got such an interesting backstory back. So in terms of education, health, and care plans do you know what they are? Do you know</p>	

	what they do? Do you know, what has it done for you?	
EHC means staff know about Bambi, she feels understood. p8 - B	B: Um I know you'd need one to get, you know, taxis in to apply for this course that amount. It's a grant sort of thing, money to this and also it's like you need one to display do you know to teachers and that so they can get information about you and about your condition sort of thing.	EHC leads to funding for taxis, some sense of money attached to it EHC provides information for teachers, so they can know about Bambi and her condition
	M: What do you think about that? How has that gone for you?	
Bambi is having a more positive experience in education since her EHC was awarded, she is cared for. p8 – B	B: Well, since I had it, it's been amazing, but I think it's also due to this place, but it has been amazing. If I have any problems, I've just had to, like, message on teams to J or to K (staff) and it's like they have my back or they send someone to have my back.	Since EHC thing shave become better for Bambi, more positive in her education. This could be combination of EHC and College as a setting. Staff have her 'back'
	M: Yeah, how does that feel?	

	B: It feels great, especially for years not having that.	Feels better than before
	M: So you think this has been a big part of the support	
EHC provides Bambi with a sense of calm, it helps support her and solve problems. p9 - B	B: Yes and also this state mind, I don't have a proper PA yet, but I have unofficial PAs, people that help me out and get to my class and it's been amazing since do you know when I were in sixth form, I had to go in a wheelchair and it's a mountain of a hill to get to from sixth form building to the school building, and you have to go over on six form to school building so you have this giant hill in between. You couldn't get up when it was raining and also you didn't have anyone with you to open doors and that. So we had me and my friend J, who had same condition we had to, do you know, learn how to open the doors by our 'sens'.	<p>Bambi needs help with her physical support, in order to get her from one place to another.</p> <p>In the past there was less adult support</p> <p>Her friend helps her</p>

	M: I'm wondering how have you contributed to this document, we'll go through it in a second, but like, have you contributed to it?	
	B: What do you mean contribute?	
	M: We might go through it together anyway, but do you feel like you've contributed, has it involved your voice possibly and your experience and what you are trying to get to. Have you been part of that process?	
Bambi is asked about her EHC, she is important and involved. p10 – B	B: tough	Info for the EHC completed with her Mum. Went through the EHC with college staff, through the details
	M: What was that like?	
Felt stressful at first to be asked, it was no something she had experienced before. p10 - B	B: It was nerve-wracking, but most of it was the same from when me and my mum did it. Obviously, when K did it, she got more details and so they are that way, but I haven't done it yet this year.	'Nerve wracking' documenting herself in some ways. Building up a picture of Bambi Not yet met about it this year

	M: Do you think that's, do you think that process has helped sort of put that together or put the whole thing around you together?	
	B: Yeah but since I'm with K every day she, I think she updates or sends, do you know, emails out to other people, do you know when it comes to it? Because she knows me as a person.	Staff at College update the EHC, and send it out to others in the College. This is good for Bambi Staff 'know' her
	M: And what do you think about that?	
EHC allows Bambi to feel known and connected to staff. p11 - B EHC evolves as she develops, it doesn't stay static. p11 - B	B: I think it's great because the people here are communicating with each other, whereas in sixth form it took months, like half a year to actually, Oh, actually a full year and a half maybe to actually put me on a system, like have a note saying I've got this disability, whereas here it's not like in my old high school I actually got screamed at like head teacher cause I were wearing, do	Staff talk about Bambi, share info about her and this is good College better than secondary school More bad experiences at a non-inclusive secondary school

	you know I were wearing trainers because I can't balance.	
	M: What was that like?	
	B: It was really hard and it weren't like he were the only teacher, lots of people that a high school turned into an Academy. Um, uh, people that were, most of the old staff went because they were like, I don't want to deal with that shit.	Staff leaving the school setting was when the changes happened Felt like a negative atmosphere
Past experiences of being different from peers has felt isolating. p12 - B	But the new staff that came in, they didn't really give two craps about you. They cared about the money and their educational purposes, but as soon as you had a different thing and you weren't on the system they hated you, even if you were tiny bit different. As I was saying and even when they were wearing black trainers, which they told me to, when I finally got through to them they come complained about my black	Bambi saying that if you were different then staff did not like you at secondary school.

	trainers because they have puma around it and gold. But it's like, are you ever seeing trainers up pure just black without anything on?	
	M: So then you moved up here and then an education, health and care plan, an education, health and care plan is officially for children and young people aged up to 25, so you are under that, who need more support than is available through special educational needs support. So EHCs identify educational health and social needs and set out additional support to meet those needs.	
	M: So that is what you have, what, what do you think about EHC plans?	
EHC leads to feeling known and understood. p14 - B	B: I think they're amazing because they, they make sure people knows about, the teachers know about your condition and about your needs. So you	Amazing to have the EHC Teachers know about her Being known leads to better experiences

	cannot, you're not in a class and you feel awkward.	
	M: And why is that important?	
<p>EHC protects Bambi from feeling judged, it is a window into her. p14 - B</p> <p>The EHC evolves with her, solves problems and feels efficient. p14 - B</p>	<p>B: Because I have very severe anxiety you from high school and always judging me and picking on me, and it were just like the EHCP they like made sure it didn't happen again. That's why I think I can speak more to people because they understand me, because they know about condition and when they don't know it's like K goes in and talks to them. Like if it is like in lunch group, I meet other PAs and sometimes K just do you know goes to the side with him and says she's got this, it affects this, this, and this and then done!</p>	<p>EHC leads to less judgement and less being picked on</p> <p>EHC means people understand you and if not they talk about you</p> <p>Staff let other people know about Bambi, this is a quick process</p>
	M: So having that plan, that thing helps does it?	

<p>Being known feels better than before. p15 - B</p>	<p>B: Yeah it helps to be known. because it were like Chinese whispers in high school.</p>	<p>Previously she felt it was not done this way</p>
	<p>M: That is a good way to put it Chinese whispers. I guess what you are saying it is more joint up? And that's, that's something, isn't it, how does that feel?</p>	
<p>Feeling of systems/people working together to help Bambi. p15 - B</p>	<p>B: Yeah because it is like this bit then this college is connected to each other, they don't abandon each do ya know department, they all like link up at some point.</p>	<p>College departments ae joined up and communicate with each other</p>
	<p>M: That's really interesting so we'll have a look through the EHC together.</p>	
	<p>M: We won't go through it all cause I think it's quite long It's quite interesting.</p>	
	<p>B: Am I that complicated? (laugh)</p>	
	<p>M: Well I mean it's important, so these are just sections that are in the here then it has all about you, so it has</p>	

	<p>your key information about your condition, like you've said before. Um, and a lot about that and how you get fatigued sometimes and talks about your anxiety, then it's your story how you reached milestones. There's quite cause there's quite a lot of information I'd say.</p>	
	<p>B: And its always changing this</p>	<p>Story is developing</p>
	<p>M: So it talks about going through GCSEs and English and things like that and um, what you were doing. A lot of information about physios, seeing physios and things like that going to hospitals and occupational therapists.</p>	
	<p>Then it says Bambi's views here, so it says these are your views. So it uses a lot of 'I's' here about what you'll need.</p>	
<p>Her voice is vital, to feel heard. p16 – B</p>	<p>B: Most important things</p>	<p>Views are important</p>
	<p>M: 'I would like to have someone who knows about me so I can go to them if I'm really worried and struggling.</p>	

	Also my anxiety, so I'm not worried about work because I like being creative and I've always enjoyed doing a lot of things like that.	
	It says about some of your worries and things like that, what you're worried about and what, what can help, then it has your parents' views as well about what they, what they think would help you, visual prompts and assistance and things like that. So that's sort of, what does that mean, having that voice in here, what does that feel like?	
Bambi has not felt understood in the past and felt hopeless. p 17 - B	B: It means do ya know understanding and that's the most important thing because if nobody understands you, then you can't get help.	The EHC is about understanding Bambi, this is important to her and leads to help
	M: And can you, can you remember contributing and saying these things? How was that?	

	B: I remember, but it were like years and years ago... but I know being myself, I would've talked about my anxiety about high school and do know the importance to understand it.	A slight memory of telling people her story for EHC
	M: What does that mean to you, to have that involvement?	
Bambi experiences support, not mired in past problems but looking to a better future with an EHC. p18 – B	B: It just means, just means I can live a normal life in college. Like, you don't wanna go somewhere and be uncomfortable, do you? You will leave a place where you feel uncomfortable and college may do you know went above and beyond to help me and support and, and it's just they knew about my bad past so they went above and beyond to try and do you know, make sure that's past, now it's not going to come into college so I'm not slagging off college.	Coming to College, having the EHC is more comfortable Past is past, College concentrating on Babi and supporting her now
	M: It's, it's changed, I'm sensing like there's some change here and that's	

	been, how's that been? I'm sensing positive in terms of your experience?	
Bambi requires people to adapt to her, she is not like others. p19 - B	B: Yeah, they're not pushing me, like my course is not an official course, so they're not pushing me do you know, towards exams. I'm just learning my skills 'cos I'm trying to do my own thing, not to put it on, do you know employers in that because I could be gone from work for weeks and I won't know when I'm coming back. It could be like, do you know if it were on a Tuesday? It could be at the, I feel right again and I'm like you can't really kind of work like that.	Not 'pushing' her, supporting her which leads to less pressure? Looking ahead to working, her condition would effect her in the world
	M: So it's got a bit of your voice in there, your mum, your family's voice and things like that and then it's, it's about your special educational needs in terms of your communication and interaction. Then it has things about, it says, Bambi is a loving and caring person with a	

	brilliant sense of humour. Then it says some things about other things about communication and interaction about your speech and things, like how that's been a challenge for you and I think you've already spoke about that quite nicely.	
	Then how you are entitled to 50% extra time in your exams and things like that uh, and a scribe and reader. So it goes through communication and interaction, and it goes through like cognition and learning about how you've, uh, it says how you've gone through I guess it's an IQ test. Can you remember that?	
	B: What were it is test do ya know for scribes and things?	Being tested is a way to get help in education
	M: Maybe, it might have led to that. Yeah.	
	B: Um, I remember one in high school.	

	<p>M: Yeah. Might have been that one. Um. So this is about learning and things like that. So there's communication, there's learning, and there will be another one about sensory and physical needs. Um, how you have become a bit more dependent on your frame, obviously and um, wheelchair it says as well. Have you got a wheelchair in there?</p>	
<p>A loss of independence if she uses a wheelchair. p 21 - B</p>	<p>B: I do have a wheelchair it's just more faffing about and also it's like if you go into the wheelchair, you might not come back out of it. Because my friend J he got diagnosed at 15 and he got put in a wheelchair straight away and now he can't walk at all.</p>	<p>Bambi does not want to use her wheelchair</p> <p>A friend went in one and now cannot walk</p>
	<p>M: Social, emotional, mental health needs section, so it says here Bambi has been good at masking how she's</p>	

	feeling about her condition sometimes is that correct?	
	B: Yeah that's just an instinct really in it.	
	M: It says she openly spoke about her increasing feelings of anxiety and about the experience of school, how she does not think she would be supported at college if things stayed like that, I guess what it's saying, unless things changed.	
	B: Yeah.	
	M: Bambi has some down days, um, and sometimes you need someone to be with you. Bambi. Bambi has a card saying she's having a down day and does not want to talk in that moment.	
	B: Yeah	
	M: Do you use that?	
	B: I call 'em dark feelings, dark clouds. It's like depression, but at certain	Conceptual – 'dark clouds', anxiety and low mood

<p>Feelings are out of her control, but others provide emotional support p23 - B</p>	<p>times, I can't stop it, it just comes and goes when it wants to and ummm, I've learnt from my friend, I'm not the only one that has it, it's like me and my friend go back and forwards 'cos obviously with this condition you don't fully know what it is, its like I saw an inkling about it and then it changes.</p>	<p>Moods change, it goes up and down</p> <p>Bambi saying it is not just her, others go through these emotional as well.</p> <p>Condition is life changing and mysterious</p>
<p>Not knowing what will happen in the future feels frightening, out of her control. p23 - B</p>	<p>Like I learned I could go blind or death from it and I didn't know about it until my friend R, who's blind, she did research on Friedreich's ataxia because it were unique she learnt that people go blind and death, its only a small percentage for deaf community it's quite big for blind community...so it's, it was very scary, but at least now I know if my hearing goes dodgy or my eyes go dodgy to bring it up to the hospital, cos for some things when you get used to being your 'sen, you don't go ooh this is different.</p>	<p>Condition has elements that are challenging any effect sight/hearing.</p> <p>It is scary to know and hear these things</p>

	<p>Yeah. Cause with FA you just get on with It's just life...and that's how we end up missing what is actually happening with us, apparently I'm not the only one everyone with FA just misses what is actually 'cos it's just normal.</p>	<p>The condition is complicated but it is who she is, others have the same condition and deal with it as well.</p>
	<p>M: That's really interesting. So then it goes through some of your health needs as well. I think we talked quite a lot about that, about your diagnosis, uh, and that sort of thing, and how you've had input from neuro teams and physiotherapy and occupational therapy and all those people, speech and language. Um, so that's the health, it's gone through education and health. And</p>	<p>Many teams have been involved with Bambi over her life.</p>
	<p>Then what we get to now, so we'll talk a bit more about this is outcomes and provision. So these are things, these are outcomes and areas that you are building towards, you know about them?</p>	

	B: It's been long, it's been a while.	
	M: So for example, a long term outcome in this section says by the end of her college career Bambi will have achieved qualifications to enable her to attend university and or employment, so that's an outcome what do you think about that?	
	B: That I've not really had info for university and gonna try and do it myself.	Wants to research about university independently.
	M: Yeah	
	M: So that's a long term and then a medium term, Bambi will continue to engage in a college program and Bambi will increase her college program during the year?	
	B: Yeah and just learning, just aiming to learn.	Wants to learn and develop her learning during education
	M: That's great and then what it has is ways that they can help you support	

	to get to these outcomes. Um, so how you require some adult support, individualised the group teaching. Um, be involved in setting targets for yourself according to your understanding. Um, be involved in any reviews. And then how best to support you as well with tutors and staff and things like that.	
	M: So do you think those things are happening? How is that feeling?	
Support is experienced but Bambi is not aware of it, meaning she can feel concentrate on other things and not stress. p26 - B	B: They are happening, but it is, I don't notice them that much, as I said, for me it's like I go through life going with the flow and I don't, 'cos when you think about stuff you stress out and it's with me it's not good at all so I just try and aim for what I can and push a bit, just keep pushing a tiny bit, not a lot otherwise I could just go back	Support and reviews are happening but Bambi is 'going with the flow' It is stressful to be too aware or involved. It is little steps at a time for her.

	<p>M: And this support, this provision at college, so staff being in contact with your staff, paying attention to your emotional needs, it says, um, staff, uh, experienced to promote inclusion, contact Bambi and have an understanding of her needs, have strategies to provide consistency for Bambi, um, and things like that are all in here. What does that feel like for you?</p>	
<p>Sensing staff listen to her by being interested in how she is doing, informal communication leading to feeling cared for. p27 - B</p>	<p>B: I think it happens, but I'm not aware, 'cos it is like I talk to J, I talk to K, it's just like a normal conversation, like how are you today? And then she finds out and then she updates other people, it just goes like that.</p>	<p>Things become normalised and not overdone. Simple conversations lead to the sharing of information in College about Bambi</p>
	<p>M: That's really good that's interesting, because what I'm interested to find out is how it feels for you, because that's what I'm trying to do, get in your shoes a bit</p>	

<p>Staff are like friends, and have genuine interest in Bambi's well-being, she is not 'othered'. p28 – B</p>	<p>B: And the thing, do you know not knowing that it's actually someone's actually doing that actually helps more, because you feel more human, you feel more like, oh it's just my mate asking how I am rather than a teacher going, putting a line through that, putting more details in. I feel like J and K are like my friends and they're the teachers, but they're like my friends and that's sort of nice to have.</p>	<p>Feels more human. Interactions are not overdone, it is normal Want to feel 'human' Friendly interactions, not like 'official' Nice to have informal conversations</p>
	<p>M: Yeah, why is that important?</p>	
<p>Bambi has more going in than just education, pastoral staff support feels like it comes from a caring place. p28 - B</p>	<p>B: It's, you can relate more, and you talk about your personal stuff that's going on at home...and it's like sometimes they learn about my personal stuff and the end up going, Oh, we could do summat to help with that. And it's just like, it is not just educational purpose that they help me with sometimes it's personal needs and they</p>	<p>It is not just about education. Getting to know her personally, again this is informal and has a sense of care to their interactions</p>

	treat me like a normal person so I don't feel an alien	'Alien' Bambi is 'normal'
	M: That's a good way of putting it, really interesting, sounds like that means something?	
	B: Yeah.	
	M: Brilliant, so yeah it's just some more outcomes, we won't spend too long on this we've chatted a long time already. (reading from EHC) Bambi will have learned how to, uh, adapt to her condition and increase her independence, that's an outcome what do you think about that?	
Feeling emotionally contained when she needs it. p29 - B	B: I do adapt, and try to be as independent as I can but I know if I have a really bad day or if I'm not walking well I can lean on them.	'lean on them' Support at difficult times
	M: Do you mean physically or emotionally?	

<p>Bambi believes staff care about her on many levels, she is known and they problem solve to help her. p30 – B</p>	<p>B: Both, but last week lights went out in my building, someone did something to the toilets and they like flooded the lifts in my building so you couldn't go to toilets and you couldn't use the lift, it were like the service lift that you could use and it's ages way...so I went from my lift to the lunch group and they could see it on my face that I were knackered, that I couldn't walk anymore and even though it were like midday there were like we'll send you home straight after lunch group, there's no point you've got no toilets, you've got no lift, a serious walk and you can't walk. So they sent me straight home and its things like that where they consider your ability and your mental capacity that makes them better because they care about you.</p>	<p>A story about helping Bambi in a systemic way.</p> <p>Sorting out for her to go home when the toilets broke.</p> <p>Support knows and cares about her</p>
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	<p>M: Yeah and how does that affect you do you think? What does that mean to you?</p>	
<p>College feels like a place that accepts her as different from others. p31 - B</p> <p>Family are trying to 'normalise' Bambi, feels like ableism. p31 - B</p>	<p>B: Mmm caring means I'm not alone. I can live my life with them cos it's just like at home, my family they don't really understand cos they're fully able, they're able people and even though my mum works with disabled, she used to work with us, it's just hard because it's your own child and obviously she's not up to date on it and she didn't know about my disability, but K and J understand, um, more about me that's why they also dip into personal because my family don't get my condition or my stresses, it is easy because at home my dad don't realise how much he puts on me and how much he upsets me, but to anyone else, it will be fine, but.,.it hurts me 'cos he's trying</p>	<p>Comparing how her family do not quite understand her whereas College staff do.</p> <p>Her family are 'able' people</p> <p>Family not understanding Bambi causes tress and upset for her.</p> <p>Split between settings – home/college</p>

<p>Bambi is allowed to feels she can complain at College, project her feelings and feel accepted. p32 - B</p>	<p>to give me like vitamins all the time to try and fix my condition so I end up feeling like I'm broken, and it is just like K, um, J tried to put me in the perspective of his and they also try and find out do you know bits they can help with and it's just nice to have a voice and a rant, you know when you need it.</p>	<p>Family trying to 'fix' Bambi, not accepting of her.</p> <p>College staff provide emotional support, they contain her.</p>
	<p>M: Absolutely. I agree, we'll just go for a couple more outcomes, so it says, by the time Bambi is 25 or she'll be managing, uh, some life demands and will talk positively about her future that's a long term one, and goals, she'll be working towards her goals. Then a medium target, Bambi will be proficient, uh, in using her electric wheelchair. Is that, is that, have you got an electric wheelchair?</p>	

<p>Feeling picked on because of her condition, Bambi is 'othered' but this is out of her control. p33 - B</p>	<p>B: I've got an electric wheelchair, but I'm not comfortable being in it because it's, when they first got diagnosed I didn't want any aid at all so I've come a long way to getting help and support, cos at first it's really hard cos you go from being an able person to BANG a disabled person, but you're not at the same time. Like if you were to look at me a few years ago, you wouldn't of known anything cos I were walking by my 'sen, yes I were wobbly you just would've thought I was drunk...and that's the names that I got in high school, that I were drunk and I were a puppet on a string, they were very nasty about it but it is just how you're seen, most people don't understand that a disability can just be like you...where you look like a normal person, there's nothing that is like</p>	<p>This outcome in the EHC is about wheelchair use</p> <p>A big change in her life as she became a 'disabled' person</p> <p>Others were mean to her when her condition worsened</p> <p>Doesn't look like a 'normal' person, 'puppet on a string' description</p>
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<p>Systems had to adapt to Bambi as she became less physically able, the world was not designed for her. p34 – B</p>	<p>physically wrong with you, you're a normal person, but suddenly you're not. And when I first got diagnosed there I wouldn't allow any help, I had to get, first thing I got help with were bathroom railings and the toilet handrail thing.</p>	<p>Needed physical help and physical adaptations</p>
	<p>M: So you've had some physical stuff like adaptations?</p>	
	<p>B: Yeah, it's adaptations and then I went into, like for long journeys, I went into a wheelchair.</p>	
	<p>M: Yeah okay so that's coming back to wheelchair.</p>	
	<p>B: So it's like I've come a long way from being able and then disabled to allowing, allowing things to happen.</p>	<p>Conceptual, 'came a long way' she has changed</p>
	<p>M: Yeah, exactly, that's really interesting. So yeah, we talked about electric wheelchair and then they've got some provisions around supporting Bambi, uh, ability to follow instructions</p>	

	sometimes, uh, OTs to support Bambi and things like that and to be supported to explore your freedom and personal choice.	
	Then I think there's just one more (section), uh, this is about community inclusion, so about emotional resilience and being able to sort of manage anxieties, that's an outcome or something to lead to. What do you think about that?	
Bambi is progressing towards this outcome, and feels more positive compared to where she was. p35 - B	B: I'm building towards it, I just haven't completely got there, but when you look from where I started to today, completely changed that's really good because before, before I wouldn't, I hated coming here, I didn't wanna come here alone, I even, there were an option between sixth form and college and I stupidly chose sixth form, because it with people I knew...I should have	Bambi is progressing towards this outcome It is a process Bambi made a bad choice initially which she reflects on

<p>Bambi has been a source of conflict for people around her during education, people advocate for her. p36 – B</p>	<p>chose college because they're more supportive, but I thought with people I knew who would find a way to support, but because it were creative department that supported me but because they were lower on the tier they weren't hear at all. Like my art teacher, she constantly got into fights with my head teacher about supporting and that and she almost lost a job trying to support me and do you know stand up for me 'cos nobody will listen to me, so they tried to help me, I even got invited to the staff room, you know,</p>	<p>Staff at school 'fought' for Bambi and that caused them trouble. It was a battle</p>
	<p>M: You mentioned there about not being listened to, is that something that happened? Is that, I think I'm getting a sense that happened in the past, but not so much now. Is that right? Or what do you think about it?</p>	

<p>Feels heard at College, Bambi has a voice and it is listened to. p37 - B</p>	<p>B: Yeah it doesn't happen now they always let me talk and you always like make sure I'm listened to.</p>	<p>College let her talk and listen to her</p>
	<p>M: What does that feel like for you?</p>	
<p>Feeling that staff care about her and want her to be in an emotionally good place. p37 - B</p>	<p>B: It feels good because I talked to J about a personal issue. It's just me and J like to talk about that is kind of stuff so she is making sure I feel well, It's just to make sure I'm mentally well.</p>	<p>The relationship, feeling comfortable talking about things, not just academics</p>
	<p>M: As long as you've got support, you've got people to talk to, that's important and I'm gonna give you some, some information about people you can talk to as well. Um, so let's just go through this quickly.</p>	
	<p>M: So what else have we got (reading EHC) Bambi joining art or drawing club outside of college, that's an outcome</p>	
	<p>B: I haven't reached that yet</p>	

	<p>M: Yeah, so that's a medium outcome. So the ways to build on this, making sure, I guess finding options, using and making sure people understand your way of sort of communicating and, um, all that sort of stuff so building those skills up to find somewhere, I guess, Is that right?</p>	
	<p>B: Yeah.</p>	
	<p>M: It says allow Bambi plenty of time to respond, if she feels rushed or pressured to speak, she may become anxious, which can affect her ability to communicate, are you happy that that's in there?</p>	
	<p>B: That mainly came out of bus rides, cos I used to go on the bus, but it's like they demand payment straight off and it's like you feel pressure because of the queue behind you as well as like the driver, like shouting in</p>	<p>Not bothered about this information being here</p> <p>Story about bus rides</p>

	your face so that's why don't like to go on buses no more (laugh)	
	M: How does that feel then when that sort of thing happens?	
	B: Feels terrible because he is just you don't want anyone shouting in your face, but you also want to be like, Oh, you are going to take your time love, sort of thing, cos it is just like, I used to go in back of queue to avoid it, but when you are at the back, it is like straight after you're done, the bus starts moving, so it's like I we're in the no win situation.	Wants to be considerate of people but also allowed to be herself.
	M: Yeah, sounds like it.	
	So that's your, so we go for your education, health care plan. So that's what you have, that's yours. Um, how did it feel like going, What did you think about going through it like that? What do you think about it?	

	B: Going through all the educational plan.	
	M: Yeah, what did you think about hearing that? Because we were talking about you, we were talking about outcomes, we were talking about all sorts	
Feels if she knew everything that was in EHC it would lead to her becoming stressed and pressurised to achieve. p40 - B	B: It's its tough to say, but stuff I don't know that's getting reported down, which I'm fine with, I'm fine with it because it's when you are getting drilled at and you're like, this is what you are going to, this is what you are going to say sort of thing you then feel stressed and a lot more anxiety 'cos there's a lot more pressure on you.	Not aware of everything in the EHC. Fine with it Difficult feelings at times
	M: Do you think with things we went through in that plan, does that sound like you and things you are doing? What do you think?	

<p>EHC feels more for adults rather than Bambi, it is in adult language. p41 – B</p>	<p>B: Yes, it sounds like me, it's just put in a more filtered, an adult version.</p>	<p>The EHC is for adults – it does sound like her</p>
	<p>M: And the outcomes, do you think they're important? What do you think about them?</p>	
<p>Staff care for Bambi, they provide her with the support to help her achieve outcomes in the EHC. p41 - B</p>	<p>B: Well what I get from them is that...do you know like K, I've complained about this, I don't really go out after college, this is like, this is like my going out time, my life sort of thing, or going to appointments. I get really excited about college and appointments 'cos it's all like I do, but what K is trying to put into place is she's trying to push me out and do you know, make me go out with friends and that, like she's tried to set up with my friend R, she's tried to set up, do you know us two going out. So, and do you know a R's mum, she has proper disabled car and everything. So I wouldn't feel uncomfortable as such</p>	<p>Here Bambi is glad that staff are putting things in place to help her achieve her outcomes (steps)</p> <p>Outcomes are team effort, they require help from staff to help her achieve them</p>

<p>Being accepted for who she is brings feelings of positivity, achieving change is something Bambi wants. p42 - B</p>	<p>because she's got all the things I need do you know for, for a wheelchair and that, which I always feel weird about, do you know, being around able people, cos you sometimes the boot of your car's not big enough, it's always a bit awkward, like that minute when on a date a while ago, but it was the first time proper being disabled and it felt so weird because it were like, I had the frame in the restaurant and I felt like I were in the way, like waiters would try trying to get past this aisle and I were trying to move frame outta away and like it's just really okay. It just really awkward but when you get over it and you get over that hell, you feel a bit better cos you achieve something.</p>	<p>Able people, Bambi might be a burden?</p> <p>Had a date</p> <p>Restaurant set up for physically 'able' people.</p> <p>Awkward but rewarding in the end.</p>
	<p>M: And you feel so you achieve, so you get over the hill, that's a good way</p>	

	of putting it and is that the same in education as well? What do you think about that?	
Difficulties are experienced as opportunities to work with staff, problem-solve to create better outcomes. p43 - B	B: The first time you're doing something it is very difficult, maybe sometimes it takes quite a couple of times to get through work and then when you're over it you are like, Oh, I can do this now. Like at first didn't want taxis, hated taxis but K (staff) put me in a way where it will like gently didn't like rush me and she also, 'cos I preferred this taxi man called T, he's an English bloke and we have conversations in the van, you find out all sorts	Ca be challenging at first but she can get there and achieve When difficulties arise staff problem-solve with Bambi to make things better
	M: Thanks Bambi, we've been talking for about an hour now so I might wrap up in a minute, but guess like what we'll come back to just one more time so you've got this education, health and	

	care plan, what is it like to be Bambi with this plan at college?	
EHC allows Bambi to feel heard. p44 – B	B: It feels a lot better 'cos I just feel like I can be myself, be just Bambi, I can turn up, it's like I can tell people if this isn't my, or if I'm not comfortable here and they're like...we'll do this for you.	The EHC means she can tell people if she wants change or help
	M: Yeah and do you think this is contributing to it this plan that you've got around you?	
The EHC is an initial insight into Bambi as a person, she does not have to explain herself. p44 - B	B: Yes cos it lets all the staff members know and then they get to know me, so they learn more when they get to know me, obviously, 'cos not every single detail is in that plan, but they have an over overview of who you are and what your difficulties are and then once they get to know you, they know more about your difficulties and they adjust to it.	The EHC is an 'overview' of Bambi, staff know her because of it. Not everything is in there but it means they can adjust to her

	M: Why is that important there? What does that mean?	
EHC means Bambi feels less stressed about telling new people about herself. p45 - B	B: I got a new teacher, she's not super new, she knew me a tiny bit from last year, but she didn't, she didn't know fully about me, but I'm guessing cos I'm on the system now, she's just looked into my case, so it's like straight away she like have a different, she adjusted to me straight off so it's good 'cos you don't feel any anxiety and distress and that you don't wanna be here sort of thing.	New teacher story. Because of the EHC she knew Bambi and that meant she had less anxiety, didn't have to explain herself.
	M: That's great, thank you for your time today	

Spencer – 22/11/22

Experiential Statements

Interview Text

Exploratory Noting

	<p>M: So Spencer, first question, I think just a big question. I'm just wondering about you and your education and what's happened and how, how has your education gone so far?</p>	
<p>Education (EHCP) is about honesty, support feels solvable, not a problem or something that is burdensome. p1</p> <p>Support is tangible, it is felt, friendly and is used to solve problems. p1</p>	<p>S: It's been alright, um, I think it is, like, there's definitely like enough support, definitely the <u>right type</u> of support. Yeah. Um, I love it 'cos it's like the, even though there might be like a problem, there's always a solution. So like, if I've got a problem, um, I'll go to like J (staff) and they'll always be aware, not just like a negative, oh, well it's a problem that's, you know, we can't really do anything about that. Um, so it's supportive, um, <u>friendly</u>, um, <u>honest</u> and open, uh, that's and I like that...they're approachable and stuff.</p>	<p>Has support</p> <p>Problems lead to a solution due to support</p> <p>Positive (not negative) conversations, shared process</p> <p>Staff are easy to approach</p>

	M: Approachable yeah, and then just again for the recording, what are you doing at college at the moment?	
	S: Uh, social work and criminal justice. We cover units such as psychology, sociology, child development, the family and society, uh, law and morality, things like that.	
	M: Sounds like really interesting stuff.	
	S: Yeah	
	M: So we're here today because I'm interviewing young people who have this thing called an education, health, and care plan. I guess a first big question again might be have you been aware of this plan? What do you think about it?	
The more you know about the EHC the more people can help. p2 Because it is there the feeling is that others are 'knowing' her, she is understood. p2	S: Yes, yes, I, I definitely, I'm aware of it and it was definitely, it's one of the things, not only, I definitely think was needed from day one, but I definitely think that also sort of prior to the future and whatnot, it is a very important thing because it's got all the information as	Definitely knows about the EHCP. As soon as Spencer entered education she was aware Puts great importance on it Information is there so no repeating, this leads to solutions and progress

<p>Without it she thinks it would have been challenging and would not have coped or been understood. p3</p>	<p>needed, so if anyone needs to look, they can say, right, I found this information, and now we can find solutions to help her.</p>	
	<p>S: Um, I think it's very informative, which it needs to be, it's very educational and it's just, it's brilliant because it's not, it doesn't exclude anything, it's got everything right there in the document stating what needs to happen and what suggestions have been put forward.</p>	
	<p>M: Brilliant and how, how does that feel for you? How has that felt for you having this plan?</p>	
<p>Feels known and heard because of the EHCP, it is a 'short-cut' to understanding Spencer. p3</p> <p>Enables more time to do other things, building relationships. p3</p> <p>Having to say all her disabilities/needs is time-consuming and uncomfortable. p3</p>	<p>S: It felt before I had it, it was...<u>annoying</u> because my day to day things, if I come with new people, new members of staff, new learning support I would constantly have to, um, repeat myself to tutors, um, about all my different disabilities, about all my different needs, what I need, what I need them to do to ensure that I get a task done, um, but then I had it and it made my life a whole lot <u>easier</u>,</p>	<p>Annoyed having to tell her story regularly before.</p> <p>Went from 'annoying' to 'a lot easier'</p> <p>Does not want to repeat, having it there allows her to build relationships</p>

<p>Spencer is heard in her regular meetings about EHCP, has a voice and can develop because of this, needs are met in education feels positive. p4</p>	<p>because then I've got, uh, I can, you know, say to the tutor that I've got an EHCP plan, you can look at it, these are all my needs, these uh, we've had meetings annually, this is what's been said, this is what's been documented, and this is the way that I have to have it in to ensure that all my needs are correctly met.</p>	<p>It's like a 'shortcut' to knowing her</p> <p>Meeting important to update information, enables conversations and collaboration</p>
	<p>M: And why is that important for you, Spencer, do you think?</p>	
<p>The EHCP is building towards Spencer becoming more, it is a part of her progress. p4</p> <p>Feeling supported and equal to her peers, she is included and important. p4</p>	<p>S: Um, it's important because if my needs weren't met appropriately, then I would not be able to <u>flourish</u> in terms of academics, in terms of social skills, um, and in terms of just learning in general, being able to be <u>inclusive</u>, being able to make sure that I'm able to <u>contribute</u> as well as other people within the class.</p>	<p>'Flourish' – see's herself as developing if environment is correct, like a flower.</p> <p>Meets lots of areas of need.</p> <p>Settings and people being inclusive.</p> <p>Comparison to others (peers) – the EHCP allows her to feel the same and important.</p>
	<p>M: Great, that's really interesting Spencer thanks for that. Um, and then so the education, health and care plan, so it sounds like you've got feelings about it. Do you think you've particularly been involved in putting it together?</p>	

	S: Yes.	
	M: And how have you been involved? Tell me about that	
<p>'Glued' to EHCP, it is a part of her and cannot be separated from her experience of education. p5</p> <p>Feels heard at reviews, the process is open and shared with those around her. p5</p> <p>Feeling important and listened to. p5</p>	<p>S: Definitely, I think I'm very <u>glued</u> in to it. Um, so we have annual meeting with mine. So we'll sit around a table and we'll just, uh, we'll talk about it, we'll go through each section separately, make sure that I <u>understood</u> what's there, what's been said. Um, sort of describe any questions, they'll help me, they'll ask me if I want to, um, have anything to be said about it or if I want any targets to be made myself from my <u>point of view</u>.</p>	<p>Attached to the EHCP</p> <p>Annual reviews are important so she understands what is happening</p> <p>Able to ask people about the plan in reviews</p> <p>Collaboration – they ask her so some power dynamics involved.</p>
<p>Plans and support are discussed, they are joint-up working. p5</p> <p>Spencer needs everyone to understand her so she can feel supported and happy. p5</p>	<p>S: Um, and then we come, sort of come together and as we go through each section, we will then go, right, well this is this, we've come up with this for this section, and then we'd make sure that at the end it's clear and it's understood by every person in that room, <u>not just professionals</u> that are there.</p>	<p>Go through each section and repeat process</p> <p>The reviews are important for Spencer.</p> <p>People understand</p> <p>Others referenced, family/friends?</p>

	M: And who else has been involved in, in that sort of process with you, Spencer?	
<p>There is an outer layer to support, systemic. p6</p> <p>Care is a shared responsibility, the experience is collaborative. p6</p> <p>People are involved in progress and that is tangible in her education. p6</p>	S: Um, there's, um, sort of different institutions, you could say in society. Uh, me, my mum, uh, my key worker, uh, my other support like LSAs, uh, tutors, um, heads of department if they're, um, you know, teaching me or know me, um, and just different professionals that have somewhat inclusiveness into my care.	<p>Referencing institutions, wider entities</p> <p>List of people involved, these people contribute towards her care.</p> <p>Keeping her included in EHCP and in life</p>
	M: Great.	
	M: So, so an education, health, and care plan is, um, so I've got the sort of the spiel that it says about it in the code of practice and it says an education, health, and care plan is for children and young people, um, aged up to 25 who need more support than is available through special educational needs.	
	M: So the plans identify educational, health and social needs and set out the additional support to meet those needs. So	

	what do you think about that as a, as a framework for an EHC plan?	
Has disabilities and needs that she needs people to understand in order to know her/care for her. p7	S: I think it is correct, and I think that by making sure that every area is identified is necessary, because I always say that I have a range of disabilities and each one of those in particular do impact or influence multiple areas all at once.	Spencer is complex, she has many levels and they all add up to make her
Support is welcoming and leads to progress in academics and life. p7 She has grown because of good support, other people contributing are needed to empower Spencer. p7	S: So like, for example, I have autism and, uh, my social skills aren't the best, um, however, intellectually wise, I am quite advanced and having that support within the classroom, having learning support sat next to me and teaching me and, and taking notes and being able to sit with a one-to-one through the support of the an EHCP, which is provided by the college has definitely helped me as a person to grow and develop and change.	Some variance in needs/presentation, good at some things not at others. Support is important on various levels Link to support outlined in EHCP EHCP + Support = Development Views support as allowing her to progress and change
	M: Yeah, what does that mean to you?	
	S: It means a lot, um, <u>equality</u> , um, <u>inclusiveness</u> , um, general <u>respect</u> , um...just	Describing words, equality is important and a theme

<p>Spencer feels diverse and unique but needs to feel equal. p8</p> <p>Acceptance for who she is, not seen as an 'other' but celebrated. p8</p>	<p>the same opportunities, so the same...you know, no <u>outcasting</u>, no, um...sort of, yeah, just diverse thoughts and diverse ways of doing things.</p>	<p>Does not want to be 'outcast'</p> <p>Difference is okay, EHCP is part of this</p>
	<p>M: Great, that's really good. So I'm just going to have a look through your education, health and care plan now, if that's alright. We can have a little chat, is that okay?</p>	
	<p>S: Yeah, that's fine.? Yeah that's cool.</p>	
	<p>M: We've got, so we go to the first bit, the personal details</p>	
	<p>S: If you don't understand anything, just like let me know</p>	
	<p>M: Oh, of course, yeah, I will do.</p>	
	<p>M: So the first bit is all about me and it says, uh, my one page profile. And it says like, what people like and admire about me, my honesty and friendly approach, my outgoing and bubbly personality. Things that are important to me. So support and help, uh, my peers, uh, always try my best to achieve</p>	

	educating others about my disability. How best to support me, use updated equipment that's suitable for me, speak to me at a pace that I can process, uh, what I dislike and find challenging people who are insensitive or are inconsiderate towards my disability and my future. Working towards working with SEN or a career in law.	
	S: Yeah.	
	M: So that was updated. Can you remember how your views were gathered for that? What, can you remember what happened? What was that like?	
Spencer needs to be strong to stand up for herself and to be heard. p9 Do not be fearful, environment needs to allow her to say uncomfortable things without hesitating. p9	S: Um, I think it was like the way that I say it was, right, because I've always been strongly <u>stubborn</u> and <u>independent</u> and <u>wilful</u> and moral, and it, it just felt right sort of being able to say this is that is that, this is the way that it should be without having to have that <u>hesitation of fear</u> .	She is strong. Telling them what is important. Describing herself – independent/wilful/stubborn/moral Being able to say what she wants, no fear.

<p>Needs to be treated as a whole person, not defined by disabilities. p10</p> <p>Mental and social factors to be acknowledged to understand and help her (holistically). p10</p> <p>The pieces lead to the whole, feeling understood and accepted. p10</p>	<p>S: Um...and I think that it, that it is sort of necessary um, I think having that in the plan itself is important about that information about who I am um, is necessary, because it's, you have to take an <u>holistic</u> approach, not just, uh, a <u>private sectioned</u> off one, you have to look at it <u>holistically</u> because then you get a rounded picture of a person.</p>	<p>Gathering her views is important and necessary to make it holistic and get a true picture of her</p> <p>Holistic approach</p> <p>'Private sectioned off' is it is like this it won't work</p>
	<p>M: That's brilliant, so that's about you, Spencer and then it says about your mum has fed into it where to get where she needs to be and participate in and fulfil meaningful roles in the future. Um, so that, that's sort of bit about you and the family and things like that. Then this has been updated, hasn't it so that's, uh, overarching strengths and achievements. It's got strengths about your communication and how you're able to express your opinions, interact well with peers and adults and things like that. Then how you're motivated to learn in lessons and</p>	

	S: Yeah, yeah.	
	M: That's going onto cognition learning. So it's talking about your strengths.	
	S: Yeah.	
	M: What's important about getting your strengths in there, do you think?	
<p>Spencer is fighting stereotypes and wider prejudice or people with SEN and disabilities, she is fighting for equality. p11</p> <p>Felt not listened to and disempowered in the past, let down by adults. p11</p> <p>Importance of people knowing what she is capable of, does not want pity. p11</p> <p>Some tension in accepting diversity but being equal to peers. p11</p> <p>Does not want to feel she is 'less than'. p11</p>	<p>S: Um, I think for me personally, it is important to make sure it's documented because I have, because of my range of disabilities, I have a lot of <u>stereotypes</u> that come with it and people assume...and I've had it like throughout life, where people have assumed that I can't talk for my <u>own</u>, uh, sort of making sure that I've got everything that I need. So <u>they'll</u> assume and they'll talk for me or they'll do things for me, or...they'll do something that <u>they</u> think that I can't do, but it's important in the EHC plan to make sure that they know that I can do it because it gives me independence. It gives me the right to live as an equal person, the right opportunities, so I'm</p>	<p>The EHCP – documenting strengths fights 'stereotypes' for Spencer</p> <p>People assuming she cannot do things</p> <p>Because of her disabilities in the past people have spoken for her – disempowering?</p> <p>Without mentioning strengths people assume she cannot do things</p> <p>People will talk for her</p> <p>Focus on equality and not being seen as different, out-casted or othered.</p>

	not out-casted as that diverse person with special needs.	
<p>The balance of challenges and opportunities is important and helps others to understand her, feel important. p12</p> <p>The EHCP as a 'building' process, Spencer is developing and becoming more than she is now. p12</p> <p>Building is collaborative, needs to be shared and lead to success. p12</p>	<p>S: Yes, I have special needs, and yes, they do impact my life, a lot of them in every area. But having my strengths and weaknesses and everything else in that document helps me because it allows that person to be informed of the things that I can do and the things that I might need help with and building on that they can know, and then they can build on that themselves by, um, doing activities, so like putting in pairs and having discussions and then the debate and things like that. So instead of just going, well, you know, she can't do this putting strengths in there allows 'em to build them, so it builds me as a person overall.</p>	<p>Accepting special needs</p> <p>Having strengths and weaknesses in EHCP helps and means others know her better</p> <p>The process is about 'building', examples of provisions</p> <p>People not assuming she cannot do things, 'build' her as a person – progress towards independence</p>
	M: That's great how does that feel for you?	
<p>Feels comfortable, supported and empowered in her education. p12</p>	<p>S: As a person it definitely makes me very, very, very independently empowered. Having the EHC definitely does because it, it allows</p>	<p>EHCP about empowerment for Spencer, she is part of it and not done to</p>

<p>Struggles are acknowledged and are a part of life. p13</p> <p>The EHCPs and supporting Spencer can lead to something bigger than her, the system is improved and inclusivity taught. p13</p> <p>CYP with SEN in the future can benefit from her because staff learn about adapting. p13</p> <p>EHCP allows her to feel like a person, not a label. p13</p>	<p>me to feel empowered, it allows me to keep my independence as a person, um, it allows me to feel comfortable, um, when in lesson allows me to feel, um, open, about the different struggles that I have, um, and it allows me just in general to educate people alongside not just my peers, but elder tutors that may have taught me or maybe have taught someone else that's similar to me throughout the years and things like that, so yeah, overall it is makes me feel as a person very, very empowered because it allows me to have something that represents me as a person, not just focusing on my disabilities, it allows to cover everything, so therefore I can identify that I can do this, this, and this, and I can build as, as a person.</p>	<p>The EHCP allows comfort, independence</p> <p>Struggles are there but are 'out there' she feels she can let people know</p> <p>Educating others (peers, tutors) to support people with SEN.</p> <p>Spencer as a trailblazer</p> <p>Focus on strengths, not just disabilities</p> <p>Enjoys having something that accurately represents her</p> <p>Build again</p>
	<p>M: Thanks, Spencer, that's really brilliant.</p>	
	<p>M: So, yes, it goes through your, your strengths and like you said, your difficulties as well in terms of it lists it like this in terms of communication interaction, um, how</p>	

	<p>sometimes you find it hard to verbalise your difficulties at times. So it says, Spencer is not aware of what appropriate responses she can give in if unfamiliar adults offer help and support while she's traveling independently and things like that.</p>	
	<p>M: So it's about communication and then cognition talks about your concentration, sometimes it wanes during the day due to tiredness.</p>	
	<p>S: Yeah, some, sometimes if I'm, um, if I'm tired, I, I won't be in reality, um, I sort of lose it or if I'm not interested in a subject as such, like sociology for example, I don't, I like the subject, but I don't love it as other subjects as psychology or law. Um, and because of that I don't really take an interest as such.</p>	<p>Spencer has interests in her learning and things she is not interested in.</p> <p>Gets tired.</p>
	<p>M: Why don't you like sociology out of interest? or why don't you like sociology compared to psychology?</p>	

	<p>S: I think it is just a subject thing, I've always liked stuff that's problem solving or things that it's like a mystery, um, but so with psychology you can do that because you look and you're problem solving you try and figure out, but with sociology it just seems a bit calmer...it's just not my interest.</p>	Aware of her strengths and interests.
	<p>M: Yeah, it's interesting, it goes through like sensory needs and things like that. It says, obviously Spencer, you're registered severely site impaired and been diagnosed with cerebral condition and things like that, so it's got stuff about your health as well</p>	
	<p>S: Yeah</p>	
	<p>M: And sort of all those sort of things, what you think about that?</p>	
<p>Spencer feels different in the SEN world, she is exotic in some ways. p15</p>	<p>S: I think that is <u>important</u> also, um, for that to be documented, it is <u>important</u> to me to make sure that all my disabilities, no matter what it is, it's to be placed in the document. Um, because it is very informative, um,</p>	Important to have disabilities in EHCP

<p>Feels calmer because she is not constantly explaining herself or her disabilities to people. p16</p> <p>Explaining takes time away from educational experience, enables Spencer to get on with things. p16</p> <p>Focused on her difference, she needs to be thought of and treated as unique. p16</p>	<p>because I do try and attempt to explain some of them, but because some of them aren't your normal diagnoses like autism or things that you commonly hear of, it's very difficult. Um, so having it documented in the EHCP does me a favour because then I'm not constantly repeating myself and I'm not getting stressed because I do sometimes, um, other people won't know of my condition so I have to sit down, have half an hour with them and explain what it is and how that affects my life, and how the support that I need needs to be tailored to my needs because I'm not like others.</p>	<p>Because Spencer has 'different' types of disabilities having it in the EHCP means she is not repeating or having to explain to people.</p> <p>Repeating things is stressful</p> <p>It takes time/effort to explain needs if are not written down or accessible.</p> <p>Spencer is different from others.</p>
	<p>M: Thank you Spencer.</p>	
	<p>M: So it goes through social, emotional, how sometimes you feel a bit confused about your vision and then it goes onto some things about steps and stairs</p>	
	<p>S: Yeah.</p>	

	M: Practical coordination and assistive technologies.	
	S: Yeah.	
	M: So then it goes on Section C Health needs relating to my SEN. So this is quite a similar section, it goes through your conditions and things like that, Spencer. Cerebral atrophy activity.	
	S: Yeah, cerebral atrophy.	
	M: Yes then back to visual conditions and things like that and how you've had community paediatricians involved and that sort of, and mentions autism as well. So it has this stuff about health.	
	S: Yeah.	
	M: And that's something, isn't it?	
	S: Yeah, yeah definitely needed.	Health needs necessary
	M: So it has, it's all about you, so it's like it's just getting a picture of you, isn't it?	
	S: Yeah, holistically, yes.	

	M: Holistically, yes, and so it goes through all them, then it goes to outcomes.	
	S: Yeah.	
	M: So we have some outcomes, so we go through some outcomes together. Um, what do you think about outcomes, or goals, I guess is another way of putting it?	
<p>Outcomes about proving herself and having a sense of achievement in her life. p18</p> <p>People doubt her and she needs to prove them wrong, they think she cannot do 'normal' things. p18</p> <p>Disabilities are not a reason for a lack of independence. p18</p> <p>Naturally active, needs to be heard and have a voice in life. p18</p>	<p>S: Um, I think to me they are important, I think it empowers me to achieve them. Um, because from a disabilities point of view, all all, I, not from everyone, but from a lot of people, I get a lot of stereotypes of, well, you can't do this because of this or you can't do that because of that, um, but having the goals, even if there are small ones, like making something in the kitchen, for example, because I can't, I can't use everything in the kitchen, I can only use toaster, microwave, basic things, I can't use the cooker the washing machine, it gives me the respect and dignity as a person, not, not as just someone that's relying on other</p>	<p>Spencer is empowered to progress and hit her goals</p> <p>Believes people with disabilities may be stereotyped</p> <p>Small outcomes are fine, helps her prove people wrong.</p> <p>Can do things despite her disabilities</p> <p>Can be like everyone else, have dignity, be independent and not rely on other people</p> <p>Independence as a goal</p>

<p>Outcomes are experienced alongside others, support from people is required to get there. p19</p>	<p>people because it's not in my nature, I've, I've grew up training myself to be independent. So having those goals within the EHCP and allowing everyone to see them will allow them to build me as a person, will give me skills to help me, will, will overall be my further, wider support network to ensure that the goals are met.</p>	<p>EHCP for everyone to see</p> <p>Build</p> <p>Having outcomes can help her get to her goals</p> <p>More about the team/support network</p>
	<p>M: Yeah, brilliant, great way of putting it, Spencer. So it's got long term and medium terms outcomes, so for example says Spencer will be able to develop independence and traveling and home skills, she'll be able to recognise when she needs help and be confident to access community settings so that's a long term one. Then a medium term one, I think it says Spencer will complete household chores once a week, Spencer will act as a student mentor twice per week in one group. How's that going?</p>	

<p>Because she is learning how to support Spencer can develop relationships and be part of something. Enabling her to feel part the system. p20</p> <p>Jigsaws suggesting people can be completed, the parts add up to the whole. p20</p>	<p>S : Yeah its alright, yeah, yeah I, uh, talk to them and get to know them, um, find out what they're like, what they don't like, um, we sort of, we sit and play frustration, jenga, um, different things, and we just have general sort of chats, um, to see and I get like a an holistic point of view, sort of gather data, collect it, and then put it like that, like a jigsaw to get a rounded person, like a person-centered approach, but the person just to get them overviewed.</p>	<p>Outcome</p> <p>The activity/outcome is allowing her to get a rounded view of other people/peers she is a mentor for.</p> <p>Descriptive – jigsaw</p> <p>Might be how she views people and herself.</p> <p>Getting to know people informally</p>
	<p>M: That's great, and then it goes through the provision about, you have a key adult to support in setting. So this is about, so you have the outcome and then you have things that are gonna help you reach the outcomes, don't you? So key adults and things like that seem to be quite big in yours, um, and also support from, from health and things like that so that's, that's one outcome.</p>	
	<p>M: Then another outcome around employability needs and goals. So Spencer will</p>	

	<p>achieve qualifications and skills she requires to follow her chosen career path, that's a long term goal. Then a medium term goal, it has been updated regularly, Spencer will, is it progress and, access Level 3 Law and Criminology, which you're talking about. So it's about sort of going towards those goals, isn't it?</p>	
	<p>S: Yeah.</p>	
	<p>M: And then it goes through provision again about key adults and Spencer with her general learning difficulties, this may include support with perseverance and concentration, reinforcement of instructions, reading and understanding pictures and diagrams, copying key information and things like that, so that's the provision.</p>	
	<p>S: Perseverance said I already have.</p>	
	<p>M: Then another outcome around health. So that one is about employability, this one's around health and let's have a look. It is</p>	

	discussing medical conditions with resilience in her sessions and things like that?	
	M: So then go through general provision to meet outcomes, it talks about differentiate teaching, quality first teaching, um, having high expectations of Spencer.	
	S: Yeah.	
	M: And have support staff like we have for every child, every young person, um, for children, for young people. Take action to remove barriers and things like that, to make sure of a graduated approach. Actions will be revisited and refined and that everyone will work together and be coordinated, family and college.	
	S: A secure support network, yeah.	
	M: Why is that important do you think?	
Feel that the EHCP is a team effort, everyone is heard. p22	S: I think, in my opinion, having the EHC plan and having everyone, um, not just write it but contribute to it from their point of view will allow them to bring together their point of view	Hear other peoples points of view and their contribution important Others can see issues/problems from an outside perspective

<p>Problems can be solved if collaboration is championed, discuss the good and the bad to feel like honesty/openness is involved. p23</p> <p>A feeling of being 'held' and understood by support network. p23</p> <p>This is better than it has been for her, she has optimism for the future. p23</p>	<p>about how they think that I'm doing. Because in that way, it can raise any, uh, barriers or concerns that they may have regarding my learning, um, that may have been either <u>missed</u> or not <u>addressed</u> properly. Um, and I think that having the EHCP and all of them coordinate, uh, make sure that every, every base is covered, that is important to me and it's important in general because that way having the plan, having a secure appropriate support network will enable me to succeed, will enable me to, uh, move on and graduate and get a job and learn skills that I haven't had in the past.</p>	<p>Focusing on unknowns/concerns</p> <p>'Every base covered' idiom</p> <p>Trick conversations, concerns raised can lead to support and achievement – leading to success in the future</p>
	<p>M: How does that feel for you to have that?</p>	
<p>Has a feeling of fairness and equality, learning to be independent without being a burden on others. p23</p> <p>Spencer is alive, she is not looked upon as 'less than' or an object that is passive. p23</p>	<p>S : Having these skills it makes me feel equal to others because it makes me feel like I can fit into society without having to go, oh, I can't do this, so you're gonna have to do it for me. I like this because it gives me independence, dignity, and it allows me to be a person instead of an object. 'Cos that's the way</p>	<p>Doing things for herself has connotations of being equal, active in life</p> <p>Independence/dignity</p> <p>'Person instead of object' she is not done to, she is participating</p> <p>Society has a perception of her</p>

<p>Focus on societal expectations of her, she feels the need to prove them wrong. p24</p> <p>Spencer believes this is for a better future for others, not just her, it is greater than her – the cause. p24</p>	<p>I see it, it's a lot of people just assume that because I can't see, I can't do things, so I'm just a doll on a shelf, someone will feed me, someone will walk me and things like that, but I'm not having, having these skills will build me not just as a person, but as a human being and will allow me to support others further, not just with my own conditions, but with everyone in general. Because other people might not have the skills that I acquire.</p>	<p>'Doll on a shelf' – passive/reliant on others/silent?</p> <p>'Build' Human being is above person – equality/rights?</p> <p>Referencing how she can help others as well, this is important – wider community</p>
	<p>M: Absolutely, yeah, very good answer Spencer. So we've just been through, so we've been through the EHC plan. So what do you think about that as a plan now? We've talked about what's in there and things like that?</p>	
<p>EHCP is something that is alive and changing with Spencer. p24</p>	<p>S: Yeah, it's definite, I would've definitely 100% want it, need it, it was definitely beneficial, um, not just on a wide scale in education, but I think on a lower level, um, micro style view, it is important because it's not just a document on a paper, it's a lesson in</p>	<p>Reflecting</p> <p>Needs the EHCP, it has benefitted her</p> <p>In education and in wider life</p> <p>Not just a document that is dormant</p>

<p>The EHCP brings equality to her and others, importance at every level/age to bring about a sense of hope and appropriate help. p25</p>	<p>itself, that's the way I put it. It's something that can be used on a daily basis supporting others to support students, which I think is extremely important and it is needed in every school, college, university, whatnot, it is needed to ensure that every single student gets the right support.</p>	<p>More than her, about teaching others to support and include CYP</p> <p>EHCP support staff to support other students</p> <p>Support is linked to EHCP to make sure CYP succeed in their education</p>
	<p>M: And looking back as is your voice, like we said at the start, do think your voice is in there?</p>	
	<p>S: Yes very, very much I think it is.</p>	
	<p>M: How has that happened?</p>	
<p>Spencer has had to fight to get here, she has defended herself and it has been emotional, not just for her but people around her. p25</p> <p>She knows who she is, what she needs and has been empowered to say it. p25</p>	<p>S: I am very <u>strong</u> and <u>wilful</u>, I have always been <u>stubborn</u> and <u>honest</u> and some people do cry, but yeah, but that's on them. But um, I think it is very important 'cos the way that I see it is if you want to provide the best support, then you ask the person that you're supporting because them as a person will know exactly what they need. Yes, you can go to their parents and you can go to their key</p>	<p>Strong/wilful, fighting for something because it is right and important</p> <p>Stubborn/honest</p> <p>Others get emotional</p> <p>Spencer is the most important person to ask, she is central and her input is crucial</p>

<p>Spencer's role is bigger than just her, she is motivated to advocate for others. p26</p> <p>Education can be bumpy/choppy, the EHCP looks to bring a smoother journey. p26</p> <p>Feeling of a wider cause, she is helping others to help other CYP in the future. p26</p>	<p>worker and their LSA, but the only person that really <u>truly</u> needs the one that only <u>truly</u> know their needs is themselves and I think that me standing for my myself, but also as an advocate for others, my role in this is powerful and it is honest and it is needed and it's right because that's what it is, it is mine, it is my, my plan to ensure that my journey through education is <u>smooth sailing</u>. Um, 'cos at the end of the day, it doesn't just help me, it also helps further, you know, <u>journeys</u>, um, last year, not this year 'cause I don't have her anymore, but I had a, an LSA I for four years straight and she got to know me and then obviously even though we've left, she would know if someone else was to come in visually impaired, she would know how to, to cope and have those skills to be able to be comfortable. So I think overall it, it is, it is needed, it is right, it is necessary, um and anyone that says that they're not are <u>stupid</u>, um (laugh) and overall it</p>	<p>Important to be heard first, she knows her needs</p> <p>Part of a wider cause/advocacy</p> <p>Lots of possessive nouns, the plan is MINE</p> <p>EHCP = Smooth sailing (idiom)</p> <p>It's a journey</p> <p>Story about her helping her support in the future. If they meet someone visually impaired in the future.</p> <p>Spencer is helping others understand – this is important</p> <p>Who is she referring to? Stupid</p>
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<p>People are complex and need to be seen holistically, the parts make the person. p27</p> <p>Doing this during the EHCP process leads to a feeling of acceptance and wider care. p27</p>	<p>is extremely beneficial, um, in every aspect of the word because you're not just covering one particular section you're covering the entire basis, you're take in an <u>holistic</u> approach and a person-centered approach to it, and you are saying, this is this, this, and this. this is what needs to be done to be able to make sure that that person thrives in an environment that they love.</p>	<p>It documents all her needs and is holistic</p> <p>The EHCP is saying what to do so Spencer can thrive and feel – loved? Accepted? Comfortable?</p>
	<p>M: That's really great answer, Spencer and I guess what we're going back to like these plans for young people who have, I guess what its saying is they have higher needs than we can sort of cater for, so this plan is necessary for these, these particular things who have SEN needs, like we said. What do you think?</p>	
<p>Spencer experiences worry for others who cannot advocate for the themselves, this would lead to them being marginalised. p27</p>	<p>S: Yes, without a doubt it is needed for people with SEN difficulties, um, because not all of us are able to <u>advocate</u> in the same way, um, that may be because of their disability, or maybe because they think that disability has</p>	<p>Wider reference to others with SEN not being able to feel as much power/advocacy as non-SEN peers</p>

<p>Not being heard/asked is dis-empowering/frustrating and can diminish your sense of self. p28</p> <p>Having a voice is progressive and positive, Spencer feels she is part of a bigger cause. p28</p> <p>Wider life becomes more manageable because of the EHCP. p28</p>	<p><u>demolished</u>, which in a sense it has because it's been put down and <u>degraded</u> to a point where it's just, it's that and if you've got that, then it's an issue when it's not and I think that that really affects <u>self-esteem, self-confidence</u>, um, and overall their ability to do lot of things. So I think that having it is extremely necessary cause it does not just give them a <u>voice</u>, but it <u>advocates</u> for themselves, it gives them confidence, it gives them self-esteem and it sure...without a doubt it definitely, uh, uh, uh, what did, um, it definitely, without a doubt does make <u>our</u> lives a whole lot easier in every aspect.</p>	<p>Importance for Spencer that CYP with SEN are heard, not degraded</p> <p>Not being heard leads to lack of self-esteem/low confidence</p> <p>Not just their voice but provides other factors skills/feelings</p> <p>'Them' she is an outsider here</p> <p>'Our' Spencer as part of a wider community, the EHCP makes things easier</p>
	<p>M: Has it done that for you, Spencer, do you think it's helped you? I guess you've gone through it quite a lot, but it's, it's experience. So I'm just trying to get into your shoes, what's the experience like?</p>	
<p>Feels calm because of the EHCP. p28</p>	<p>S: Definitely a whole lot better, but I'm not, I think if I didn't have it, I would be <u>stressing</u></p>	<p>EHCP made things better</p>

<p>Experience of being 'seen', there for staff to see and know about. She is understood and accessible. p29</p>	<p>really bad. But now, but I do have it, and that for me is like the way that I would put, it's like, it's like a box, like <u>a very big box and I'm in the box and it's like everyone can see like all the information's on the walls and everyone can see it.</u></p>	<p>Would be stressful without it</p> <p>Box idiom – she is in it and others can see her</p> <p>EHCP = A Perspex box – conceptual</p>
<p>Feeling of being relaxed a being known to those around her. p29</p> <p>Spencer is heard, she is active, not passive. p29</p> <p>Feeling like she has control and is valued. p29</p> <p>A sense of ownership over her experiences is empowering. p29</p>	<p>S: So I'm not there <u>stressing</u> about it or repeating myself or, you know, um, having to...physically...sort of go through that process of right, this is my name, this is what I need, da, da, da, because it's right here, um, for me it is because it gives me, in, in, in the weird way that I...I get to be a <u>participant</u> in it, I'm not just a <u>doll on a shelf</u> and they're all talking about it around a table. I'm, <u>I'm in on it</u> and I'm at the table, I'm, uh, posing my views, I'm asking them questions, they're asking me questions, so it's a, you know, it's a, in a group or a one-to-one, I'm included and that's one of the things that is important to me about it, is that it's not</p>	<p>Not having to repeat herself and not stressing about it</p> <p>Spencer is active in it, not passive</p> <p>Doll reference again</p> <p>She is present, not talked about, giving her views</p> <p>Able to question and be involved</p> <p>Being included = important</p> <p>First hand, not hearsay</p>

	just something that's been said about a person, it's for the person by the person.	
	M: Brilliant, Spencer, I think that it's brilliant. I, uh, I, I think we'll stop the recording now if that's okay. Thank you for chatting to me, that's a bit over half an hour and, um, let's stop there.	

Luna – 28/11/22

Experiential Statements	Interview Text	Exploratory Noting
	M: I think a first question is what are you doing at college at the moment, Luna?	
	L: Um, I'm doing floristry, um, I'm doing, I'm level two, it's a diploma.	
	M: Yeah, and how's that going for you?	
	L: Good.	It's been positive at College
	M: Yeah, what do you like about it?	
	L: Um, I just like, I just like kind of being a, as a creative.	
	M: What does does being creative, does that mean?	
Proud to create something and see the end product. p1 – L	L: Because I get to plan out and the designs, and then I get to make it, and then I get to sell it to people, and then I get to see kind of how they, uh, how they kind of react.	Being creative and doing the process start to finish. Accomplishing and achieving things
	M: Sounds wonderful.	
	Then the bigger question might be about, so we're talking about education today. So you	

	are at college, you've been at high school as well before that. How's that gone for you, how's education been going for you, Luna?	
	L: Um, good. I mean, I've had, um, I've had my ups and downs, but apart from that it's going good.	Education has ups and downs, challenges.
	M: Yeah, what sort of ups and downs might that be?	
<p>EHC is separates Luna from peers, makes her appear different. p2 - L</p> <p>Embarrassment in contents being read openly in from of peers. p2 - L</p> <p>Appreciative of support the EHC brings but wants it to be private, it is personal to her. p2 - L</p>	<p>L: Um, well last year because I'm still doing maths and because I find it hard, I really don't like maths whatsoever. Um, my, um, my maths tutor, wanted to speak to me, um, it was something to do about my EHCP, I can't remember what, but, um, I thought that he was gonna take me out of the class and speak to me, but he just decided and to tell the whole class and what was on my EHCP and I were <u>mortified</u>. Um, I went home that day and I was <u>fuming</u> because I don't mind people knowing I've got one, but I don't want</p>	<p>Does not like maths.</p> <p>Teacher discussed EHCP in front of her class, other students with Luna.</p> <p>Does not want EHC to be openly discussed outside of teacher/student relationships.</p> <p>Upsetting experience for Luna – fuming/mortified</p>

	anybody to know and kind of what's on it because it's personal.	Should not be public, it is private information
	M: As we're talking about the issue we'll come back to that if that's okay?	
	L: Yeah.	
	M: So the reason we are talking today is cause you do have an education, health, and care plan, so we've got it with us. What have you known about it Luna?	
Luna aware of plan and having more support than others, to her it is linked to her autism diagnosis. p3 - L	L: It's something and that was put in place, um, and when I got diagnosed with autism, um, I got diagnosed at three and a half, um, and as soon as I left a nursery, I started primary and I think it came into place and when I started primary school, um, I can remember in primary and secondary, um, and being taken out of our lessons as for these meetings, because you've got to have like a kind of updates and stuff for EHCPs. I mean, and when I were little I didn't think and kind of anything of it and, but when I started to get a	Linking EHCP to diagnosis of autism. Had plan since she was young (tough not EHC as that only introduced in 2015) Memories of being taken out of lesson for meeting and updates regarding the EHC. Younger Luna did not think about it.

<p>Sensing a difference to her peers when being taken out of lessons for meetings. Being singled out. p4 - L</p>	<p>bit older, I started to question like, why was I being taken out? Because I've been in mainstream and kind of all my life, um, I've never been to in special schools or anything, um, I've always stuck to mainstream.</p>	<p>Questioning why she was being taken out and other children not.</p> <p>Always attended mainstream education.</p>
	<p>So as I started to get a bit older, I started to question like, why was it <u>only me</u>? Because I didn't, because I thought that at all my traits as were normal, but as I started to get a bit older, um, I started to realise that I'm a bit <u>different</u> kind to everyone else.</p>	<p>EHC making Luna aware of a difference to others.</p> <p>It is different to what she believes as 'normal' developing this sense of her difference.</p>
	<p>M: What's that like for you? What's it been like?</p>	
<p>Bullied because of her perceived differences, emotionally challenging as it is who she is. p4 – L</p>	<p>L: Um it hasn't phased me, I mean, I'm not, I mean, I'm not particularly bothered, but when people, and take the 'mick' and stuff, that's when stuff gets hard because I don't like it.</p>	<p>People were making fun of her and pointing out her difference.</p> <p>Did not like this happening.</p>
	<p>I mean, I get jokes at stuff and I'm all up for jokes, but when people and take it and too far, that's when, that's when it gets difficult</p>	<p>People taking it to far, the jokes about her causing upset.</p>

	M: For yourself?	
	L: Yeah	
	M: And how does that feel?	
	L: Um...without swearing.	
	M: You can swear .	
Not being known or understood, it is unfair to be nasty to Luna – p5 – L	L: It's, it's <u>shit</u> , it is, um, I mean, I've had people who kind of barely know me and take the 'mick', umm and that really, really, and kind of ticks me off because they know and kind of nothing about me, and for them to take the 'mick' I just find that unfair.	Intense negative feelings around people making fun of her because of her difference. Unfair things being said.
	M: Yeah, that's fair enough. So Luna, that's a really good answer. Thank you for that.	
	So, so you've been, I think you've been quite aware, so, so what is it like to have one of these plans in your education? What's it been like?	
	L: Um, well, my mum and dad have and always been, and well, they've always, and kind of made me aware about, um, and kind	Family discussed EHC with her.

<p>The EHC is needed because Luna has autism, education would be challenging without it. p6 – L</p>	<p>of about my autism and stuff, so I've always known, I mean, and when I was little I didn't really and kind of understand until probably when I were in year five, year six, that's when it probably 'clicked' and kind of what autism was and I did a bit of research. .</p>	<p>At this point she realised she was different and found out about her autism.</p> <p>Linking autism to EHC.</p>
	<p>M: Yeah and how, how would you say, how involved do you think you've been in making this plan throughout the years? Because you say you've had it for a while.</p>	
<p>The EHC is not about Luna, it has been other peoples responsibility and she has been separated from it. p6 – L</p>	<p>L: Well, it's mainly been my mum, um, and that has been a kind of involved, um, I kind of, both of my parents and have been involved, but it's always been, and kind of my mum and sometimes my dad and kind of whenever he, and kind of whenever he gets the time off work because, um, both of my parents work full time.</p>	<p>EHC has historically been something her parents have been involved in.</p> <p>No so much herself, may not of been explained to her.</p>
	<p>M: Yeah. Because um, one of the things about having one of these plans that they, uh, they say is like, it's important for young</p>	

	people to sort of have input and have a voice in their plans and make it about them. What do you think about that?	
	L: Um, I think it's a good idea because it's asking, it's asking the people and who I've got and kind of difficulties and kind of what they want.	See's the importance of people with EHCs having a say, asking what they want.
	M: And has that happened?	
	L: Um, um, sometimes yes, but sometimes no.	Mixed experience of having a say.
	M: So in, in the times that it has happened, what's been happening?	
When Luna has been heard and asked she has received help. p7 – L	L: Um, well, I'm getting a kind of extra help and with my floristry and with my maths. Um, it's been hard and kind of getting the support, but I've got it, um, it was harder in college and then in secondary school because, well, and well, because I kind of, we had covid and stuff like that.	Getting support in her academics (extra help). Harder in College to get support due to covid.
	M: It was a big change, wasn't it?	

	L: Yeah.	
	M: Yeah. So the care plan, so what it says about EHC plans is they're for children and young people aged up to 25 who need more support than is available through special educational needs support. So EHC plans identify educational health and social needs and set out additional support to meet those needs.	
	So it is saying that it's over and above what they can provide in educational settings for young people and then the plan comes into place. What do you think, what do you think about that Luna?	
	L: Um, I think it's good , as long as people are, are kind of aware and stuff.	EHCP is good with some caveats, that people are aware (staff?)
	M: What, what does that mean to you?	
The EHC takes away the need to explain her needs, she feels known. P8 – L	L: Um, well it basically lets, as the teachers and tutors know and that I've got like a kind of additional needs and kind of without me and having to tell them.	Positive that EHC tells staff about her. What she needs and who she is so Luna doesn't have to.

	M: And how has that felt for you during your education?	
	L: It takes the pressure off me a bit.	Pressure is lifted from Luna.
	M: Tell me more?	
	L: Um, mainly because I don't, sometimes I don't like telling other teachers and stuff.	EHC explains her, she does not have to say or tell them because of this.
	M: So it's a like thing that's there that's behind the scenes, I guess, sort of thing? Is that what you're saying?	
	L: Yeah.	
	M: For, for support and teachers to know about you. And is that important, do you think? Has it been important for you?	
	L: Yeah.	
	M: Secondary and then college, you've had it?	
	L: Yeah. Um, a secondary and college, yeah.	
	M: You've already mentioned about meetings and things like that.	

	L: Mm-hmm.	
	M: So what, tell me about them.	
The plan is experienced as a shared endeavour, other people are responsible for helping and constructing it. p10 - L	L: Well, in primary and secondary, um, I kinda, it would be my mum and sometimes as my dad and kind of whenever he can get the time off work. Um, and then it would be, and teachers that I had, um, and then it would be people like from the council and stuff that kind of deal with, and kind of additional needs and stuff like that.	Meetings involve a team of people such as teachers, family, council workers. Additional needs are a point of discussion and a specialist subject for these people.
	M: And what about you? Because you mentioned other people, but what about yourself?	
	L: Um, I'd get called in.	
	M: And how, how has that been?	
	L: Um, good in secondary and if it was, and during a lesson and that I didn't like, and then it were great. That's .	Meetings happen in lesson time. Good when they were ones she did not like.
	M: So you were, you were contributing. Is that, is that what you're saying in meetings ,how did you do that go?	

Luna is on the periphery, people talk and plan for her in meetings, out of her control. p11 – L	L: Um, well, they just, and told me and kind of what was said and what and they were planning to do and um, and stuff like that. Yeah.	Luna describing herself as quite passive in reviews. Might be a little 'done to' here.
	M: That's good, thank you. That's really interesting.	
	Now we're going to look through your EHC plan together. Is that okay?	
	L: Yeah	
	M: we've got it with us. Um, so it has, have you seen one of these?	
	L: Yeah	
	M: So let's go through, the first bit is very adminny, it's got all your contact details and things like that. So it has an all about me page, a one page profile it talks about your hobbies, what's important to you, uh, friends, family, college course, the cat.	
	L: Mm-hmm.	
	M: You got the cat?	
	L: Yeah, yeah.	

	M: What's it called?	
	L: Alfie	
	M: Uh, it says what I find difficult or challenging maths, uh, I'm shy, I dislike eye contact it says, unfamiliar places and people, I need time to settle and open up. It says in my future I'd like a job.	
	L: I'll be the first to admit I cannot stand maths, yeah maths is just my weakest area.	Maths is not a popular subject for Luna.
	M; That's fine, it says in my future I would like a job and an independent life. Um, so that's been updated I guess a year ago. So can you remember if people asked you about this?	
Peers are interested in her EHC, she is viewed as having something different/extra to them. p12 – L	L: Um, I mean, people have asked me and what one is, and friends and stuff. Um, I don't mind and kind of in and kind of explaining and once I do they start to 'twig' on a bit.	Friends have asked her about the EHC. Luna explains to them what an EHC is, she believes that when she does this they start to understand her more.

	M: And then for this bit, these sort of all about me parts, have you been involved in sort of contributing to that?	
	L: Yeah.	
	M: So it goes through some stuff over your mum, uh, how Luna's mum would like her to gain skills and experience access to employment and work a job that she enjoys.	
	L: Mm-hmm.	
	M: Um, and then it goes through, so then it's got summary of my special education, health and care needs, so it goes through your strengths in communication and interaction, how you able to make decisions and communicate effectively. Cognition of learning, Um, Luna's beginning to rely less on adults in the learning environment, she's particularly independent with written work and often just these reassurance, Luna has completed a CV, um, Luna attends a work placement.	

	L: Yep.	
	M: Then it goes through physical and sensory, um, how you're physically fit and well, uh, social, emotional, mental health, how you're motivated and content. Confidence and self-esteem has developed, uh, made good friends at college, develop resilience and is willing to help others. Then it goes on to developing independence. Luna, accesses the community with friends. Luna is independent in managing personal care. Luna continues to practice home skills. She participates in cooking.	
	L: Mm-hmm.	
	M: Luna has basic money skills and your journey, you take journeys together, so it's got, it goes through the sections that's all your strengths.	
	L: Mm-hmm.	
	M: What do you think about that?	
	L: Good.	

	M: What was it like to hear that?	
In the moment feels pleasure in hearing positives about herself, the EHC was previously negative about her. p15 – L	L: Um, it's better then how it sounded and when I were in a primary and secondary school already, uh, well in primary secondary school, it just, I used to focus and on the negatives.	Luna has heard positive things about herself in the EHC. Strengths emphasised. In the past it has been negative.
	M: On the negatives. Okay do you think it's good to focus on both and why?	
	L: Uh, because I don't like and talking about the negative stuff.	Does not like negative focus in plans.
	M: So then section B, then it does go to special educational needs. So it talks about you having a diagnosis of autism.	
	L: Mm-hmm.	
	M: Cognition and learning difficulties with mathematics, I think you mentioned that as well.	
	L: Yeah.	
	M: Uh, does not like maths finds it very difficult, Luna finds it difficult about maths again and deal with problems, going through	

	needs, aren't they. Luna now wears glasses. Do you wear glasses?	
	L: Yeah, I wear glasses, but I don't, um, kind of wear them as often as I should. Okay. That's right.	
	M: It says Luna is developed money skills, Luna is developing independent travel skills, which you are developing.	
	So it goes through your strengths and then maybe things to work on difficulties. Do you think it's good to have all that sort of thing in when you think about that?	
	L: Yeah.	
	M: It gets, it's a good picture of you.	
	Then it goes through outcomes. So have you heard about outcomes in your EHC? I guess it's called goals or aspirations and things like that?	Outcomes section of the conversation.
	L: Yeah.	
	M: Yeah. If you talked about them before with anyone before.	

	L: Sometimes, yeah, sometimes.	
	M: So it goes through goals, uh, it talks about, uh, towards employability needs and goals. Luna will gain her qualifications, develop her math skills, skills to enable her to access employment, and that's a long term outcome and that has medium term outcome, uh, to complete simpler sample tasks as a taster to offer the opportunity to progress to level two, which you have done haven you?	
	L: mm-hmm.	
	M: So it talks about those goals and tells us about what you need to get there, so for example, it has a key one to one adult, I think it's just weekly, uh, for a few one hour I guess it's got.	
	So do you think, do you feel, do you have adults with you that help you, do you think at college? Do you have that provision?	
	L: In primary and secondary I had like adults and kind of learner support, uh,	Support referenced as a younger person.

<p>An experience of changing provision over the years, it has had difficulties but encouraged independence as a goal. P18 – L</p>	<p>workers like in nearly like every, like every lesson, but since I'm getting to college, I've had them and less and less, it's been hard to kind of <u>grasp</u>, but I think I'm doing all right and kind of being kind of on my own, um, in floristry and stuff. But I would like somebody there and just to be in my maths because of how much I struggle and with it, um, the support with maths ever since I've started college, which were back in 2019, has been, it's not been the best at times because I don't get help until Christmas time and kind of by then, it's just too late because I've kind of already gone through the content, like half the content.</p>	<p>Things have changed since coming to College. Change has been hard. Would like support in Maths to help her with her work. Maths specific, hasn't received support until the new year. Has not come in good time to help her achieve.</p>
	<p>M: So do you have a plan don't you?</p>	
	<p>L: Yeah.</p>	
	<p>M: And so can you, can you let people know about how you are feeling about this?</p>	
	<p>L: Yeah but not sometimes in the right way.</p>	

	M: How would you go about it?	
<p>Feels more comfortable and able to achieve with adult help in her education. p19 - L</p> <p>Can feel like a burden at times, her needs mean other peers do not get help from people. p19 – L</p>	<p>L: Sometimes I get very frustrated, and when they don't listen, um, currently and at the minute I don't have kind of anyone in class. I've got, um, in maths, I've got two teachers, but I just like somebody just assigned to me because I find that easier, because and when they're not a kind of assigned to me, then I feel bad and kind of for the other people and that need help because if I'm there and constantly asking for help and all the time and the other people don't get a chance.</p>	<p>When Luna is in a frustrated frame of mind she believes she cannot communicate effectively.</p> <p>If support is not directly focused on her she feels bad about taking up their time, so they subsequently cannot help other in the class.</p> <p>She wants others to have a chance of getting help.</p>
	M: Yeah, how does that feel?	
	L: Um, makes me feel bad.	Negative feelings.
	M: Why does it?	
	L: Um, because, I dunno how to explain it, but it just does.	Cannot explain why at this moment.
	M: That's okay, it's quite hard to explain feeling sometimes, isn't it? That's really good answer. Thank you for that.	

	<p>So then it goes through another more outcomes. So this one talks about friends, relationships and being in the community so it as a long term outcome and a medium term outcome. It says, for example, in the past it says to respond appropriately using learned strategies to open question and it talks about communication skills and understanding of people's points of view.</p>	
	<p>Then goes on to another one, so it has different outcomes for different sections around friends, relationships and goals. It talks about small group activities being in those regularly and doing collaborative task, doing collaborative tasks where Luna can learn and understand all people's points of view. It talks about the provision again, it's talked about key adults and being in small groups at college is that happening for you?</p>	

	L: Um, I mean, it takes me a while and kind to get used to people, but once I start to get to know them, I start to open up a bit.	The process of getting to know people and feeling comfortable with them.
	M: Do you think that's important?	
	L: Yeah.	
	M: What does that mean to you?	
Having consistent staff eases worries. p21 – L	L: Um, it means, and that I'm making progress with them.	Progress in building relationships with people.
	M: Progress on the course or progress in bigger life?	
	L: Just in general.	
	M: And what do you want do when you, when you go into the workplace and things like that and you got any ideas about that?	
	L: Um, hopefully and to continue to have a kind of an independent life, because I've always been a kind of independent, um, but, and if I need help and then I'm very good at kind of asking.	Independence is an important goal for Luna. To get this she is okay with having ask people and have her say.
	M: Yeah. I kind and is there people at college particularly you find supportive?	

<p>Luna is on a 'path' she feels she is going to arrive somewhere and this is part of her journey. p22 – L</p>	<p>L: Probably K (staff), um, and currently, and after I leave college, um, I signed up to the job center, um, and to try and, and to try and put me on that <u>path</u> and to get me into work, um, and I've been working closely with a woman called L and yeah, she's really good.</p>	<p>Reference to a 'path' towards independence.</p> <p>People helping her along the way, she has links to help her and knows their names/roles.</p>
	<p>M: Seems like you've had positive experience there.</p>	
	<p>L: Yeah.</p>	
	<p>M: And then I see you mentioned the lunch group and things like that what's that like?</p>	
<p>Luna has felt different to peers during her education, this had led to feelings of frustration. p22 - L</p>	<p>L: Um, it's really good because it's people and kind of who have had a kind of similar a kind of experiences, as to me. Because out of my close, uh, secondary school friends, like I'm the only one, that has a kind of additional needs, um, whenever I try and explain to them, sometimes it's hard to say sometimes I'd say they do understand, but sometimes I'd</p>	<p>Being with 'similar' peers is good for Luna.</p> <p>Mainstream friends do not have SEN, Luna finds it challenging to talk to them about it.</p> <p>Peers sometimes understand.</p>

	say they don't, and I find it kind of really frustrating, I've never told them this kind of, by the way.	Others do not quite understand Luna, she gets frustrated about this.
	M: It's all confidential.	
	L: Yeah, but when, but when I, um, but when I speak to them, I feel like they understand a bit more sometimes.	This is a little better now for Luna.
	M: Yeah, because a big question might be, what is it like for you? Cause I'm trying to get in your shoes as a young person, like you've mentioned additional needs, which is sort of what the at the EHC plan is as well. What has it been like to be you in education, having these additional needs?	
	L: Uh, well it hasn't been easy, um, but somehow I've managed to work through and kind of all the problems.	Problems have come up but have been worked through during her education.
	M: And has anyone, has anyone been influential in helping you, do you think?	

	L: Probably, probably my family and like my mum, dad and grandparents and yeah and stuff like that.	Family have helped.
	M: So we've been through the EHC plan, so how did it feel? What did, what was it like to go through it like that?	
Hearing and experiencing her EHC today led to a realisation that when she was younger she was not involved in contributing to EHC. p24 – L	L: Um, well, back in primary and secondary I didn't, uh, I didn't really know kind of what was going on. I mean, half of it, I don't, I don't kind of particularly remember, but from the times that I do, it's been a kind of a okay, I guess.	Reflecting on EHC As a younger person she was not aware of her EHCP. It has been okay to hear what is in it and talk about it.
	M: What was it like to hear it just now when we talked about it, did it sound anything like you, do you think you are in there? Does that represent you?	
	L: Yeah. Yeah uh, probably the maths.	The EHC does represent her.
	M: The maths?	
	L: Yeah, because I struggle with maths. .	
	M: I guess like a big sort of final question to sort of wrap up nearly half an hour in.	

	Having the education, health and care plan throughout your education through high school into college, how do you think it has been?	
	L: Um, I think it has because, and kind of without it, I think I would've struggled and kind of a lot in mainstream, um, but because I've got that, there's been less struggles.	EHC has meant it has been less of a struggle for Luna during her education.
	M: What is struggles?	
EHC has enabled Luna have the help she needs in her education. p25 – L	L: Well, and kind of without it, I wouldn't have had the help and that I had, um, in primary and secondary and now in college.	Without the EHC Luna believes she would not of had the support in her education.
	M: What does what it do for you?	
Having an EHC has led directly to positive outcomes, Luna therefore feels successful. p25 - L	L: Well...I wouldn't have achieved and what I've achieved. Yeah, because in secondary I ended up passing kind of half of my GCSEs, um, I got a C and kind of in most of them um, I got a couple of merits and stuff like that in College, um, I've got a few and kind distinctions and merit and stuff like that.	EHC = Achievement Support has led to good academic marks that she is proud of. EHC has played a role in this.

	M: Thanks Luna, so the EHC plan, have you got any thoughts about how they, how it could have been different for you? Is there anything you would add?	
Frustration when she believes teachers have not read the EHC, therefore they do not 'know' her properly. p26 – L	L: Um, there's one thing that I would add, um, half of the teachers <u>don't read</u> them and they're supposed to, but half of them just flick through it and stuff. I'd like to see in the future more teachers and dedicating the time and to reading the kind of EHCPs and to better understand the child.	Teachers not reading the EHC. If they read the EHC they would have a better understanding of Luna and other CYP with plans.
	M: Why is that?	
If you know Luna's EHC it explains how she is and makes her feels understood. p26 - L Her bad experiences, the feeling of being exposed she does not want for others. p26 - L Sense of shame in information being shared publically without her permission. p26 - L	L: Uh, because I, because I don't want I kind of anyone to go through and what I went through with maths kind of last year, and where a teacher just <u>blurted</u> it out to the entire class, uh, he said that, he said that half of it is just maths, I mean, well, yeah, it is and there's some other stuff as well and if he had and taken the time and to actually read it, then I don't think, I don't think that incident,	Luna referring back to the 'bad' experience where a teacher said what was in her EHC in front of class. Does not want this to happen to other people. Teacher had not read it before. All about maths.

	um, would've happened. I tell you, you have good ideas.	
	M: Because you are a young person that's had an EHCP it's important to hear your experiences, your ideas. What you think is good, what you think is bad, and things like that.	
	And just like to wind up then, do you think, your voice, has your voice been heard throughout your education, do you think?	
	L: Um, sometimes yes, but sometimes no.	Having her voice has been mixed in her EHC journey.
	M: And how has that been? What's that felt like for you?	
Frustrating when she has not been heard, led to bad outcomes. p27 – L	L: Um, and when it's been heard then it's been great, but when it hasn't been heard, that's when it starts to get a bit <u>crappy</u> .	Being heard/asked has led to good outcomes, not being asked has been the opposite.
	M: And what happens in the crappy time?	
Had to battle/fight to be heard at times, experience of anger and conflict. p27 - L	L: Um, I've had to fight, um, I've had to virtually fight and just to get them to listen to	'Fight' a battle to be heard. When listened to it is a 'weight off my shoulders' - idiom

<p>When heard in her education a sense of freedom, it has then felt easier. p28 – L</p>	<p>me and when they finally do it's like <u>a weight that's been lifted off my shoulders.</u></p>	
	<p>M: That's a really nice way of putting it. I think that's a good way of putting it. Um, so yeah, that's great. I think that that'll be fine. We've just done about 30 minutes, thank you.</p>	

Rock – 30/11/22

Experiential Statements

Interview Text

Exploratory Noting

	M: So just a question I want to ask you first. So I what ae you do at college at the moment and how is it going really?	
	R: Uh, currently I'm doing ICT level two about systems and principles. Uh, there's not really much else to say.	
	M: How are you finding it?	
Positive experience linked to interest in subject. p1	R: Uh, sometimes it's enjoyable, sometimes it can be a bit dull. It depends on the work.	Education has ups and downs.
	M: And this is your second year at college?	
	R: Yes.	
	M: And what, did you do the same thing the first year?	
	R: No, I, uh, did electrical installation my first year.	
	M: Okay, great and then so where did you go to for school?	

<p>Childhood and education have feelings of upheaval, moving around and not settling or perhaps being accepted. p2</p>	<p>R: I've been to a lot, a lot of schools, uh, across my life, um, the one that I probably stayed at, one of the longest I stayed at was, uh, a school that no longer exists 'cause they closed down, merged, and I don't know what's happened to it, uh, and that school is called the C and it was, uh, located near W. So I was there for a long time, so there for about, I think I started in like year three. I was there till like year six. So it was about three years and</p>	<p>Many school moves during education. One is worth referencing, the one R stayed at the longest.</p>
	<p>M: Then a few other schools did you say?</p>	
<p>Not having a physical disability so confusing as to why he was there, this memory has stuck with Rock. p2</p>	<p>R: Um, I've been, I was at H, uh, in E for, for about a year and uh, I was also at C, which is a primary school in D. I've also been to, uh, C, which is also a school in D, but that's more for students with physical disabilities, so whether they need a wheelchair or, and a support like that. Um, um, I went to...I'm trying to think now, I went to, D House, which is a school located in N, so quite far away from here, I had to take a taxi to get there.</p>	<p>Attended a school for CYP with physical disabilities (R does not). Some school moves required long travel and journeys in transport.</p>

	And I don't remember what the name of it was, it was, uh, most people called it J, I'm not sure if you've heard of it?	
	M: No, no.	
	R: So you have not heard of any of those schools?	
	M: Some of them. Some of them that are in C, and in H, yeah, and not J though, is that, is that way?	
	R: Uh, no, it's, it's towards B, it's on a, like Lancaster and the last school I went to was, well, last on the list, it wasn't the last school I went to, the last place I went to was S, that was the very first school I went to, which is also school in D.	Ended up at the same school that he began his education after plenty of moves.
	M: So that's quite a lot	
	R: Yeah, quite a lot of schools.	
	M: How has that been for you, how's it felt to move to all those schools for you?	
Reflection and acceptance that others have experienced struggle because of the moves. p3	R: Hard...well, I, I don't, I wouldn't say it's hard for me, uh, actually, no, I would say it's	The school moves have an effect on others and not just Rock.

<p>Empathy towards parents and their struggles with Rocks school moves. p4</p> <p>'Kicked out' – feeling of being rejected or forcibly removed from schools. p4</p> <p>A life in flux, getting used to new surroundings constantly, people are rejecting him, others have control over his experiences. p4</p>	<p>hard for me, but its also hard for my parents because they had to arrange to go to all these different schools after I was kicked out of the previous one for some reason or another, some of them were my fault, some them weren't, so its hard on my parents to try and like find a school for me, and it was also hard on me because I had to adjust a lot, thats basically it.</p>	<p>The school moves have negative impact on parents, this might mean them emotionally or physically.</p> <p>'Kicked out' description of him leaving schools.</p> <p>Sharing the 'fault', the process of moving schools is challenging</p>
	<p>M: Thanks, thanks for sharing that. Really. So the reason that we're sort of doing the interview today, you are your person who has one of these education, health, and care plans, so I'm just wondering how, how aware have you been of this plan?</p>	
<p>Feels like it has been a secret and has been kept from Rock. p4</p> <p>This thing (EHC) has been completed without his knowledge, been 'done to', he has not been in the loop as a younger person. Now it might feel like is has been a secret, kept from him. p4</p>	<p>R: Um, until I was, until like only two years back, I wasn't that aware of it because I don't think schools or teachers or anyone makes it really aware that you have one, err all it does tell you is that you have special needs or whatever, and you've told that you get support,</p>	<p>Recent awareness of EHC.</p> <p>People (staff) have not told him about the EHC.</p> <p>Rock thinks it is information for staff about his SEN.</p> <p>Discovered he had it when around 16.</p>

	but you're not really told about this, I didn't find out.	
	M: How does that feel about like, not the not knowing? What does that mean to you?	
	R: What do you mean by that?	
	M: So I guess you found out that you got one eventually, and then you've had one for a while, but you didn't know about it.	
	R: No.	
	M: Did that feel any sort of way?	
The uncomfortable feeling that his 'story' is written for others to see. p5 Some shame present as the history might not be positive. p5	R: I felt quite uncomfortable because I didn't know that, uh, everything I, I'd been through was documented.	Rock's history is in this document. Unaware that his history is there for others to see.
	M: Yeah.	
His story is public, he has not had control over this and has not been informed. p5 Lack of openness from others, trust might be affected. p5	R: And recorded and everything, I didn't know about that, so it just felt kind of weird that all this has been written down.	Not aware that this information is out there.
	M: Yeah so how has your involvement been in it, do you think?	

	R: Very little, like I said only till a couple of years back that I know about it.	Low involvement in EHC.
	M: And do you feel aware of what it is meant to be doing for you? What's the reason for it?	
Lack of information/idea about what EHC is, feeling unaware of its relevance for him and his education. p6 He may not of been informed or may not of understood when told about EHCs, marginalised. p6	R: Uh, not really, not fully aware of what it does really well then tells teachers like my history and what's what I need, other than that, I don't really understand much about the EHCPs.	A speculative idea about what EHC is and is meant to do, does not really understand their function.
	M: So EHCs in the official legislation says EHCs are educational health and care plan is for children and young people age up to 25 who need more support than is available through special educational needs support. So educational health and care plans, identify educational health and social needs and set out additional support to meet those needs. I guess that's the, the basis of it.	
	R: Mm-hmm.	
	M: What do you think about that as basis?	

	R: Sounds about right.	
	M: What do you think about special educational needs? What does that mean to you?	
EHC is created by higher systems, but the purpose of them is still unclear. p7 He needs help to get through education. p7	R: It's supposed to be a thing like, is it like a government thing or is it just a council thing? I think it's like a government thing and it's their way of like helping people who need, need it.	EHC is a systemic thing (political?) – Government, council. 'they' use it, who are they?
	M: Yeah, what do you mean by who needs it?	
Rock is 'othering' himself, he is different and experiences the world differently. p7	R: People who are, I guess not as independent as others, I can't or don't see the, the world the same way as other people do.	The world is different for Rock compared to others.
	M: See the world a different way?	
	R: Yeah.	
	M: Is that what you mean? Is your experience do you think?	
People in Rock's life have highlighted his differences during his development. His understanding of himself influenced by others. p7	R: I think so, it's what other people have told me as well.	People have told him he see's the world differently.
	M: That you see things differently?	

	R: Mm-hmm. . yeah.	
	M: And do you think, do you think that that's part of you?	
<p>Autism is challenging for Rock and makes his life challenging now and in the future, SEN as a challenge. p8</p> <p>Autism is something to learn about and cope with for Rock, his experience of ableist culture. p8</p> <p>It is difficult to be him, the path is not easy and feels hard. p8</p>	R: Well, if I said that, I think I'd be lying a little bit, I'm not really keen on having autism because it massively effects the way I get along in life and I feel like it's gonna be like that for the future, as you grow older, I feel like you learn to cope with it more, like you get used to it so you work around it, but when you're younger it's because you're not used to it, you're, you don't know how to cope with then it's really difficult.	<p>Autism linked to Rock's experiences, he's not 'keen' on having it.</p> <p>Looking further ahead.</p> <p>Autism as something to learn about and cope with.</p> <p>A developmental process of coping.</p>
	M: Yeah and you've had experience of that it seems?	
	R: Yeah, definitely.	
	M: And then, so you gone through that and then as you got older, like you're saying it's become a little bit different or you've managed?	

In his experience Rock has been cast as the problem, he is the bad one. p9	R: Yeah I've calmed, because I used to be quite bad when I was young.	Rocks changing behaviour has led to better things
	M: Yeah, yeah. Some might say like, everyone's very different anyway and that's okay.	
	R: Yeah	
	M: So what we'll do is we'll have a look through your education, health and care plan, if that's okay. We'll go through it and just talk about it, if that's okay. Is that alright?	
	R: Yeah	
	M: Brilliant. So it's got the sort of admin at the start about what it is and things like that, personal details about yourself, sort of parent carer names and things like that. It's got a one page profile, so it talks about your story in here.	
	So it says, as you've talked about, already diagnosed with autism in 2009. It says you can sometimes be a quite demanding young	

	person, history of challenging behaviors and things like that.	
	Sociable on your terms and a lot about behaviours and speech and language therapists that that you've been involved with. Different assessments you've had at different times, so it's quite like historic that bit. Um, do you think that's needed in here? What do you think about that?	
	So it's got your story, do you think that's important for people to have? What do you think about that?	
<p>Idiom – 'grain of salt', people should view information with scepticism, it is not who he is. p10</p> <p>Too simplistic, worries about what people might think of him. p10</p> <p>Untruths from his point of view, he may have to fight the narrative, others may form a negative impression of him. p10</p>	<p>R: Uh, kind of, but you should really take it with a grain of salt since this doesn't explain everything, like I don't want people to read that and like think oh, right, so he is like only socialise on his own terms, so that means he might only, like he might be like, want things or demand things, and it's like, that's not true. I don't want people to make assumptions based on just a little bit of info about me.</p>	<p>History is not to be taken as fact, he is more than his history.</p> <p>Concern about what people who read might assume about him.</p> <p>The EHC has small amounts of information, Rock feels some is false.</p> <p>Not enough to be a thorough account.</p>

	M: Good way of putting it. One page profile that's got quite a lot about your history and things like that. Different things about going to different schools like you've already talked about and how you've been attending at various times of school and things like that.	
	So it's quite vast that bit, do you think you've been asked about this particularly to contribute to this part because it's your story?	
	R: To contribute to this?	
	M: Yeah.	
Some helplessness felt, history is documented and not able to change it but still influences how people engage with him in the present. p11 Feelings of being stuck in his past. if people see this profile of him which is negative in his view. p11	R: Uh, somewhat, I can't really contribute much since it's not like subject to change because it's just part of history, so I can't really like go back in time and change that, so it's kind of like once it's happened I can't really change much about that.	History cannot be changed, Rock unable to change that now. Documentation of history is not changeable.
	M: When you've been at school, you've already mentioned because sometimes they'll	

	have young people in meetings and things like that, they'll ask them about things that are going on, they'll ask them about what they think about things, have you experienced that at all?	
Rock has not been asked/heard before he reached College regarding his EHC. p12 He is being 'done to', by others, rather than being engaged in the process. p12	R: Uh only a handful of times that happened when I was, the first one I did was when I was 16 and then I did another one when I was about 17/18 and then I had one here with K.	Cannot recall his views being gathered, expect since reaching College. Lists three times since then he can remember being involved.
	M: And what happened? What happened there?	
	R: Uh, what happened? What? The first one?	
	M: Yes, so when you've had these meetings, you said you, about you getting your voice?	
Others make plans, Rock is passive and not engaged in a style that suits him. p12 Discussions are forgotten and lost in Rocks mind. p12	R: Errr they basically talk about what I'm like currently and like what the plans are for my future and, to refer, they go by quite fast and I tend to forget them because it's kind of blurry	Focus on the present and future. 'They' – run by adults? The sessions are fast/blurry, Rock forgets them, 'they' talk.

	for me, um, but they talk about like what I want to do and stuff, and that's basically it really.	
	M: And do you think that's important for you?	
<p>People in education do not listen to or respect his views. p13</p> <p>They do not care to listen to him in his assumption, he is not valued or worth peoples time. p13</p>	R: Yeah, kind of because sometimes they, to be fair, they can't be arsed to listen, some, a lot of staff I've met who are like, that just can't be arsed to listen, they all just don't take me seriously and that's it really.	<p>Rock has not been listened to and not taken seriously, he is not heard.</p> <p>To be listened to is important.</p>
	M: Yeah, and how's that feel?	
Rock is not important enough to be listened to/asked in the past. p13	R: Uh, I feel like I'm being ignored.	Not listened to.
	M: So they have had these meetings, they've happened.	
	R: Yeah they've had them	
	M: So I guess it's like change as you've gone on, as you got older sort of thing?	
Rock's development has accompanied a feeling he is now more involved in his education, this is better. p13	R: Yeah as I've got older, I have a, like in general, um, as I've got older, I've had more involvement and control over my life, but when I was younger, you don't really have a say or	The process of getting and older, his development had led to having more control.

<p>Past hurt feelings associated with lack of say/voice in things happening to him. p14</p>	<p>control of anything, I think that's, like a hurtful thing.</p>	<p>Hurtful is a strong descriptor, Rock has been hurt due to a lack of control over his life/not being listened to</p>
	<p>M: Why is it hurtful?</p>	
<p>Rock is not having a say and is being done to, controlled against his will. p14</p> <p>It does not feel like a shared venture, it is frustrating and oppressive. p14</p>	<p>R: Because when people make decisions for you it's not very nice, you don't get to have a say in things and stuff, so many times in my life I've been forced to do things I don't want to do. I feel that's the hardest part of growing up.</p>	<p>Other people are making decisions and controlling his life.</p> <p>Happened many times.</p> <p>People are forcing him to do things.</p>
	<p>M: Do you think in those times, if you would've had a say things might have been different?</p>	
	<p>R: Yeah, yeah, definitely.</p>	<p>Having his views would of helped.</p>
	<p>M: What way?</p>	
<p>An experience of not being able to say what he thinks/wants, feeling helpless and not in control. p14</p> <p>Not being asked has felt dis-empowering and created negative feelings for him. p14</p> <p>No control over his life. p14</p>	<p>R: Like the things I would've chose to do as maybe a job or the things I would've liked to do or maybe the support I wanted or anything like that, that could have all been completely different. Even the schools I could have gone to would've been different if I just had a say in things.</p>	<p>If Rocks opinion/voice would have been heard things could have been better and different for him.</p> <p>Could of led to better things now and in the future.</p>

	M: You feel like that didn't happen, but could have happened?	
	R: It should have, yes, yeah, definitely, yeah.	
	M: I guess we don't know, but it might have changed rings significantly.	
	R: Yeah	
	M: Part of this is having your voice, so that's, that's important to know and to get your experience of it.	
	So we'll briefly go for a bit more Rock because it's really interesting. So it's got my family and views and hopes for the future. So it talks about your family, say Rock has always been very good with numbers and maths, for example.	
	R: Yeah.	
	M: Also likes computers .At the moment in a quiet library at some points. So it's quite big this part, so yeah, so it goes through views, then it goes through a summary of your	

	<p>strengths and achievements around your communication, around your cognition and learning around your physical needs and around your social, emotional, mental health. That talks about positivity, it says Rock has good fluency of speech and good language structure and things like that. Rock can communicate when he chooses, good sense of humour. Rock is generally good at organizing and reasoning, general health, games participating in, coping with noise from school bell and fire alarm I guess that's in the past now. Is it, do they have a fire alarm?</p>	
<p>Confused that descriptions about him are not relevant now, the EHC is not who he is now. p16</p>	<p>R: Yeah, they had a fire alarm a few weeks, no, they don't have be here, but I wasn't really bothered by the firearm, never really affected by that anymore.</p>	<p>Information on the EHC is not up-to-date, he is fine with fire alarms now.</p>
	<p>M: So the plan talks about family, three paternal, older half brothers and things is that right?</p>	

	R: I don't really bother with like the rest of my family, I don't really have a good connection with them because they live so far away.	No relationship with distant family.
	M: So it talks about developing independence, Rock is well organised and has good timekeeping skills, Rock has good money skills, that's always useful, um, and things like that.	
	So then it goes through special educational needs, so it's things that you might find a struggle sometimes or need to work on, that's what it's saying. So trust again, it mentions trust and things like that, and that, that being something is difficult for you sometimes is that right?	
It takes time and commitment for Rock to trust people in his life, this is important for people to know to understand him. p17	R: Yeah it still applies to this day, it's hard for me to get on with someone I don't know, very well.	Up-to-date information that is valid. Rock need to build up relationships to build trust.
	M: English learning struggle in the past, it says, and one to one support. So do you, do	

	you have? It has Rock struggle sometimes to engage in support, is that right?	
	R: Depends on support, but yeah.	
	M: What sort of support would you like, do you think?	
Listing support he needs or provision required is complex and challenging for Rock. It is more than can be put on an EHC, the document is too simple here. p18 'Shoving' staff into lessons is not appropriate, makes him feel not listened to and unimportant. p18	R: This is a very hard question, I don't answer it that much because it's, it's hard, it's really hard for me to answer 'cos even though I'm not sure what, what support I want, I just want support that makes me feel like I'm being listened to, makes me feel comfortable, because the shoving staff in my lesson does not help if they don't know me	What support staff Rock needs is a difficult topic for him. He needs to be listened to and it needs to suit him and be targeted to his wants and needs.
	M: What does that feel like? The shoving staff a lesson and thinking they're going to help you?	
Somewhat outside his influence regarding staff support. p18 Sense of calm now, consistency regarding staff has led to positive feelings. p18	R: Yeah, it's happened here actually, especially like end of the year when they're still organising staff around and stuff, it's always staffing the lesson, but that's mostly gone now I've got the same staff now so okay.	The process of having support has been up and down, now it is better than before in his experience.

	M: How's that going?	
	R: Uh, alright, well I think my staff last, that I had last year was a lot better.	
	M: Okay, so you had different experiences. (reading) So social, emotional, mental health, change is difficult and frustrating, it can take a long time to build trust with people and interacting with peers can be difficult sometimes. That's okay, it's okay not to interact with peers, I think	
	R: In my class, it's definitely forced.	Forced socialising
	M: What's that like?	
Forced social situations are challenging and not welcomed. p19	R: I'm not very comfortable, it's one of the most awkward and uncomfortable things I could do.	Social situations are challenging scenarios.
	M: And you think people know that about you?	
Rock is different and has his own unique ways of experiencing the world. p19	R: No, no. definitely, people just think I'm just like a normal person, where I get along with me like, like that, um, it doesn't work like that for me.	Reference to 'normal'. Rock is not what he describes as normal.

<p>He views himself as sitting outside what it is to be 'normal', an 'other' in this environment. p19</p>		
	<p>M: So it goes through a few things and a few things crossed out because as it goes along they cross them out and then they update them. Travel, Rock does not travel independently because you come with your family at the moment. So it goes through strengths, things to work on and then health needs about you having autism. Wearing glasses, uh, which are regularly monitored.</p>	
	<p>Then it goes onto finally, so we'll just talk about this outcomes. So part of the EHC is building towards things, so that's one of the points of it for young people. So an outcome here in terms of cognition and learning says Rock will gain skills and qualifications to access employment in a career path of his choice. Is that an outcome you are, you'd be happy with?</p>	
<p>This outcome is valid and important. p20</p>	<p>R: Yeah, yeah I'd rather it come soon though but yeah.</p>	<p>Eager to leave and gain employment.</p>

	M: Do you know what you want to do when you leave?	
	R: Uh, well, I've wanted to do computer science, I've always been interested in computers and like, programming them, getting them to do, like, whatever you want, or what you have in mind I feel like the, the applications of that are very, very interesting.	Interests in computers is important and a goal for Rock
	M: Sounds very interest. So that's a long term outcome and then it says Rock will achieve sort of his target grades in his lessons so that's about learning. Then it talks about key support, so it does talk about key adults one to one. But you've already said you're not a big fan of that, are you? Is that right?	
In an environment that is weighted towards verbally saying what you think/need Rock believes he does not have these skills, he is at a disadvantage to peers. p21 He is not 'heard' and his experience is that he is then not understood by others. p21	R: Sometimes it can help, but I just don't feel like I have enough to say, I don't think I have enough to say in a one to one because I don't really talk that much when people ask about me, I can basically say what I've just told you, but not really much more. Uh, but like I	Not having a say and struggling to communicate what he needs (support). Verbalising is how to get you views across, this is a struggle for Rock. Wants help if stuck. Teachers do not make things easy for him to understand.

<p>Progress and learning are about collaboration, they can help him decipher work and then achieve. p22</p>	<p>prefer support lessons because then if I'm struggling with work that I can't do, because to be honest, the teachers don't make it very clear what you need to do, they kind of put it kind of vaguely and expect you to figure it out, errm so like I need a support to like break it down for me to make it, make it understandable to me.</p>	<p>Support/staff needed to make things understandable.</p>
	<p>M: So that's the sort of support you'd like? Is that what you mean?</p>	
	<p>R: Yeah, I'm not sure like when you say, uh, adult one to one, like what do you mean by that?</p>	
	<p>M: I guess a learning support assistant or a tutor or someone, yeah, I guess someone employed by college with you.</p>	
<p>People who support help in varying facets of Rocks development. p22</p> <p>Support staff help emotional and psychological needs and are part of their role, more than academics. p22</p>	<p>R: Definitely sounds helpful, but if I was to have one to one support, I'd be more for like, it'd be more for more my self-development than, uh, learning and helping me get work done if I was have one to one</p>	<p>Support in EHC more to develop social skills/confidence as opposed to academic.</p> <p>1:1 staff mentioned.</p>

	M: Rather than?	
Life skills, psychological needs are important and people can support Rock to develop these. p23	R: Rather than like work, more like, uh, helping me become more confident or something like that.	Confidence important to progress.
	M: So then it goes into health and it talks about seeing opticians for your eyesight and things like that. Then it talks about more provisions coming to the end now around key adults, Rock requiring someone, it says requiring someone to check with him at the start and end of the day, I guess that says school day, but I don't know if that applies at college.	
	R: No.	Out of date
	M: In order to see if anything that's troubling him, thus reducing any anxieties, I guess that one needs to be updated, doesn't it?	
	R: Yeah.	
	M: Yeah. This,	

The EHC is not him now, it is not like him currently. p24	R: Yeah, the EHCP needs updating, when was the last time this was updated?	Information out of date, asking why and when it will be updated.
	M: I think it will say at the end, so we can talk about that.	
	(reading) Different things around health as well, supporting and developing healthy and routines, um, others around supporting him feeling more positive about himself, which means focusing on positives. It says use a sliding in approach, access to exercise programs	
	R: Yeah	
	M: So it has a couple of outcomes, we've talked about provision, how best to support how Rock requires consistency with relationships, he prefers to be involved in any decision making process. I think that's true, isn't it? I think that's important?	
(Outcomes) Decisions needs to come from Rock and be collaborative, if this does not happen it is setting him up to fail. p24	R: Yeah, definitely, that's like the necessity if I need to progress forward. So if you do	Rock needs to be asked, others deciding for him will not lead to positive things.

	make decisions about me, then don't expect me to adapt very well.	
	M: It mentions, tutored, how you're tutored with familiar staff, opportunities to work in small groups in an environment that's calm, um, and things like that. So it has quite a lot about provision actually such as opportunities to work in an environment with reduced stimuli. A flow chart could be created with you in order to get you to where you need to be. Have you ever heard any that particular idea?	
EHC not accessible or understandable for him here, language and terms are confusing. p25	R: I'm not sure what it means by that.	EHC has text he does not understand.
	M: Me neither, it says Rock requires a setting like college that liaises and engages effectively with all professionals involved with Rock and continues to ask him what's working and what's not working.	
	So I feel I will have a look at when it was last updated, I'm not sure, oh, earlier, I guess like	

	nearly a year ago, so maybe needs, it's meant to be updated every year at least.	
	R: Yeah.	
	M: Maybe it needs another update.	
	R: Yeah.	
	M: So how's that felt going through that document?	
	R: All right.	
	M: What do you think about the things mentioned?	
The EHC is not who he is now, not representing him in the moment. p26	R: They definitely need updating because that was a year ago now, so it'll need updating soon.	Things change and the EHC needs to change with it.
	M: And do you think what's in here is useful?	
Confused and frustrated about past descriptions, he is different now. p26	R: Some of it is, some of it isn't, but the only things that I really think that aren't is the things that are outdated.	Mix of information, update needed.
	M: I guess having this sort of plan is meant to get you to where you need to be eventually	
	R: Hopefully.	

	M: Do you think that, do you think it will help in that way?	
	R: That's the plan.	
	M: How long do you think you'll, you'll be at college for?	
Important facts/facets about him has not been included in the EHC. Rock is not fully understood by others, who read this document, in an important area. p27	R: Uh...I'm not sure. Because what I want to do really just depends on my mood, because I get burnt out of things quite easily, 'cos I don't think it's like, I don't think it's really explained much in here, but, um, I don't have a very good attention span, so I can sometimes get distracted very easily, especially on things that I really just don't feel like doing that day.	The EHC has missed information about his attention span, for Rock this is important to have in there.
	M: Being in education is a lot about like attention, isn't it? Do you think that suits you?	
	R: If it can grab my attention and keep me interested, if it can keep me motivated to do the work then yeah, yeah, I can do it.	If interested then he is motivated.
	M: So education, health and care plans as a whole, what is your experience of them?	

Like Rock the EHC develops and must improve, it is not all it can be yet. p28	R: They definitely, uh, I'd say a step in the right direction, but I still think they need work.	EHCs going the right way but need improving.
	M: Yeah, a step in the right direction for?	
	R: For what it's trying to achieve	
	M: And what is that in your experience?	
Trying to make the educational experience for the 'other' (people with SEN) in a system that is challenging for them. p28 'Abides' has legal connotations, settings have a duty to acknowledge the EHC and therefore the YP with them. p28 When Rock is not understood through the EHC it leads to him feeling negative and unsupported, he is a problem. p28	R: It's trying to make education more comfortable and easier for people who have special needs, because every place I've been to, not every place abides by the EHCP, some places I've been to will pay more attention to it than others, but some, some of the places I've been to just simply, don't care about it.	Rocks view for the reasons behind EHCs as a philosophy. Mixed experiences of settings using the EHC to help.
	M: And what's that been like?	
Not places he wanted to be. p28	R: Well, those have been the worst places I've been to.	Those that ignore it are the worst.
	M: So the ones that have been more positive have sort of paid attention and I guess	

	got your voice almost and had outcomes around progression.	
	R: I'm not sure what you mean by that.	
	M: So I guess like you say, there's the bad ones and then the good ones have been more inclusive, I don't know, I don't want to put words in your mouth, but I guess they got your voice more or asked you more about things?	
The EHC does not always correlate to how he is treated/viewed. p29 People are important in Rock's experience and it can feel random in how they treat him. p29	R: It's very mixed, I think some places listen to it and treat me well, some places listen to it and treat me bad, some places don't listen to it and treat me good, some places don't listen to it and treat me bad.	Places are also people. The EHC is there but it is the people that treat him good or bad.
	M: A mix.	
To be heard and accepted has an impact on lived experience, it could be better. p29	R: It has an impact, but an impact on, on education, it's an impact on me, I don't think as much of an impact as it should	Impact was used three times. Can it do more? Not just education but in wider life
	M: Is there any ways you think it could be better?	

	R: Uh um, I'm not really sure it been in a while, so I'd have to really think about what would I do to improve it.	
	M: I think what you've said already has been really interested, really value them, because your experience and you've actually said a lot of things I think that you could look at to improve.	
<p>Feeling overwhelmed having to answer big, open questions. p30</p> <p>Comfortable in simplicity of responses. p30</p>	R: Yeah, I feel like in general as a whole, asking students with special needs, uh, closed questions is a lot easier to answer than open questions because if you're asking them open questions, they might not be able to answer or might, uh, make them overthink or something like that it might stress them. But if you ask some close questions, they can answer with a simple yes or no or just head shake or a thumbs up or down or, or anything like just a sign that yes or no.	<p>A flip on what professionals might think around questioning.</p> <p>Closed questions easier to comprehend and answer.</p> <p>Stress linked to being confused by questions.</p> <p>There are ways of communicating that aren't verbal.</p>
	M: And are there other ways of doing it, do you think?	

<p>Voice is important but understanding how Rock (and others) communicates best and feel comfortable with can lead to positive engagement and his views being accessible. p31</p> <p>The feeling of being heard and adapted to is powerful. p31</p>	<p>R: There could be a lot of people who have special needs prefer not at talk, I was like that for a while and even now I don't, I don't feel like I speak to my full potential, but um, last year I didn't speak like almost at all so the only way I'd reply to people is either by either writing down my phone and showing them, or just a head shake, just yes or no and it was a lot easier to answer questions that was a yes or no than having to write a whole, like paragraph on my phone.</p>	<p>Generality when talking about YP with SEN.</p> <p>Ways of feeling heard and getting your voice out varies.</p> <p>Still developing communication profile.</p> <p>Make things easier/accessible.</p>
	<p>M: And how was that experience?</p>	
<p>Being understood feels good, and comforting. p31</p>	<p>R: Much easier, much more comfortable for me.</p>	<p>A positive way of doing it.</p>
	<p>M: That's really interesting. Thank you, what about using a computer?</p>	
<p>Class setting feels uncomfortable. p31</p> <p>Communication and how you are asked to communicate is vital. p31</p>	<p>R: Computers are definitely the, like the best way for me to communicate because it feels a lot more com uh, comfortable than just writing it up and just showing someone than having to talk to them face to face, because</p>	<p>Importance of being comfortable, adapting to Rock and his communication style.</p> <p>Having 1:1 in important.</p>

<p>Person-centred methods and adapting to the YP can open doors, be informative and make them feel comfortable/heard. p32</p>	<p>some people like me, especially, I don't really like attention, like when you have to like present in front of a class to everyone looking at you or everyone can hear what you say or whatever I don't really feel comfortable like doing that, which is why one to one's very important.</p>	
	<p>M: That's great, thanks Rock, that's really interesting.</p>	

Felix – 06/12/22

Experiential Statements

Interview Text

Exploratory Noting

	<p>M: So thanks for meeting me today, Felix. I really appreciate it. I guess a first question might be just what are you doing at college at the moment?</p>	
	<p>F: Uh, so I am on the, um, independent living skills course, and that is, uh, basically, um, learning our work to become more independent, not, not, and obviously, so that's your basic, um, learning how to cook, learning, um, different, um, techniques and how to obviously cope with mental health and uh, and um, stuff like that.</p>	<p>Independence goals</p> <p>Life skills and metal health mentioned, all aspects important</p>
	<p>And then they obviously got a basic, um, Maths and English, so that's a section which we have on Thursdays, and then the Fridays is the, um, options, uh, bit and that is, and that is, um, where you pick a, uh, option and, and you, um, do that, it's, uh, is only for about</p>	

<p>More sense of having a choice at College, having options and his say in studies. p2 – F</p>	<p>a, um, a six week block and then, uh, and then we are picking again, uh, today actually so after that, um, six weeks, you re-pick and then you, and then you just, um, try and do all the, uh, options that, that are on there and have been chosen.</p>	<p>Different options at College</p>
	<p>M: Right. And how's it going for you? How are you finding college?</p>	
<p>College has been a formative experience, having choice bring excitement and new opportunities. p2 – F</p>	<p>F: Um, well, brilliant, I think it's because it's, it's given me, um, it's, uh, given me that, um, that sense of, uh, um, independence that I didn't really get in my, in my old school. Um, uh, it's, uh, you know, it, it, it is given me, um, you, it, it is given me the choice and, and chance to me obviously, um, and new friends to the develop new work skills, and I'm just really, um, excited for to being here.</p>	<p>Positive about College, including gaining independence skills and making new friends.</p> <p>Opportunities for new experiences.</p> <p>Excitement</p>
	<p>M: That sounds wonderful. The reason why we're sort of talking today is because you're a young person that has one of these an education, health, and care plan and</p>	

	you've had it, I think you've had it for a little while.	
	I guess a first question might be, are you aware of this plan? What do you know about this plan?	
	F: Yes, so it is <u>beneficial</u> to me, so, so I know, uh, obviously because I've got a, um, disability and stuff that like, they, like everything that, uh, that obviously here advocated to my needs is on there.	Has benefit for Felix Disability referenced 'advocated' has his needs met
EHC is a guide to Felix for others, it enables him to feel 'known' to people who look to meet his needs. p3 – F	Um, uh, as well as, as, as well as, um, academic, um, side as well. So my Maths, my English and whatnot and, and, and yeah and then, and then also obviously what's what's needed for me in terms of, um, health wise and what's, uh, and obviously when my, um, levels and whatnot on there to.	EHC outlines what is needed to support him in academic and health spheres
	M: What's it feel like to have one of these plans for you? What's it been like?	
	F: It's, I mean, it's been, it's, it's actually quite, um, I won't say great, but like good	

	because it, because it is like they're for other people to show that, oh yeah, they're like, this person's got one, this is how, this is how, you know, to, to help them in any way, this is how to, you know, if, if you need some help to help them, you know, and stuff like that.	EHC for others to see (support? staff?) Help via the EHC EHC linked to helping Felix and other students like him
There is a feeling of being 'known' and explained to people, being understood leads to being helped. p4 – F	Uh, I think it's, I think it's, uh, great that, that, um, people do have one, one because it, like, it, like, it really shows like, like, you know, you, you like, it's great that for this, you know, for people like yourself can see what, what, you know, other people need and what and what, um, and what you know, and what need and what and, and how to help them.	Great for allowing people (like me/professionals) know how best to help CYP who have one We can help because the EHC is there and accessible
	M: And what does that do for you, Felix, do you think? What was the experience of that?	
	F: Um, I'd say it, I'd say it don't really, I mean, for me, it's just, it doesn't really, um, I don't really, um, think about it as, as, as much because, you know, for me it's just like all the	Doesn't think about it much, it is just there

	stuff I know, um, already but its, but its, um, um, for other people to know how to obviously help me really	Felix knows himself, the EHC is for others
	M: That's really good point. And then do you think, do you think you've had involvement in the plan over the years, over your education?	
There has been a lack of his voice/views heard so far in his education. p5 - F College is involving him more, allowing him a say in things. p5 – F	F: Um, um, I want, I want to say I've been, uh, um, involved in it possibly now because it was more, um, planned by my, um, education, uh, people at my primary of coming to, um, T (school) and whatnot and then, uh, here, uh, so, uh, so this will be my first year that I'll have had some involvement in it.	Not sure about involvement in the EHC in the past This year is his first involvement
	M: What sort of involvement?	
	F: Uh, I'd say it is just, um, it's like different ways that we could get round things, you know, maybe, um, have a look at, um, targets that was set in the past. Think I I, um, have I achieved them, have I not, you know,	Target setting in EHC Lots of shared responsibility Achievement or not

<p>EHC is experienced as a shared responsibility, other people are important to lead to achievement. p6 – F</p>	<p>what can I work on? Um, but yeah, so it'll be looking at that and it'll be, and it's, and and, um, um, making sure that we've, that we've fulfilled every criteria on there.</p>	<p>Have things been achieved/accomplished in EHC</p>
	<p>M: And do you think that's an important thing? What do you think about that?</p>	
<p>EHC is an extension of Felix, he is represented on it. p6 – F</p>	<p>F: I think it's, yeah, um, it is, because I think at the, at the, uh, end of the day, you know, you know, it's, uh, it's your life that, that you're gonna, um, lead into it and it's, and it's obviously, it's a part of me.</p>	<p>EHC is important to leading him through his life and education It is a part of Felix</p>
	<p>So I've got to have some say like, I like how I feel, whether I think there's, um, aspects or not.</p>	<p>Important to have his say</p>
	<p>M: I'll read you what, what is in the legislation. It says in the education, health, and care plan is for children and young people aged up to 25 who need more support than is available through special educational needs support. EHC plans identify educational, health and social needs and set</p>	

	out the additional support to meet those needs.	
	What do you think about that as a whole?	
EHC as a 'path', vital that it is there to ultimately lead to a better life/aspirations. p7 – F	F: Um, uh, I think it's, I think it's, um, I think it's, it's, uh, needed, um, I think, uh, you know, I think, um, I think, um, nowadays, I think, yeah, especially with the, with the pandemic and whatnot, I think people with, um, special, uh, educational needs, need, um, more support than ever, because I think it's, I think, I think, uh, I think it's a vital that we give these obviously, um, people a, um, support and the backing to go on, um, to achieve what they want to in life. And then, uh, yeah, uh, really I think, I think it's, uh, it's a much, much, uh, need needed to help them along the path.	Because of pandemic people with SEN needs more support than ever 'Vital' that 'these' people get support/backing in order to lead to a better life 'Path' leading to something in the end
	M: The other people and you particularly because you are the one that has it, how has it affected you, do you think?	

<p>Having disabilities, being different motivates Felix to prove people 'wrong', society does not expect him to succeed. p8 – F</p>	<p>F: It's, um, it's affected me, it's, well, I, um, CP and ME (conditions), it's affecting the, um, massively because it's like, it's, it is made me have, it is my condition is made me want to go out there and prove people wrong. Uh, you know, it is made me want to challenge myself and push myself to, to the limit really. To go and, um, to go in, um, show people you know what I can do really.</p>	<p>Felix's disabilities and his struggles lead to him wanting to prove people wrong.</p> <p>Showing others what he is capable of</p>
	<p>M: Yeah, that's a great answer, then sort of having a plan like this contributes to that sort of SEN outlook, doesn't it, how has it been beneficial? Has it been beneficial, do you think?</p>	
	<p>F: Uh, yeah, yeah, I'd, uh, I'd, I'd say, uh, um, I'd, I'd say, um, I'd say, yeah. It, it, it definitely is.</p>	<p>EHC has benefited his journey</p>
	<p>M: We're going to have a look through it for a second. Is that all right?</p>	
	<p>F: Yes, sound.</p>	

	M: So here's your plan, Felix. Have you, have you seen this before, this particularly?	
Not aware of the content of the EHC, in the dark. p9 – F	F: Um, I've seen it, a bit, but not that much.	Seen EHC but not much
	M: So Felix's plan, so it has lots of admin in first your my name and stuff like and family and all that sort of stuff.	
	F: Cool, yeah.	
	M: I know it's got this thing at the first bit is about Felix, it's about you and it's about you as a young person and sort of your life events.	
	F: Yeah.	
	M: What's happened, um, with your learning needs and things like that and you live at home with your parents.	
	F: Yeah.	
	M: And Felix has seen the neurologist three times recently. You're described as having complex learning difficulties. Its talking about being in a school setting. I guess this is	

	all about you being sociable, your mother describes you as being sociable friendly.	
	F: Yes, very much, very much so.	
	M: Felix loves coming to school, he is always very involved, a strong sense of responsibility.	
	F: Yeah.	
	M; Felix has developed his social, emotional skills as well as general life skills. Felix is becoming more aware of differences, which he can describe to us and needs to develop resilience in managing these. So it talks about a bit of past stuff in 2018, and it talks about where you attend before college.	
	F: Yeah.	
	M: It talks a bit just about you and stuff like that. I guess, like have you been, do you think you've been involved in putting those views together?	
	F: Um, uh, I'd say, um, at the time, uh, no. No. Um, well, I think, um, because I think,	

<p>As he has developed so has his involvement in guiding his education and EHC. p11 – F</p>	<p>I think you know I was still in the, um, processes still, you know, um, learning at the, at the time so, um, so I mean, I've been involved a bit, but like when I were obviously younger, it'll have been my, my, my, um, education team and the team at my schools and obviously my Mum that put that together.</p>	<p>Felix in his early education not involved in getting information into the EHC</p> <p>Others have been involved in providing information/context such as his family and teachers</p>
	<p>M: Yeah, because one of the things about the EHCP is it really values like the, the person at the center, which is you and their voice and their views are important do you think that?</p>	
	<p>F: Yeah one hundred percent, it's because I think, you know, I think I, nowadays people don't open up enough and I think it's, and I think it's vital that they can and express how they feel, how they think about things and like, I'd say the, what I'd say one of the biggest things that I've learned, so far is just don't involve your, uh, um, emotions, because I think, you know, we're in a world when</p>	<p>Felix believes it is important to have his views heard- 'vital'</p> <p>What he is thinking and what he is feeling needs to be expressed.</p>

<p>Asking and involving Felix in his education allows him to be understood, this is vital to him. p12 – F</p>	<p>there's so much, um, um, scrutiny, in how people act, and now people look and what people say, you know, it's, so, I think opening up, speaking out to people, especially with, um, educational needs is vital, you know it's, it's really, really vital.</p>	<p>Scrutiny on everyone Societal expectations Having your say is vital to progress</p>
	<p>M: Yeah and in your experience, have you had chance to do that Felix, do you think?</p>	
<p>Awareness of his difference but him having agency over his experience makes him feel equal to peers. p12 - F</p> <p>Disabilities should not hold him back in his life. p12 – F</p>	<p>F: Um, uh, I'd say I, uh, I, uh, have yeah. Um, I'd say because, um, because, uh, I'm just, just, um, started my own, podcast, so, uh, yes, I, so I think, and that, and that's one of the, of the main, uh, reasons and why, because I think, you know, it goes to show that like people with, um, disabilities, people with, um, autism and, you know, they can, they can do what, um, normal people can do and it's like, and it's like, you know, it's, it, it is never beyond the, uh, the, the, uh, opportunities and, and, um, chances that people get in life.</p>	<p>Own podcast</p> <p>Important to Felix this people with disabilities can do what 'normal' people do</p> <p>Reference to normality and what that represents</p> <p>Everyone needs a chance to succeed</p>

	M: Do you think having a plan, does that link to that or is that important or what do you think?	
<p>The EHC experienced as a pathway to aspirations. p13 - F</p> <p>Challenges are inevitable but the plan allows this to become part of the process of building towards adulthood. p13 - F</p>	<p>F: Uh, yeah, it is, I, I think it is, um, important because, you know, especially for someone with, um, a disability, because, because, you know, I think, I think I that having that like <u>pathway</u> to go and achieve, uh, something it's, it's you know, you need that and like, you know, because there's always gonna be <u>bumps on the road</u> and stuff that doesn't go well while you're getting there, but I mean that, um, planning, knowing how, how you can take them <u>steps</u> to get to where you want to be is vital, it's vital.</p>	<p>The EHC is creating a path in his life</p> <p>'Bumps on the road'</p> <p>Deal with problems and plan the next steps to achieve his goals.</p> <p>'vital' this is what needs to happen</p> <p>pathway/bumps/road/steps</p>
	M: That's great. Thank you. Really interesting stuff.	
	So that, that's all about you and then it goes, the next part of the EHC goes to, um, about your strengths and special educational needs.	

	So it talks about where your strengths are and then goes onto about what you, what your needs might be and things people need to help with or work on and things like.	
	So it talks about Felix's interaction with others has become more enjoyable and positive, he values interaction. Then it goes to needs, it says sometimes you experience difficulties with communication skills, associated with your autism and developmental delay and sometimes they affect your understanding of language or sometimes, Felix can sometimes experience finding words difficult and may use lead on phrases. Which I think is fine, I don't know what's a problem with that, to be honest.	
	F: Yeah, yeah, I know, you know, you've got to well you don't have, you know, lots of people do that, just not people we always, well, not just people with autism	Felix is like others, not just people with autism

	<p>M: It talks about how it can be difficult, reciprocal conversation can be difficult and talks about eye contact and things like that again.</p>	
	<p>So they're needs and then cognitive learnings it says Felix is making progress, assessment indicates cognitive skills fall in a good range for children of a similar age. Literacy skills are improving, de-coding skills are improving, understanding of concepts are improving and things like that.</p>	
	<p>Then it goes onto needs, it' talks about your learning difficulties, especially in maths, and how you continue to rely on support throughout the day. It says learning difficulties have become a bit more pronounced and you demonstrate difficulties in certain areas such as visual and visuo-motor scales. Do you know what that means, Felix?</p>	

	F: Uh, yeah, what visual is obviously, sight and eyesight and stuff and, and then motor skills is just obviously, um, motor skills is everything else.	Understands some of the more technical language in the EHC.
	M: Yeah, good point. So it says significant needs, you needed some support for concentration and stuff like that, for the cognition and learning. A high level of support, Felix continues with difficulties with his organisational skills across areas of learning.	
	F: Um, yeah, my, my, um, organisational skills that still need it, uh, but I think with the, with the most of them, it, it was when I was, uh, um, really, really young and they didn't obviously um diagnose me until until 2017, I think with, with autism, yeah.	Linking difficulties experienced with autism diagnosis EHC out of date here possibly
	M: Just going through it, so then it goes through social, emotional, mental health strengths. Felix enjoys coming to school,	

	obviously college now. He's sociable, likes to talk to people.	
	Felix is beginning to recognise sarcasm, it says here, Felix is involved with the school and demonstrates a sense of responsibility and becoming more aware of difficulties. It says you can accept unexpected situations with a good level of understanding.	
	F: Yep.	
	M: Then it, so its strengths and then needs, it talks about sometimes you can find it difficult to engage with appropriate play sometimes. It talks about difficulty identifying, understanding emotions of others and you find it difficult to understand humour and you can be a bit anxious at times, it says.	
	F: Yeah, it's, I think again, again, I've got, I think it sounds at times I've got it better, I think, you know. Because I, I actually think I, um, I actually think I've got, um, I think because at my primary school, I weren't, you	Improving in this area relating to descriptions of him struggling to understand others.

<p>Awareness of not being able to communicate his difficulties before College. p18 – F</p>	<p>know, obviously I needed more help, but I need obviously more, um, more support than obviously I think, but it is just you know obviously, like, that's all, I never could before I came to here, I couldn't never told them.</p>	<p>Needed more help when he was younger Could not tell people before – why?</p>
<p>Education is helping to develop him into a rounded individual as he gets older. p18 – F</p>	<p>Um, now I'd say I'm reasonably, well, you know, I'd say me writing's got better and I'd say I'm, I'm alright at uh, maths, I think at T (previous school) and obviously coming here it's like, it's like helped me and actually shaped me to actually be, you know, to be half decent.</p>	<p>Felix believes he is getting better at things College has 'shaped' him, he is progressing 'half decent', bit disparaging</p>
<p>EHC feels out of date, Felix has outgrown some of the things in the document. p18 – F</p>	<p>Obviously, I think the thing, uh, for me, if I were going to, I'd my, it'll be my, um, the point where, where a struggle has always, always been money and maths and change and what have you, so, but yeah, I'd say most of these targets that are on here, I think are, are well I'm well past.</p>	<p>Numbers are challenging Reflecting that some things in the EHC are out of date</p>
	<p>M: Oh really, well, we're going get onto them. So it talks about about social and</p>	

	<p>mental health and things like that and then sensory and physical needs, it talks about your fine motor skills are still improving. It says Felix takes an active part in all aspects of learning.</p>	
	<p>F: Yeah.</p>	
	<p>M: And then needs, it says that you have cerebral palsy that primarily affects your right side. It talks about your limbs and things like that some unsteadiness on your feet.</p>	
	<p>F: Yeah, that's still the case.</p>	
	<p>M: It says you need help with some activities, daily living, dressing and things like that and zips and buttons.</p>	
	<p>F: Yeah.</p>	
	<p>M: Needs reminding to eat it says Felixi can experience difficulties focusing with both eyes and things, so that's needs, isn't it?</p>	
	<p>F: Yeah</p>	
	<p>M: That's in the document, it's just interesting to see what's in here, isn't. Then</p>	

	got about your, uh, a bit more about information. So it's gone through your SEN needs there.	
	Then it gets onto to like outcomes like you talked about before. So one outcome is it says to demonstrate improved cognitive skills to the maximum of his potential, then it talks about the steps towards meeting those outcomes about your learning. Felix will join letters correctly, Felix will understand 10 numbers. Felix will be secure and understanding and subtraction, review arrangements at annual reviews by SENCos and it'll say how you got to there.	Outcomes
	F: Yeah.	
	M: So that's one outcome and then it's got more outcomes. So outcomes around demonstrating improved attention, and then it's got to demonstrate growth and fine motor skills to the best of his ability that minimises impact on his physical difficulties. Then it	

	talks about, again, how you're going to get there, steps to get there, and who's going to assess it. Basically it's going to be reviewed.	
	Demonstrate improvements in self care skills to reduce his dependence on adult support.	
	F: Yeah, yeah I'm well, um, I'm alright with that	Progressing in this outcome
	M: Demonstrate control over anxiety and worry more appropriately indicating that he's managing, accepting his difficulties and challenges more consistently so he can Felix can maximise his learning.	
	Is that something, what you think about that?	
A sense of pride in achieving outcomes on his plan. p21 – F	F: Yeah, I, I'd say again, um, I've got, um, obviously still, uh, one or two things need to, um, push on, but the most of these things now I'm able to do myself, I'm able to do it now.	Felix see's himself as meeting outcomes mentioned 'push on' it is something he can do
	M: A few more outcomes about your Maths entry levels qualification and things like that.	

	By Year 12, Felix will have successfully transitioned to post 16 college, what you're doing at the moment.	
	F: Yeah, yeah.	
	M: So then it has those outcomes, then it talks about provision, so that's support to meet those outcomes.	
	F: Yeah.	
	M: So in order for Felix to be able to demonstrate these he'll work with individual and small groups, a broad and balanced curriculum where teaching has appropriate pace and materials. Structured learning programs to support your development, individual programs of work and things like that. Its talking about those around him, being aware of the plan and how to support you.	
	F: Yeah.	
	M: So it's about staff and the college in general to support, support you. Strategies to	

	help your attention, learning to be broken down into manageable chunks, small groups.	
	Staff with expertise in education with managing physical difficulties, and support both in terms of personal and adaptations to equipment.	
	F: Yeah. Yeah.	
	M: And that's about the Educational setting providing that, staff with expertise, ongoing assessment of physical needs, individualised programs of support created in conjunction with appropriate health service.	
	So this is all about provision, isn't it? There's quite a lot of provision in here.	
	F: It is, it is.	
	M: Do you feel this support when you're at college?	
College staff have an understanding of Felix, they know what he requires. p23 – F	F: Yes, I do, I feel, um, I think, uh, yeah, I feel, um, I, I, the support is great here. I think, I think it is good.	Good support/staff at College
	M: In what way for you, Felix?	

	<p>F: Uh, I'd just say, um, I'd just say, you're like, if, if you needed help, this supports great because, um, I just think, you know, if there's anything that you need, they're there for you essentially, they are, um, there for you.</p>	<p>Staff are there to help and be there for Felix</p>
<p>Staff adapt to his communication style, they care and make effort to meet him on his level. p24 – F</p>	<p>I think it's, and I think, you know, because they try to explain sort of in a, in a way that you understand and you would get, and you know, um, but yeah, I think it's, I think coming in (college) it's been, it is been real good, the support's been good.</p>	<p>Staff communicating with him in ways he can comprehend, it is accessible to him.</p> <p>Positive experiences of support</p>
	<p>M: That sounds good. So provision it mentions Health services, time to practice and consolidate skills in a structured manner, help develop confidence in your own abilities. It talks about who's going to help you with this?</p>	
	<p>So yeah, so it's got those outcomes provision, then it just goes onto a bit more admin, I</p>	

	think, about what school you're at previously and what college you've come to.	
	F: Yeah.	
	M: Who's been involved in putting together this education, health, and care plan. So there's been quite a few people involved, head teachers report, paediatrician reports, physiotherapist, speech and language therapist, clinical psychology, annual reviews from school.	
	Have you felt people being involved in your education?	
	F: Yes, I, I have, um, you know, um, I mean, um, you know, I can remember like, you wouldn't believe the, the like amounts in physiotherapy, at (specialist health service) to see, were just like, mindblowing.	Reflecting Lots of people and services have been involved in his life. 'mindblowing'
	It was, um, yeah, I think, um, um, because you're just like learning how to walk to me splints to me, to me, um, and because um, I, I remember as well, I used to do this thing	Felix has physical needs that are very specific to him.

	called multi-mits, so that was like putting this like glove on me, on my left hand, so I'd just use my bad hand to actually pick things up and like, and like, uh, uh, make things and stuff as well with it, so that was good.	Memory of physical tools being used to help with motor skills development in the past
People involved in EHC have contributed positively to educational experience, the team has been required to 'shape' Felix. p26 – F	I'd say, you know, um, a lot of these people on there, on my plan with, they have like helped me and they've, and they've <u>shaped</u> me to where I am now.	People mentioned have helped Felix, got him to this point in his life
	M: Yeah, and do you think because a lot of people talk about having an EHC plan, we talk about voice again and talk about meetings and things like that and getting your view.	
Meetings have not engaged Felix's interest, they have been experienced as boring. p26 – F	F: So, uh, just, uh, um, I'm just, well I've had many in, in my time, so my, my experience of them, they've been pretty, I'd say I'd say at that time for me <u>boring</u> , but um, you know, I think you need to have them to find out how you getting on and stuff, how you're acting and stuff.	Voice = meetings and his experience of them 'Boring' not an interesting process/phenomenon for Felix Importance on knowing how it is going, education and more

<p>Diagnosis was an emotional time, a negative initial reaction to his diagnosis. p27 – F</p>	<p>Now obviously, um, you know, you are, um, I can remember my what, um, diagnosis that was, um, it was very, um, it was very, um, boring, but then obviously I remember, um, crying at, uh, one point for, for something and I, uh, and then I think, I think that's when they could tell that, that I, um, uh, autism traits, that's when that, uh, happened. But yeah, I've had, I've had many.</p>	<p>Diagnosis process was boring for Felix</p> <p>Cried when he was diagnosed, emotional for Felix</p> <p>Had many meetings and assessments through his life</p>
	<p>M: At school as well Felix?</p>	
<p>Meetings all merge together and are indistinguishable. p27 – F</p>	<p>F: Yes, yes, uh, well, I've had you're general, uh, meetings, but, uh, yeah, I've had, I've had, uh, many. Like loads I've had</p>	<p>Lots of meetings at school</p>
	<p>M: Have they contributed towards your progress in any way?</p>	
<p>Meetings overall have been key to Felix developing and progressing. p27 – F</p>	<p>F: Yeah, yeah. I'd, I'd, I'd, I'd say they have, uh, you know, they've, I'm they've developed me massively, you know, they've helped me, uh, massively they've helped me really good.</p>	<p>Meetings about Felix/EHC had led to him getting help and progressing.</p> <p>Developed Felix</p>

	<p>M: So that's about the end of the EHC plan. So we've been through it. How's it felt going through the EHC plan, things like that? What's that been like?</p>	
<p>Some surprise at the details contained in the EHC. p28 - F</p>	<p>F: Uh, it's felt, it's been alright, you know, I think, I think because I weren't obviously initially involved in it, it was, uh, you know, I just have to have obviously say, well, a feeling I think and it, it was very, um, I, uh, was interested by some of the, um, topics that we've talked about on there and stuff like that.</p>	<p>Reflecting</p> <p>Doesn't believe he was involved in the EHC at first.</p> <p>Felix has been interested to hear what is in his plan.</p>
	<p>M: What's it like hearing those things about you?</p>	
<p>Pride felt in believing he has passed some of the outcomes in the EHC. p28 - F</p>	<p>F: Uh, I'd say it's, uh, even I'd say all going through them together, I mean, it's, it's great to know, um, definitely. But, but then, like I said, I think listening to them and hearing them now, I, I feel as if they're, I've passed them, which is, which is actually in a way, it makes me feel quite <u>proud</u> to know them targets when I were little I've passed</p>	<p>Appreciates knowing what is in the EHC, listening to it has been positive</p> <p>Is aware now that he has passed some of the outcomes</p>

	<p>them. Which is, which is, which is well them, uh outcomes side of, you know, I, I feel like, I feel like now I've passed them.</p>	
	<p>M: And then what about like the descriptions of you and things like that? How's that feel?</p>	
<p>The plan relates to who he is and is a good description of Felix. p29 – F</p>	<p>F: It felt, I mean, I mean, it didn't really, I mean, I pretty much hear them every single day, so, yeah, they don't really, um, you know that there's no change in terms on that form anyway, so, yeah.</p>	<p>Felix is aware and hears about his needs everyday Needs do not change 'that form' possibly referencing physical needs</p>
	<p>M: So this is your EHC plan, we've talked about the start and I've been through it. Is there anyways you would change it maybe, or is there anything you think could be different?</p>	
	<p>F: I'd say, I'd say just, um, to where now, because I think, well, that's what I've got me, um, reviewing next week anyways. So I think that's what, uh, we'll be doing there. But I think just, um, update, updated so to work</p>	<p>EHC review next week EHC needs updating</p>

	now and there, and then, and then focus on what in the, in this present moment and then just, and then just go from there really update it.	What is happening now, how Felix is doing and keeping it all up-to-date
	M: Why is it important to update?	
EHC is out-of-date and he is different now, ready for his next challenges. p30 – F	F: Uh, because I think, I think most of these have become, um, outdated now these, the, these are outcomes that, I mean, I, some are still true, but the, but the rest of them they've I'm way, way, um, ahead of that, I feel.	Out-of-date outcomes, he is ahead of the information.
	M: Yeah, it's your experience, I'm just interested. So you've had this plan above you for years and years now, it's always been there. Do you think it has been important, what do you think?	
	F: Uh, I'd say it's been, it's been, uh, important, yeah, I mean, I mean, I think, you know, uh, every obviously educational setting I've been to, I've obviously had, I've had it with me, uh, and, and I think it's been, um, a	

<p>EHC is an extension of Felix, it has been a part of him for a long time and needs to develop with him. p31 – F</p>	<p>massive, uh, part of me and it's, and it's, and it's obviously helped me in, in what I've needed. But I think, I think now I'm at, I'm at a time where I, I think we need to update it and from the targets that we've set, then I'll look at it now and just, and just keep on going, you know, you know, to where I want to be up until I'm 25.</p>	<p>'Massive part of me' EHC has been a help, got Felix what he has required</p> <p>Reset the targets in the plan</p> <p>EHC important, setting outcomes to get to where he wants to be when he has left education.</p>
	<p>M: And as we said in the guidance, uh, one of the important things is it's about you and your voice and your views are the most important thing in plans according to the legislation and do you feel that's the case?</p>	
<p>Being asked and involved can lead to positive influence on his life, it is morally correct to ask him. p31 – F</p>	<p>F: Yes, I do, um, I feel, I feel, um, well, like I said earlier, I think, um, nowadays it's, it's, uh, vital more than ever that people, um, open up and share their, um, experiences and points of view on life, I think, I think it's right.</p>	<p>Vital the 'people' share their point-of-view, not just him.</p> <p>Opinions and 'opening up' is important and morally right</p>
	<p>M: Yeah and do, do you have that chance?</p>	

	<p>F: Uh, yes, by the way, yes, I do, yes, I have. I do. I feel I, um, I've had it, uh, um, already, and I feel like that, that, uh, I will, um, continue to get that, um, opportunity and then, and then, um, pushing myself to actually get out there.</p>	<p>Has been heard in the past and that needs to continue to get him to next steps.</p>
	<p>M: I guess finally, how does it feel to have that opportunity? What's that mean to you?</p>	
<p>Feelings of being understood and a part of a wider cause, with his peers. p32 - F</p> <p>Felix is not alone, he can access help when he needs it. p32 - F</p> <p>There is hope for the future, feeling he can reach his aspiration and be free to be who he wants to be. p32 - F</p>	<p>F: Uh, I think it's great, I think it's <u>amazing</u> because I think, you know, to go out there and then show people who you are is, is um, amazing because I think, I think, um, you know, being in an environment where obviously people where, more people with um, special, uh, uh, needs and what have you, it's given me a different perspective a lot and given me opportunity to go out there to share my, um, experiences and so other, uh, people, you know, you know, look, look, it's fine, it's okay, <u>you're not on your own</u> go and go and <u>fly</u>.</p>	<p>Opportunity to show everyone who he is</p> <p>In a place/environment with other YP with SEN</p> <p>I has enabled Felix to have a different view/perspective</p> <p>Shared experiences, others are not alone</p> <p>You can fly (aspirations) with voice and the opportunities provided</p>

	M: What do you want to do out of interest when you leave education? Like any ideas about that?	
	F: I have, I've, um, some kind of, of, uh, sports, uh, um, journalism, um, a really like that obviously working in um, media is one of my, uh, just is, well, is a well of coaching sports as well, that's, uh, another one in my interests. So something there again, that'd be good and something, you know, something like this would be amazing, yeah.	Media/coaching outcomes
	M: And you could talk about your goals, because that's what it's all about isn't	
	F: Yes.	
	M: I'll turn off the recording now, that's been so brilliant.	
	F: You're welcome, I loved it, thank you Matt.	

Appendix 18: Example of ES document made for each participant (Felix)

More of a sense of having a choice at College, having options and his say in studies. p2 – F

College has been a formative experience, having choice brings excitement and new opportunities. p2 – F

EHCP is a guide to Felix for others, it enables him to feel 'known' to people who look to meet his needs. p3 – F

There is a feeling of being 'known' and explained to people, being understood leads to being helped. p4 – F

There has been a lack of his voice/views heard so far in his education. p5 - F

College is involving him more, allowing him a say in things. p5 – F

EHCP is experienced as a shared responsibility, other people are important to lead to achievement. p6 – F

EHCP is an extension of Felix, he is represented on it and it has value in him being understood. p6 – F

EHCP as a 'path', vital that it is there to ultimately lead to a better life and his aspirations. p7 – F

Having disabilities and being different motivates Felix to prove people 'wrong', society does not expect him to succeed. p8 – F

Not aware of the content of the EHCP, in the dark. p9 – F

As he has developed so has his involvement in guiding his education and EHCP. p11 – F

Asking and involving Felix in his education allows him to be understood, this is vital to him. p12 – F

Awareness of his difference but him having agency over his experience makes him feel equal to peers. p12 - F

Disabilities should not hold him back in his life. p12 – F

The EHCP experienced as a pathway to aspirations. p13 - F

Challenges are inevitable but the plan allows this to become part of the process of building towards adulthood. p13 - F

Awareness of not being able to communicate his difficulties before coming to College, lack of voice. p18 – F

Education is helping to develop him into a rounded individual as he gets older. p18 – F

EHCP feels out of date, Felix has outgrown some of the things in the document. p18 – F

A sense of pride in achieving outcomes on his plan. p21 – F

College staff have an understanding of Felix, they know what he requires and the feels comforting. p23 – F

Staff adapt to his communication style, they care and make effort to meet him on his level. p24 – F

People involved in EHCP have contributed positively to educational experience, the team has been required to 'shape' Felix. p26 – F

Meetings have not engaged Felix's interest, they have been experienced as boring. p26 – F

Diagnosis was an emotional time, a negative initial reaction to his diagnosis. p27 – F

Meetings all merge together and are indistinguishable. p27 – F

Meetings overall have been key to Felix developing and progressing. p27 – F

Some surprise at the details contained in the EHCP. p28 - F

Pride felt in believing he has passed some of the outcomes in the EHCP. p28 - F

The plan relates to who he is and is a good description of Felix. p29 – F

EHCP is out-of-date and he is different now, ready for his next challenges. p30 – F

EHCP is an extension of Felix, it has been a part of him for a long time and needs to develop with him. p31 – F

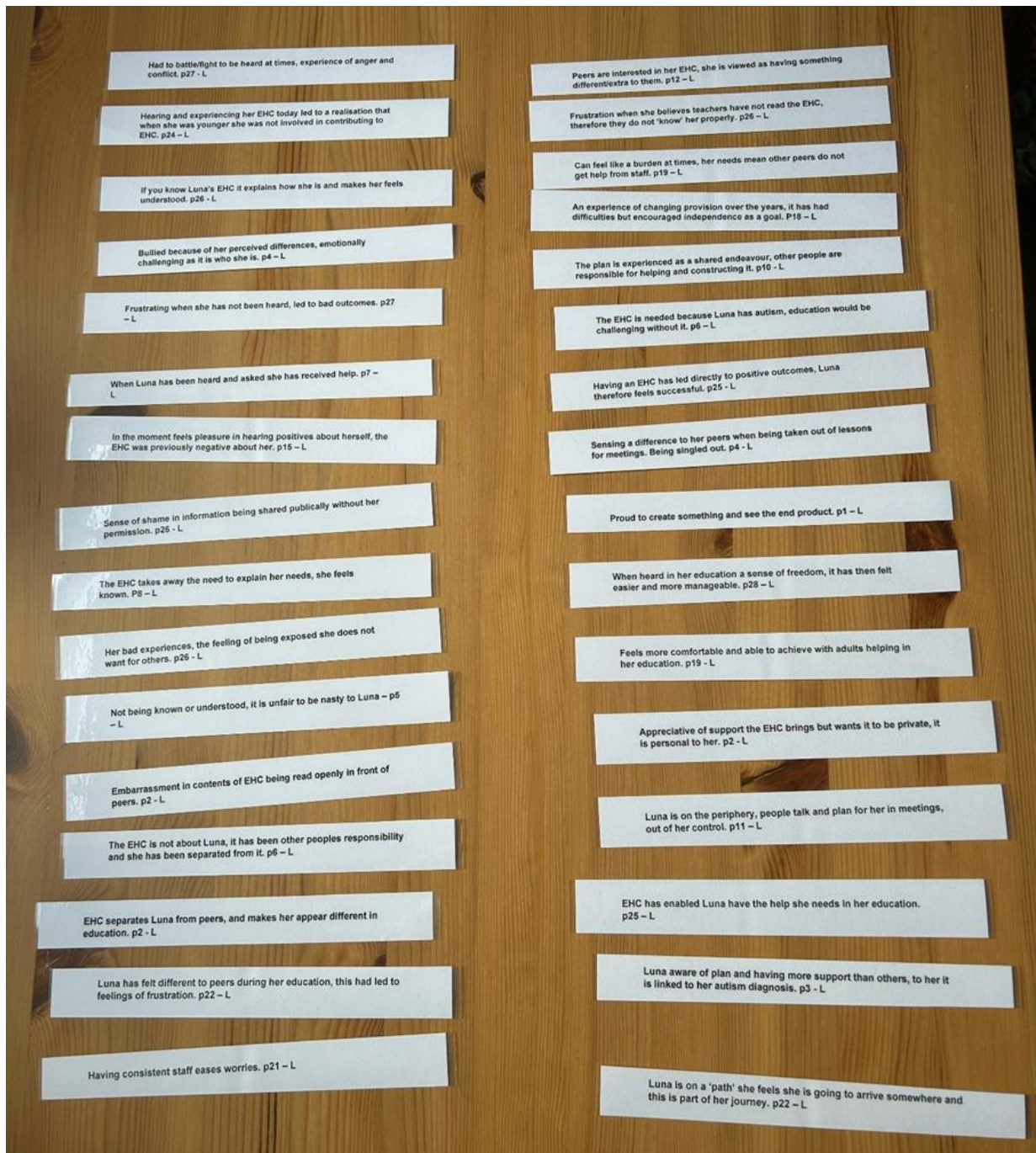
Being asked and involved can lead to a positive outcomes in his life, it is morally correct to ask him. p31 – F

Feelings of being understood and a part of a wider cause, with his peers. p32 - F

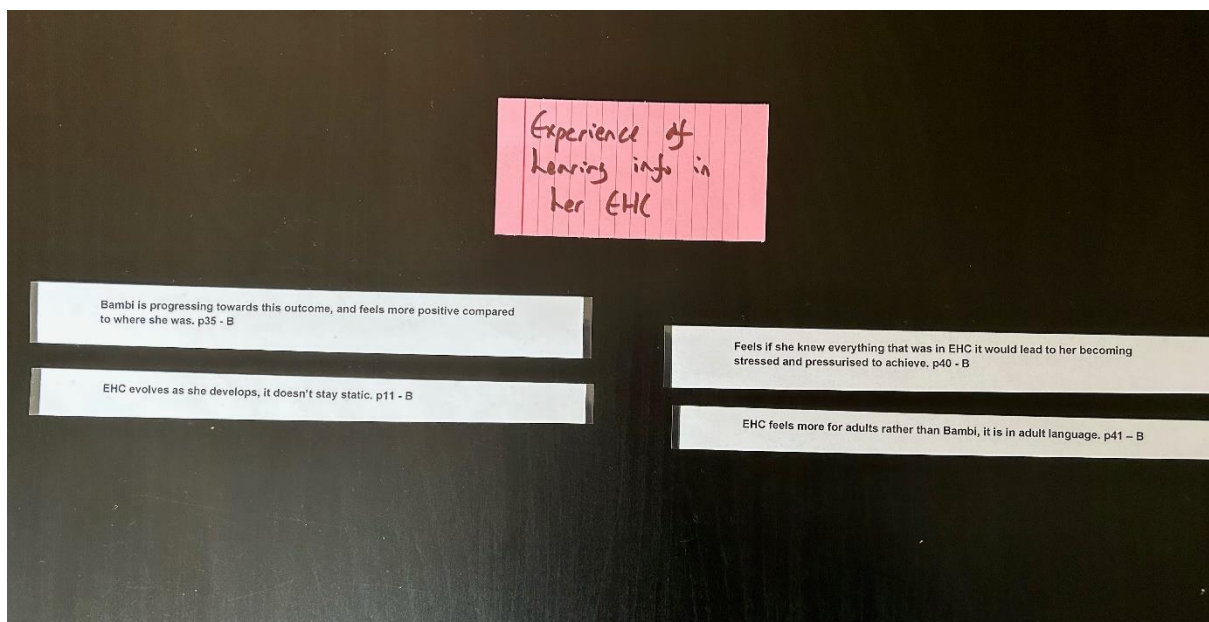
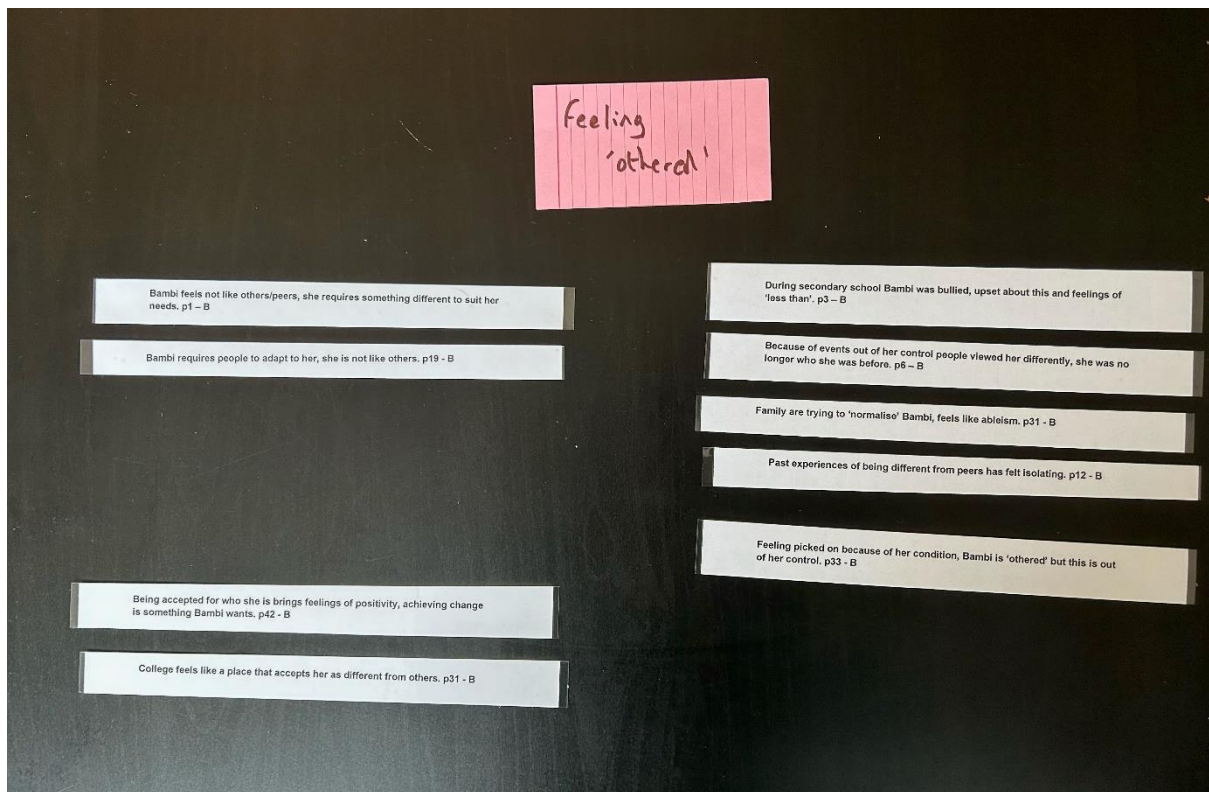
Felix is not alone, he can access help when he needs it. p32 - F

There is hope for the future, feeling he can reach his aspiration and be free to be who he wants to be. p32 - F

Appendix 19: Example of ES' physically laid out (Luna)



Appendix 20: Example of physical PETs developed (Bambi)



EHC leading to Solutions and forward-looking

The EHC evolves with her, solves problems and feels efficient. p14 - B

Bambi believes staff care about her on many levels, she is known and they problem solve to help her. p30 - B

Difficulties are experienced as opportunities to work with staff, problem-solve to create better outcomes. p43 - B

EHC provides Bambi with a sense of calm, it helps support her and solve problems. p3 - B

Bambi experiences support, not mired in past problems but looking to a better future with an EHC. p18 - B

EHC felt new, like a fresh start and something to support Bambi. p5 - B

College relationships and Support

Feelings are out of her control, but others provide emotional support p23 - B

Feeling emotionally contained when she needs it. p29 - B

Sensing staff listen to her by being interested in how she is doing, informal communication leading to feeling cared for. p27 - B

Bambi is having a more positive experience in education since her EHC was awarded, she is cared for. p6 - B

Bambi has more going on than just education, pastoral staff support feels like it comes from a caring place. p28 - B

Feeling that staff care about her and want her to be in an emotionally good place. p37 - B

Staff are like friends, and have genuine interest in Bambi's well-being, she is not 'othered'. p28 - B

Feeling of systems/people working together to help Bambi. p15 - B

Support is experienced but Bambi is not aware of it, meaning she can concentrate on other things and not stress. p26 - B

Staff care for Bambi, they provide her with the support to help her achieve outcomes in the EHC. p41 - B

EHC contributes
to being
Understood

EHC leads to feeling known and understood. p14 - B

EHC allows Bambi to feel known and connected to staff. p11 - B

The EHC is an initial insight into Bambi as a person, she does not have to explain herself. p44 - B

EHC means staff know about Bambi, she feels understood. p8 - B

Bambi has not felt understood in the past and felt hopeless. p17 - B

Being known feels better than before. p15 - B

EHC protects Bambi from feeling judged, it is a window into her. p14 - B

EHC means Bambi feels less stressed about telling new people about herself. p45 - B

Being heard/
Having voice

Bambi is asked about her EHC, she is important and involved in it. p10 - B

Feels heard at College, Bambi has a voice and it is listened to. p37 - B

Her voice is vital, to feel heard is empowering. p16 - B

EHC allows Bambi to feel heard. p44 - B

Felt stressful at first to be asked, it was not something she had experienced before. p10 - B

Bambi is allowed to feel she can complain at College, project her feelings and feel accepted. p32 - B

Appendix 21: Table of PETs produced for each participant

Table of Personal Experiential Themes (PETS) for Bambi

A. BEING HEARD AND HAVING VOICE

Having an EHCP leads to Bambi feeling her views are important

Bambi is asked about her EHCP, she is important and involved in it. p10 – B

'K sat down when me and my parents go through it again.'

Feels heard at College, Bambi has a voice and it is listened to. p37 - B

'Yeah it doesn't happen now they always let me talk and you always like make sure I'm listened to.'

Her voice is vital, to feel heard is empowering. p16 – B

'Most important things'

EHCP allows Bambi to feel heard. p44 – B

'It feels a lot better 'cos I just feel like I can be myself, be just Bambi, I can turn up'

Bambi is allowed to feel she can complain at College, project her feelings and feel accepted. p32 - B

'they can help with and it's just nice to have a voice and a rant, you know when you need it.'

Having her views heard as a new experience

Felt stressful at first to be asked, it was not something she had experienced before. p10 - B

'It was nerve-wracking'

B. EHCP ENABLING BAMBI TO FEEL UNDERSTOOD

EHCP means Bambi has u need to tell people about herself

EHCP leads to feeling known and understood. p14 - B

'the teachers know about your condition and about your needs. So you cannot, you're not in a class and you feel awkward.'

EHCP allows Bambi to feel known and connected to staff. p11 - B

'I think it's great because the people here are communicating with each other'

The EHCP is an initial insight into Bambi as a person, she does not have to explain herself. p44 - B

'cos not every single detail is in that plan, but they have an over overview of who you are and what your difficulties are and then once they get to know you, they know more about your difficulties and they adjust to it.'

EHCP means staff know about Bambi, she feels understood. p8 – B

'you know to teachers and that so they can get information about you and about your condition sort of thing.'

EHCP means Bambi feels less stressed about telling new people about herself. p45 - B

'but I'm guessing cos I'm on the system now, she's just looked into my case, so it's like straight away she like have a different, she adjusted to me straight off so it's good 'cos you don't feel any anxiety and distress'

Feeling support has not always happened during her education

Bambi has not felt understood in the past and felt hopeless. p17 – B

'that's the most important thing because if nobody understands you, then you can't get help.'

Being known feels better than before. p15 - B

'Yeah it helps to be known. because it were like Chinese whispers in high school.'

EHCP protects Bambi from feeling judged, it is a window into her. p14 - B

'the EHCP they like made sure it didn't happen again. That's why I think I can speak more to people because they understand me, because they know about condition and when they don't know it's like K goes in and talks to them.'

C. POSITIVE STAFF RELATIONSHIPS/SUPPORT

Feeling cared for, people are a containing presence for Bambi

Sensing staff listen to her by being interested in how she is doing, informal communication leading to feeling cared for. p27 - B

'I think it happens, but I'm not aware, 'cos it is like I talk to J, I talk to K, it's just like a normal conversation, like how are you today?'

Bambi is having a more positive experience in education since her EHCP was awarded, she is cared for. p8 – B

'If I have any problems, I've just had to, like, message on teams to J or to K (staff) and it's like they have my back or they send someone to have my back.'

Bambi has more going on than just education, pastoral staff support feels like it comes from a caring place. p28 - B

'and it's like sometimes they learn about my personal stuff and the end up going, Oh, we could do summat to help with that'

Feeling that staff care about her and want her to be in an emotionally good place. p37 – B

'It's just me and J like to talk about that is kind of stuff so she is making sure I feel well, It's just to make sure I'm mentally well.'

Staff are like friends, and have genuine interest in Bambi's well-being, she is not 'othered'. p28 – B

'I feel like J and K are like my friends and they're the teachers, but they're like my friends and that's sort of nice to have.'

People are a containing presence for Bambi

Feelings are out of her control, but others provide emotional support p23 - B

'I've learnt from my friend, I'm not the only one that has it, it's like me and my friend go back and forwards 'cos obviously with this condition you don't fully know what it is'

Feeling emotionally contained when she needs it. p29 - B

'but I know if I have a really bad day or if I'm not walking well I can lean on them.'

Support is there to help Bambi achieve

Feeling of systems/people working together to help Bambi. p15 - B

'this college is connected to each other, they don't abandon each do ya know department, they all like link up at some point.'

Support is experienced but Bambi is not aware of it, meaning she can concentrate on other things and not stress. p26 - B

'They are happening, but it is, I don't notice them that much'

Staff care for Bambi, they provide her with the support to help her achieve outcomes in the EHCP. p41 - B

'what K is trying to put into place is she's trying to push me out and do you know, make me go out with friends and that'

D. EHCP LEADING TO SOLUTIONS AND FORWARD FOCUSED

EHCP incorporating problem-solving dynamic

The EHCP evolves with her, solves problems and feels efficient. p14 - B

'I meet other PAs and sometimes K just do you know goes to the side with him and says she's got this, it affects this, this, and this and then done!'

Bambi believes staff care about her on many levels, she is known and they problem solve to help her. p30 – B

'So they sent me straight home and its things like that where they consider your ability and your mental capacity that makes them better because they care about you.'

Difficulties are experienced as opportunities to work with staff, problem-solve to create better outcomes. p43 - B

'The first time you're doing something it is very difficult, maybe sometimes it takes quite a couple of times to get through work and then when you're over it you are like, Oh, I can do this now'

EHCP provides Bambi with a sense of calm, it helps support her and solve problems. p9 – B

'Yes and also this state mind, I don't have a proper PA yet, but I have unofficial PAs, people that help me out and get to my class and it's been amazing'

EHCP enables positivity, it looks ahead and is a fresh start

Bambi experiences support, not mired in past problems but looking to a better future with an EHCP. p18 – B

'college may do you know went above and beyond to help me and support and, and it's just they knew about my bad past so they went above and beyond to try and do you know, make sure that's past'

EHCP felt new, like a fresh start and something to support Bambi. p5 - B

'I only had it coming into college. I didn't have it in high school I got told do you know the person that sorts out the disabilities and everything?'

E. EXPERIENCE OF HEARING INFORMATION IN EHCP

Okay not to know everything in the document, some is not for her

Feels if she knew everything that was in EHCP it would lead to her becoming stressed and pressurised to achieve. p40 - B

'its tough to say, but stuff I don't know that's getting reported down, which I'm fine with, I'm fine with it'

EHCP feels more for adults rather than Bambi, it is in adult language. p41 – B

'Yes, it sounds like me, it's just put in a more filtered, an adult version.'

Positivity in hearing she is progressing

Bambi is progressing towards this outcome, and feels more positive compared to where she was. p35 - B

'I'm building towards it, I just haven't completely got there, but when you look from where I started to today, completely changed that's really good'

F. FEELING OTHERED DURING EDUCATION

Bambi is not like others, leading to negative experiences – other

During secondary school Bambi was bullied, upset about this and feelings of 'less than'. p3 – B

'They're like instead supporting you they picked on you for being different'

Family are trying to 'normalise' Bambi, feels like ableism. p31 - B

'my dad don't realise how much he puts on me and how much he upsets me, but to anyone else, it will be fine, but...it hurts me 'cos he's trying to give me like vitamins all the time to try and fix my condition so I end up feeling like I'm broken'

Past experiences of being different from peers has felt isolating. p12 - B

'but as soon as you had a different thing and you weren't on the system they hated you, even if you were tiny bit different'

Feeling picked on because of her condition, Bambi is 'othered' but this is out of her control. p33 - B

'and that's the names that I got in high school, that I were drunk and I were a puppet on a string, they were very nasty about it but it is just how you're seen, most people don't understand that a disability can just be like you'

Bambi feels not like others/peers, she requires something different to suit her needs. p1 – B

'I'm too disabled for a normal job, but I don't wanna sit around and do nothing.'

Bambi requires people to adapt to her, she is not like others. p19 - B

'because I could be gone from work for weeks and I won't know when I'm coming back'

Systems had to adapt to Bambi as she became less physically able, the world was not designed for her. p34 – B

'where you look like a normal person, there's nothing that is like physically wrong with you, you're a normal person, but suddenly you're not'

Accepting Bambi as an 'other'

Being accepted for who she is brings feelings of positivity, achieving change is something Bambi wants. p42 - B

'It just really awkward but when you get over it and you get over that hell, you feel a bit better cos you achieve something.'

College feels like a place that accepts her as different from others. p31 - B

'but K and J understand, um, more about me that's why they also dip into personal because my family don't get my condition or my stresses'

Table of Personal Experiential Themes (PETS) for Spencer

A. EHCP ENABLES SPENCER TO FEEL KNOWN AND UNDERSTOOD IN EDUCATION

Positive experiences of staff understanding Spencer due to EHCP

A feeling of being 'held' and understood by support network. p23 - S

'and I think that having the EHCP and all of them coordinate, uh, make sure that every, every base is covered'

Experience of being 'seen', there for staff to see and know about. She is understood and accessible. p29 - S

'it's like a box, like a very big box and I'm in the box and it's like everyone can see like all the information's on the walls and everyone can see it.'

Feels known and heard because of the EHCP, it is a 'short-cut' to understanding Spencer. p3

'but then I had it and it made my life a whole lot easier, because then I've got, uh, I can, you know, say to the tutor that I've got an EHCP plan, you can look at it, these are all my needs'

Has disabilities and needs that she needs people to understand in order to know her/care for her. p7 - S

'because I always say that I have a range of disabilities and each one of those in particular do impact or influence multiple areas all at once.'

Feeling of being relaxed a being known to those around her. p29 - S

'So I'm not there stressing about it or repeating myself or, you know, um, having to...physically...sort of go through that process of right, this is my name, this is what I need, da, da, da, because it's right here'

Because it is there the feeling is that others are 'knowing' her, she is understood. p2

'it is a very important thing because it's got all the information as needed, so if

anyone needs to look, they can say, right, I found this information, and now we can find solutions to help her.'

EHCP means she does not have to explain who she is

Feels calmer because she is not constantly explaining herself or her disabilities to people. p16 - S

'so having it documented in the EHCP does me a favour because then I'm not constantly repeating myself'

Explaining takes time away from educational experience, enables Spencer to get on with things. p16 - S

'I'm not getting stressed because I do sometimes, um, other people won't know of my condition so I have to sit down, have half an hour with them and explain what it is and how that affects my life'

Having to say all her disabilities/needs is time-consuming and uncomfortable. p3 - S

'if I come with new people, new members of staff, new learning support I would constantly have to, um, repeat myself to tutors, um, about all my different disabilities, about all my different needs, what I need'

Spencer is complex and different but can be understood

Jigsaws suggesting people can be completed, the parts add up to the whole. p20 – S

'like a jigsaw to get a rounded person, like a person-centered approach, but the person just to get them overviewed.'

Spencer feels different in the SEN world, she is exotic in some ways. p15 – S

'I do try and attempt to explain some of them, but because some of them aren't your normal diagnoses like autism or things that you commonly hear of, it's very difficult'

B. BEING HEARD IN EDUCATION, HONEST CONVERSATIONS REGARDING EHCP

Spencer is involved and listened during reviews and in her education

Feels heard at reviews, the process is open and shared with those around her. p5 – S

‘So we’ll sit around a table and we’ll just, uh, we’ll talk about it, we’ll go through each section separately, make sure that I understood what’s there, what’s been said’

Spencer is heard, she is active, not passive. p29 - S

‘I get to be a participant in it, I’m not just a doll on a shelf and they’re all talking about it around a table. I’m, I’m in on it and I’m at the table, I’m, uh, posing my views, I’m asking them questions, they’re asking me questions’

Spencer is heard in her regular meetings about EHCP, has a voice and can develop because of this, needs are met in education feels positive. p4 – S

‘we’ve had meetings annually, this is what’s been said, this is what’s been documented’

Feeling important and listened too. p5 - S

‘they’ll ask me if I want to, um, have anything to be said about it or if I want any targets to be made myself from my point of view.’

Negatives of not being listened to or asked

Not being heard/asked is dis-empowering/frustrating and can diminish your sense of self. p28 – S

‘it’s that and if you’ve got that, then it’s an issue when it’s not and I think that that really affects self-esteem, self-confidence, um, and overall their ability to do lot of things.’

Do not be fearful, environment needs to allow her to say uncomfortable things without hesitating. p9 - S

‘it just felt right sort of being able to say this is that is that, this is the way that it should be without having to have that hesitation of fear.’

Having open, challenging conversations

Problems can be solved if collaboration is championed, discuss the good and the bad to feel like honesty/openness is involved. p23 - S

'Because in that way, it can raise any, uh, barriers or concerns that they may have regarding my learning, um, that may have been either missed or not addressed properly.'

Do not be fearful, environment needs to allow her to say uncomfortable things without hesitating. p9 - S

'I think it was like the way that I say it was, right, because I've always been strongly stubborn and independent and wilful and moral, and it, it just felt right sort of being able to say this is that is that'

C. EHCP BRINGING EQUAILITY, EQUITY AND ACCEPTANCE

Feeling equal to peers

Acceptance for who she is, not seen as an 'other' but celebrated. p8 - S

'no outcasting, no, um...sort of, yeah, just diverse thoughts and diverse ways of doing things.'

EHCP allows her to feel like a person, not a label. p13 - S

'very empowered because it allows me to have something that represents me as a person, not just focusing on my disabilities'

Spencer is alive, she is not looked upon as 'less than' or an object that is passive. p23 - S

'I like this because it gives me independence, dignity, and it allows me to be a person instead of an object.'

Does not want to feel she is 'less than'. p11 - S

'It gives me the right to live as an equal person, the right opportunities, so I'm not out-casted as that diverse person with special needs.'

Spencer feels diverse and unique but needs to feel equal. p8 - S

'just the same opportunities, so the same'

Some tension in accepting diversity but being equal to peers. p11 - S

'they'll do something that they think that I can't do, but it's important in the EHCP plan to make sure that they know that I can do it because it gives me independence.'

Needs to be treated as a whole person, not defined by disabilities. p10 - S

'I think having that in the plan itself is important about that information about who I am um, is necessary, because it's, you have to take an holistic approach, not just, uh, a private sectioned off one'

Proving to people she can achieve

People doubt her and she needs to prove them wrong, they think she cannot do 'normal' things. p18 - S

'but from a lot of people, I get a lot of stereotypes of, well, you can't do this because of this or you can't do that because of that'

Focus on societal expectations of her, she feels the need to prove them wrong. p24 - S

'it's a lot of people just assume that because I can't see, I can't do things'

Being equal/accepted

Has a feeling of fairness and equality, learning to be independent without being a burden on others. p23 - S

'it makes me feel equal to others because it makes me feel like I can fit into society without having to go, oh, I can't do this, so you're gonna have to do it for me.'

Doing this during the EHCP process leads to a feeling of acceptance and wider care. p27 - S

'this is what needs to be done to be able to make sure that that person thrives in an environment that they love.'

D. EHCP PROVIDING SUPPORT DURING EDUCATION

Support is experienced and felt

Support is tangible, it is felt, friendly and is used to solve problems. p1 – S

'if I've got a problem, um, I'll go to like J (staff) and they'll always be aware, not just like a negative, oh, well it's a problem that's, you know, we can't really do anything about that'

Support is welcoming and leads to progress in academics and life. p7 - S

'and having that support within the classroom, having learning support sat next to me and teaching me and, and taking notes and being able to sit with a one-to-one through the support of the an EHCP, which is provided by the college has definitely helped me as a person to grow and develop and change'

Feeling supported and equal to her peers, she is included and important. p4- S

'being able to be inclusive, being able to make sure that I'm able to contribute as well as other people within the class.'

There is an outer layer to support, systemic. p6 - S

'sort of different institutions, you could say in society. Uh, me, my mum, uh, my key worker, uh, my other support like LSAs, uh, tutors, um, heads of department'

Feels comfortable, supported and empowered in her education. p12 - S

'As a person it definitely makes me very, very, very independently empowered'

Education is a collaborative experience for Spencer

She has grown because of good support, other people contributing are needed to empower Spencer. p7 - S

'a one-to-one through the support of the an EHCP, which is provided by the college has definitely helped me as a person to grow and develop and change.'

Outcomes are experienced alongside others, support from people is required to get there. p19 - S

'will give me skills to help me, will, will overall be my further, wider support network to ensure that the goals are met.'

Care is a shared responsibility, the experience is collaborative. p6 - S

'and just different professionals that have somewhat inclusiveness into my care.'

Building is collaborative, needs to be shared and lead to success. p12 - S

'and then they can build on that themselves by, um, doing activities, so like putting in pairs and having discussions and then the debate and things like that.'

Feel that the EHCP is a team effort, everyone is heard. p22 - S

'having the EHCP plan and having everyone, um, not just write it but contribute to it from their point of view will allow them to bring together their point of view about how they think that I'm doing'

People are involved in progress and that is tangible in her education. p6 - S

'Uh, me, my mum, uh, my key worker, uh, my other support like LSAs, uh, tutors, um, heads of department'

Good support leads to problem-solving

Education (EHCP) is about honesty, support feels solvable, not a problem or something that is burdensome. p1 - S

'I think it is, like, there's definitely like enough support, definitely the right type of support. Yeah. Um, I love it 'cos it's like the, even though there might be like a problem, there's always a solution.'

E. EHCPS AND SEN IN SOCIETY

Spencer's experiences leading to better outcomes for others following her

Spencer believes this is for a better future for others, not just her, it is greater than her – the cause. p24 - S

'having these skills will build me not just as a person, but as a human being and will allow me to support others further, not just with my own conditions, but with everyone in general.'

Spencer's role is bigger than just her, she is motivated to advocate for others. p26 - S

'but also as an advocate for others, my role in this is powerful and it is honest and it is needed and it's right because that's what it is'

Feeling of a wider cause, she is helping others to help other CYP in the future. p26 - S

'she would know if someone else was to come in visually impaired, she would know how to, to cope and have those skills to be able to be comfortable.'

The EHCP brings equality to her and others, importance at every level/age to bring about a sense of hope and appropriate help. p25 - S

'which I think is extremely important and it is needed in every school, college, university, whatnot, it is needed to ensure that every single student gets the right support.'

Strengthening the system to support CYP with EHCP/SEN

Having a voice is progressive and positive, Spencer feels she is part of a bigger cause. p28 - S

'So I think that having it is extremely necessary cause it does not just give them a voice, but it advocates for themselves, it gives them confidence, it gives them self-esteem'

Spencer is fighting stereotypes and wider prejudice or people with SEN and disabilities, she is fighting for equality. p11 - S

'I have a lot of stereotypes that come with it and people assume...and I've had it like throughout life, where people have assumed that I can't talk for my own'

CYP with SEN in the future can benefit from her because staff learn about adapting. p13 - S

'it allows me just in general to educate people alongside not just my peers, but elder tutors that may have taught me or maybe have taught someone else that's similar to me throughout the years'

F. EHCP DEVELOPING WITH SPENCER

Making the journey more manageable for Spencer

Education can be bumpy/choppy, the EHCP looks to bring a smoother journey. p26 - S

'my plan to ensure that my journey through education is smooth sailing. Um, 'cos at the end of the day, it doesn't just help me, it also helps further, you know, journeys'

EHCP is something that is alive and changing with Spencer. p24 - S

'it is important because it's not just a document on a paper, it's a lesson in itself, that's the way I put it. It's something that can be used on a daily basis supporting others to support students'

The EHCP is building towards Spencer becoming more, it is a part of her progress. p4 – S

'it's important because if my needs weren't met appropriately, then I would not be able to flourish in terms of academics, in terms of social skills, um, and in terms of just learning in general'

The EHCP as a 'building' process, Spencer is developing and becoming more than she is now. p12 - S

'because it allows that person to be informed of the things that I can do and the things that I might need help with and building on that they can know, and then they can build on that themselves'

Outcomes, achieving and progressing to adulthood

Outcomes are experienced alongside others, support from people is required to get there. p19

'So having those goals within the EHCP and allowing everyone to see them will allow them to build me as a person'

Wider life becomes more manageable because of the EHCP. p28 - S

'it definitely, without a doubt does make our lives a whole lot easier in every aspect.'

This is better than it has been for her, she has optimism for the future. p23 – S

'will enable me to, uh, move on and graduate and get a job and learn skills that I haven't had in the past.'

Outcomes about proving herself and having a sense of achievement in her life. p18 – S

'I think to me they are important, I think it empowers me to achieve them.'

G. STRONG EMOTIONS AND BEING STRONG DURING EHCP PROCESS

Staying strong and fighting

Spencer has had to fight to get here, she has defended herself and it has been emotional, not just for her but people around her. p25 – S

'I am very strong and wilful, I have always been stubborn and honest and some people do cry, but yeah, but that's on them.'

Spencer needs to be strong to stand up for herself and to be heard. p9 – S

'I think it was like the way that I say it was, right, because I've always been strongly stubborn and independent and wilful and moral,'

Table of Personal Experiential Themes (PETS) for Luna

A. EHCP AS 'SHARED' WHO HAS CONTRIBUTED AND HAD VOICE

Positive experiences when feeling heard

When Luna has been heard and asked she has received help. p7 – L

'I'm getting a kind of extra help and with my floristry and with my maths. Um, it's been hard and kind of getting the support, but I've got it'

When heard in her education a sense of freedom, it has then felt easier and more manageable. p28 – L

'...and when they finally do it's like a weight that's been lifted off my shoulders.'

Luna lacking involvement in her EHCP: It is for others

The plan is experienced as a shared endeavour, other people are responsible for helping and constructing it. p10 – L

'it would be my mum and sometimes as my dad and kind of whenever he can get the time off work. Um, and then it would be, and teachers that I had, um, and then it would be people like from the council and stuff that kind of deal with, and kind of additional needs and stuff like that.'

Luna is on the periphery, people talk and plan for her in meetings, out of her control. p11 – L

'they just, and told me and kind of what was said and what and they were planning to do.'

The EHCP is not about Luna, it has been other peoples responsibility and she has been separated from it. p6 – L

'both of my parents and have been involved, but it's always been, and kind of my mum and sometimes my dad'

Hearing and experiencing her EHCP today led to a realisation that when she was younger she was not involved in contributing to EHCP. p24 – L

'Um, well, back in primary and secondary I didn't, uh, I didn't really know kind of what was going on.'

B. EHCP LEADING TO BEING KNOWN TO OTHERS

EHCP allowing Luna to feel known, taking away pressure

The EHCP takes away the need to explain her needs, she feels known. P8 – L

'as the teachers and tutors know and that I've got like a kind of additional needs and kind of about me and having to tell them.'

If you know Luna's EHCP it explains how she is and makes her feels understood.

p26 - L

'there's some other stuff as well and if he had and taken the time and to actually read it'

Negative in being exposed and not feeling known

Sense of shame in information being shared publically without her permission. p26 - L

'...and where a teacher just blurted it out to the entire class'

Frustration when she believes teachers have not read the EHCP, therefore they do not 'know' her properly. p26 – L

'...and if he had and taken the time and to actually read it, then I don't think, I don't think that incident, um, would've happened'

Not being known or understood, it is unfair to be nasty to Luna – p5 – L

'...and that really, really, and kind of ticks me off because they know and kind of nothing about me, and for them to take the 'mick' I just find that unfair.'

C. COMPARISON TO PEERS DURING EDUCATION

Feeling like she is different to her peers

EHCP separates Luna from peers, and makes her appear different in education. p2 - L

'Um, my, um, my maths tutor, wanted to speak to me, um, it was something to do about my EHCP'

Luna has felt different to peers during her education, this had led to feelings of frustration. p22 – L

'whenever I try and explain to them, sometimes it's hard to say sometimes I'd say they do understand, but sometimes I'd say they don't, and I find it kind of really frustrating'

Sensing a difference to her peers when being taken out of lessons for meetings. Being singled out. p4 - L

'I mean, and when I were little I didn't think and kind of anything of it and, but when I started to get a bit older, I started to question like, why was I being taken out?'

Embarrassment in contents of EHCP being read openly in front of peers. p2 - L

'I went home that day and I was fuming because I don't mind people knowing I've got one, but I don't want anybody to know and kind of what's on it because it's personal.'

Luna aware of plan and having more support than others, to her it is linked to her autism diagnosis. p3 - L

'It's something and that was put in place, um, and when I got diagnosed with autism'

Peers do not understand EHCP and support Luna receives

Peers are interested in her EHCP, she is viewed as having something different/extra to them. p12 – L

'people have asked me and what one is, and friends and stuff.'

Can feel like a burden at times, her needs mean other peers do not get help from staff. p19 – L

'then I feel bad and kind of for the other people and that need help because if I'm there and constantly asking for help and all the time and the other people don't get a chance.'

Negative experiences and feeling different: Not wanting it for others

Bullied because of her perceived differences, emotionally challenging as it is who she is. p4 – L

'I get jokes at stuff and I'm all up for jokes, but when people and take it and too far, that's when, that's when it gets difficult'

Her bad experiences, the feeling of being exposed she does not want for others. p26 - L

'because I don't want I kind of anyone to go through and what I went through with maths kind of last year'

D. PROVIDING HER WITH SUPPORT AND PROGRESSING

EHCP bringing the support required

Feels more comfortable and able to achieve with adults helping in her education. p19 - L

'but I just like somebody just assigned to me because I find that easier'

An experience of changing provision over the years, it has had difficulties but encouraged independence as a goal. P18 – L

'In primary and secondary I had like adults and kind of learner support, uh, workers like in nearly like every, like every lesson, but since I'm getting to college, I've had them and less and less, it's been hard to kind of grasp, but I think I'm doing all right and kind of being kind of on my own'

Having consistent staff eases worries. p21 – L

'Um, it means, and that I'm making progress with them.'

Appreciative of support the EHCP brings but wants it to be private, it is personal to her. p2 - L

'because I don't mind people knowing I've got one, but I don't want anybody to know and kind of what's on it because it's personal.'

EHCP has enabled Luna have the help she needs in her education. p25 – L

'Well, and kind of without it, I wouldn't have had the help and that I had, um, in primary and secondary and now in college.'

Setting her up for the future, EHCP brings positives

Having an EHCP has led directly to positive outcomes, Luna therefore feels successful. p25 - L

'Well...I wouldn't have achieved and what I've achieved. Yeah, because in secondary I ended up passing kind of half of my GCSEs, um, I got a C and kind of in most of them um, I got a couple of merits and stuff like that in College, um, I've got a few and kind distinctions and merit and stuff like that.'

Luna is on a 'path' she feels she is going to arrive somewhere and this is part of her journey. p22 – L

'to try and put me on that path and to get me into work'

In the moment feels pleasure in hearing positives about herself, the EHCP was previously negative about her. p15 – L

Um, it's better then how it sounded and when I were in a primary and secondary school already, uh, well in primary secondary school, it just, it used to focus and on the negatives.'

Table of Personal Experiential Themes (PETs) for Rock

A. THE EHCP AS A DOCUMENT – HEARING AND KNOWING ABOUT IT

Lack of awareness of EHCP during his education

EHCP feels like it has been a secret and has been kept from Rock through his education. p4 - R

'I wasn't that aware of it because I don't think schools or teachers or anyone makes it really aware that you have one'

Lack of information/idea about what EHCP is, feeling unaware of its relevance for him and his education. p6 - R

'I don't really understand much about the EHCPs.'

Feeling uncomfortable with information in EHCP

Important facts/facets about him has not been included in the EHCP. Rock is not fully understood by others, who read this document, in an important area. p27 - R

'I don't think it's really explained much in here, but, um, I don't have a very good attention span'

Some shame present as the history might not be positive in EHCP. p5 – R

'I felt quite uncomfortable because I didn't know that, uh, everything I, I'd been through was documented.'

Some helplessness felt, history is documented and not able to change it but still influences how people engage with him in the present. p11 - R

'I can't really contribute much since it's not like subject to change because it's just part of history, so I can't really like go back in time and change that'

Idiom – 'grain of salt', people should view information with scepticism, EHCP is not everything he is. p10 – R

'you should really take it with a grain of salt since this doesn't explain everything, like I don't want people to read that and like think oh, right, so he is like only socialise on his own terms'

Information in EHCP part of the past

The EHCP is not him now, it is not like him currently. p24 - R

'Yeah, the EHCP needs updating, when was the last time this was updated?'

Confused that descriptions about him are not relevant now, the EHCP is not who he is now. p16 - R

'but I wasn't really bothered by the fire alarm, never really affected by that anymore.'

Confused and frustrated about past descriptions, he is different now. p26 – R

'Some of it is, some of it isn't, but the only things that I really think that aren't is the things that are outdated.'

EHCP not clear or understandable

EHCP not accessible or understandable for him here, language and terms are confusing. p25 - R

'I'm not sure what it means by that.'

EHCP is created by higher systems, but the purpose of them is still unclear. p7 - R

'It's supposed to be a thing like, is it like a government thing or is it just a council thing? I think it's like a government thing and it's their way of like helping people who need, need it.'

B. BEING HEARD/ENGAGED IN EHCP PROCESS – GOOD AND BAD

Not being included or asked

Rock has not been heard before he reached College regarding his EHCP. p12 - R

'Uh only a handful of times that happened when I was, the first one I did was when I was 16'

Not being asked has felt dis-empowering and created negative feelings for him. p14 - R

'Even the schools I could have gone to would've been different if I just had a say in things.'

He is not 'heard' and his experience is that he is then not understood by others. p21 - R

'I don't think I have enough to say in a one to one because I don't really talk that much when people ask about me'

Others make plans, Rock is passive and not engaged in a style that suits him. p12 - R

'they basically talk about what I'm like currently and like what the plans are for my future and, to refer, they go by quite fast'

They do not care to listen to him in his assumption, he is not valued or worth peoples time. p13 - R

'they just can't be arsed to listen, they all just don't take me seriously and that's it really.'

Rock is not having a say and is being done to him in education, controlled against his will. p14 - R

'you don't get to have a say in things and stuff, so many times in my life I've been forced to do things I don't want to do.'

Decisions needs to come from Rock and be collaborative, if this does not happen it is setting him up to fail. p24 - R

'Yeah, definitely, that's like the necessity if I need to progress forward. So if you do make decisions about me, then don't expect me to adapt very well.'

Being heard leading to positive outcomes

The feeling of being heard and adapted to is powerful. p31 - R

'Much easier, much more comfortable for me.'

Rock's development has accompanied a feeling he is now more involved in his education, this is better. p13 - R

'as I've got older, I've had more involvement and control over my life, but when I was younger, you don't really have a say or control of anything, I think that's, like a hurtful thing.'

To be heard and accepted has an impact on lived experience, it could be better. p29 - R

'It has an impact, but an impact on, on education, it's an impact on me, I don't think as much of an impact as it should'

Communication style/Best ways to gather voice

Feeling overwhelmed having to answer big, open questions. p30 - R

'because if you're asking them open questions, they might not be able to answer or might, uh, make them overthink or something like that it might stress them.'

Person-centred methods and adapting to the YP can open doors, be informative and make them feel comfortable/heard. p32 - R

'Computers are definitely the, like the best way for me to communicate because it feels a lot more com uh, comfortable than just writing it up and just showing someone than having to talk to them face to face, because some people like me, especially, I don't really like attention'

Voice is important but understanding how Rock (and others) communicates best and feel comfortable with can lead to positive engagement and his views being accessible. p31 – R

'There could be a lot of people who have special needs prefer not at talk, I was like that for a while and even now I don't'

In an environment that is weighted towards verbally saying what you think/need Rock believes he does not have these skills, he is at a disadvantage to peers. p21 - R

'I don't think I have enough to say in a one to one because I don't really talk that much when people ask about me'

Meetings merge together

Discussions are forgotten and lost in Rocks mind, not impactful. p12 - R

'they go by quite fast and I tend to forget them because it's kind of blurry for me'

C. HOW ROCK IS VIEWED IN EDUCATION

Rock feeling like an 'other'

EHCP trying to make the educational experience for the 'other' (people with SEN) in a system that is challenging for them. p28 - R

'It's trying to make education more comfortable and easier for people who have special needs, because every place I've been to, not every place abides by the EHCP'

Rock is 'othering' himself, he is different and experiences the world differently from peers. p7 – R

'People who are, I guess not as independent as others, I can't or don't see the, the world the same way as other people do.'

Autism is challenging for Rock and makes his life challenging now and in the future, SEN as a challenge. p8 - R

'I'm not really keen on having autism because it massively effects the way I get along in life and I feel like it's gonna be like that for the future, as you grow older, I feel like you learn to cope with it more'

Rock is different and has his own unique ways of experiencing the world. p19 – R

'No, no. definitely, people just think I'm just like a normal person, where I get along with me like, like that, um, it doesn't work like that for me.'

Understanding Rock

It takes time and commitment for Rock to trust people in his life, this is important for people to know to understand him. p17 - R

'Yeah it still applies to this day, it's hard for me to get on with someone I don't know, very well.'

When Rock is not understood through the EHCP it leads to him feeling negative and unsupported, he is a problem. p28 - R

'because every place I've been to, not every place abides by the EHCP, some places I've been to will pay more attention to it than others, but some, some of the places I've been to just simply, don't care about it.'

In his experience Rock has been cast as the problem, he is the bad one and a problem. p9 – R

'Yeah I've calmed, because I used to be quite bad when I was young.'

D. EDUCATION REJECTING ROCK

Moving to placements and not belonging

Childhood and education have feelings of upheaval, moving around and not settling or perhaps being accepted. p2 - R

'I've been to a lot, a lot of schools, uh, across my life'

A life in flux, getting used to new surroundings constantly, people are rejecting him, others have control over his experiences. p4 – R

'and it was also hard on me because I had to adjust a lot'

'Kicked out' – feeling of being rejected or forcibly removed from schools. p4 - R

'I was kicked out of the previous one for some reason or another, some of them were my fault, some them weren't'

Feeling for family because of educational moves

Reflection and acceptance that others have experienced struggle because of the moves. p3 - R

'but its also hard for my parents because they had to arrange to go to all these different schools after I was kicked out of the previous one for some reason or another'

E. SUPPORT STAFF/PROVISION EXPERIENCED PROVIDED BY EHCP

Rock not involved in staffing decisions

'Shoving' staff into lessons is not appropriate, makes him feel not listened to and unimportant. p18 - R

'I'm not sure what, what support I want, I just want support that makes me feel like I'm being listened to, makes me feel comfortable, because the shoving staff in my lesson does not help if they don't know me'

It does not feel like a shared venture, it is frustrating. p14 - R

'Because when people make decisions for you it's not very nice, you don't get to have a say in things and stuff'

People are important in Rock's experience and it can feel random how they treat him, both positive and negative. p29 - R

'It's very mixed, I think some places listen to it and treat me well, some places listen to it and treat me bad, some places don't listen to it and treat me good, some places don't listen to it and treat me bad.'

Support staff helping Rock during education

Support staff help emotional and psychological needs and are part of their role, more than academics. p22 - R

'Definitely sounds helpful, but if I was to have one to one support, I'd be more for like, it'd be more for more my self-development than, uh, learning and helping me get work done'

Progress and learning are about collaboration, they can help him decipher work and then achieve. p22 - R

'they kind of put it kind of vaguely and expect you to figure it out, erm so like I need a support to like break it down for me to make it, make it understandable to me.'

Sense of calm now, consistency regarding staff has led to positive feelings. p18 - R

'but that's mostly gone now I've got the same staff now so okay.'

Table of Personal Experiential Themes (PETS) for Felix

A. HAVING A VOICE AND BEING HEARD IN EHCP DURING HIS EDUCATION

Importance of gaining Felix's views

Being asked and involved can lead to a positive outcomes in his life, it is morally correct to ask him. p31 – F

'nowadays it's, it's, uh, vital more than ever that people, um, open up and share their, um, experiences and points of view on life, I think, I think it's right.'

Asking and involving Felix in his education allows him to be understood, this is vital to him. p12 – F

'I think opening up, speaking out to people, especially with, um, educational needs is vital'

More say as he has developed and moved to College

As he has developed so has his involvement in guiding his education and EHCP. p11 – F

'so I mean, I've been involved a bit, but like when I were obviously younger, it'll have been my, my, my, um, education team and the team at my schools and obviously my Mum that put that together.'

College is involving him more, allowing him a say in things. p5 – F

'so this will be my first year that I'll have had some involvement in it.'

More of a sense of having a choice at College, having options and his say in studies. p2 – F

'where you pick a, uh, option and, and you, um, do that, it's, uh, is only for about a, um, a six week block and then, uh, and then we are picking again'

A lack of voice before College

There has been a lack of his voice/views heard so far in his education. p5 - F

'because it was more, um, planned by my, um, education, uh, people at my primary of coming to, um, T (school)'

Awareness of not being able to communicate his difficulties before coming to College, lack of voice. p18 – F

'I never could before I came to here, I couldn't never of told them.'

B. BEING KNOWN AND UNDERSTOOD BECAUSE OF HIS EHCP

EHCP is a staff guide to understanding Felix

EHCP is a guide to Felix for others, it enables him to feel 'known' to people who look to meet his needs. p3 – F

'and yeah and then, and then also obviously what's what's needed for me in terms of, um, health-wise and what's, uh, and obviously when my, um, levels and whatnot on there to.'

EHCP is an extension of Felix, he is represented on it and it has value in him being understood. p6 – F

'it's your life that, that you're gonna, um, lead into it and it's, and it's obviously, it's a part of me.'

There is a feeling of being 'known' and explained to people, being positive leads to being helped. p4 – F

'it's great that for this, you know, for people like yourself can see what, what, you know, other people need'

EHCP is an extension of Felix, it has been a part of him for a long time and needs to develop with him. p31 – F

'I'd say it's been, it's been, uh, important, yeah, I mean, I mean, I think, you know, uh, every obviously educational setting I've been to, I've obviously had, I've had it with me, uh, and, and I think it's been, um, a massive, uh, part of me'

Understood in relation to peers

Feelings of being understood and a part of a wider cause, with his peers. p32 - F

'I think it's amazing because I think, you know, to go out there and then show people who you are... given me opportunity to go out there to share my, um, experiences and so other, uh, people, you know, you know, look, look, it's fine, it's okay'

Awareness of his difference but him having agency over his experience makes him feel equal to peers. p12 – F

'it goes to show that like people with, um, disabilities, people with, um, autism and, you know, they can, they can do what, um, normal people can do'

C. STAFF SUPPORTING HIM BECAUSE OF EHCP AND IT BEING SHARED

Staff adapts to his needs

Felix is not alone, he can access help when he needs it. p32 - F

'experiences and so other, uh, people, you know, you know, look, look, it's fine, it's okay, you're not on your own'

College staff have an understanding of Felix, they know what he requires and this feels comforting. p23 – F

'Yes, I do, I feel, um, I think, uh, yeah, I feel, um, I, I, the support is great here. I think, I think it is good.'

Staff adapt to his communication style, they care and make effort to meet him on his level. p24 – F

'because they try to explain sort of in a, in a way that you understand and you would get'

Staff important in developing provision for Felix

EHCP is experienced as a shared responsibility, other people are important to lead to achievement. p6 – F

'Um, but yeah, so it'll be looking at that and it'll be, and it's, and and, um, um, making sure that we've, that we've fulfilled every criteria on there.'

People involved in EHCP have contributed positively to educational experience, the team has been required to 'shape' Felix. p26 – F

'a lot of these people on there, on me plan with, they have like helped me and they've, and they've shaped me to where I am now.'

D. FEELING PROUD AND THE FUTURE

Pride in achievements and say outcomes on EHCP

Pride felt in believing he has passed some of the outcomes in the EHCP. p28 - F

'I feel as if they're, I've passed them, which is, which is actually in a way, it makes me feel quite proud to know them targets when I were little I've passed them'

A sense of pride in achieving outcomes on his plan. p21 – F

'but the most of these things now I'm able to do myself, I'm able to do it now.'

Felix is on a pathway and developing independence because of EHCP

College has been a formative experience, having choice brings excitement and new opportunities. p2 – F

'given me that, um, that sense of, uh, um, independence that I didn't really get in my, in my old school. Um, uh, it's, uh, you know, it, it, it is given me, um, you, it, it is given me the choice and, and chance to me obviously, um, and new friends'

Education is helping to develop him into a rounded individual as he gets older. p18 – F

'it's like helped me and actually shaped me to actually be, you know, to be half decent.'

The EHCP experienced as a pathway to aspirations. p13 - F

'important because, you know, especially for someone with, um, a disability, because, because, you know, I think, I think I that having that like pathway to go and achieve'

There is hope for the future, feeling he can reach his aspiration and be free to be who he wants to be. p32 - F

'you know, you know, look, look, it's fine, it's okay, you're not on your own go and go and fly.'

EHCP as a 'path', vital that it is there to ultimately lead to a better life and his aspirations. p7 – F

'I think it's, uh, it's a much, much, uh, need needed to help them along the path.'

Challenges are inevitable but the plan allows this to become part of the process of building towards adulthood. p13 - F

'because there's always gonna be bumps on the road and stuff that doesn't go well while you're getting there, but I mean that, um, planning, knowing how, how you can take them steps to get to where you want to be is vital, it's vital.'

E. INFORMATION IN EHCP

Lack of knowledge around what is in his EHCP

Not aware of the content of the EHCP, in the dark. p9 – F

'Um, I've seen it, a bit, but not that much.'

Some surprise at the details contained in the EHCP. p28 - F

'I, uh, was interested by some of the, um, topics that we've talked about on there and stuff like that.'

Information in EHCP is not current

EHCP feels out of date, Felix has outgrown some of the things in the document. p18 – F

'I'd say most of these targets that are on here, I think are, are well I'm well past.'

EHCP is out-of-date and he is different now, ready for his next challenges. p30 – F

'some are still true, but the, but the rest of them they've I'm way, way, um, ahead of that, I feel.'

F. EXPERIENCE OF MEETINGS DURING EHCP PROCESS

Meetings not engaging for Felix

Meetings have not engaged Felix's interest, they have been experienced as boring. p26 – F

'they've been pretty, I'd say I'd say at that time for me boring'

Meetings all merge together and are indistinguishable. p27 – F

'I've had you're general, uh, meetings, but, uh, yeah, I've had, I've had, uh, many. Like loads I've had'

Meetings have value: Feed into EHCP and develop Felix

Meetings overall have been key to Felix developing and progressing. p27 – F

'they've developed me massively, you know, they've helped me, uh, massively they've helped me really good.'

G. FELIX HAVING A DISABILITY

Proving to people he can achieve

Having disabilities and being different motivates Felix to prove people 'wrong', society does not expect him to succeed. p8 – F

'my condition is made me want to go out there and prove people wrong. Uh, you know, it is made me want to challenge myself and push myself to, to the limit really.'

Disabilities should not hold him back in his life. p12 – F

'it goes to show that like people with, um, disabilities, people with, um, autism and, you know, they can, they can do what, um, normal people can do'

Felix being diagnosed was an emotional period

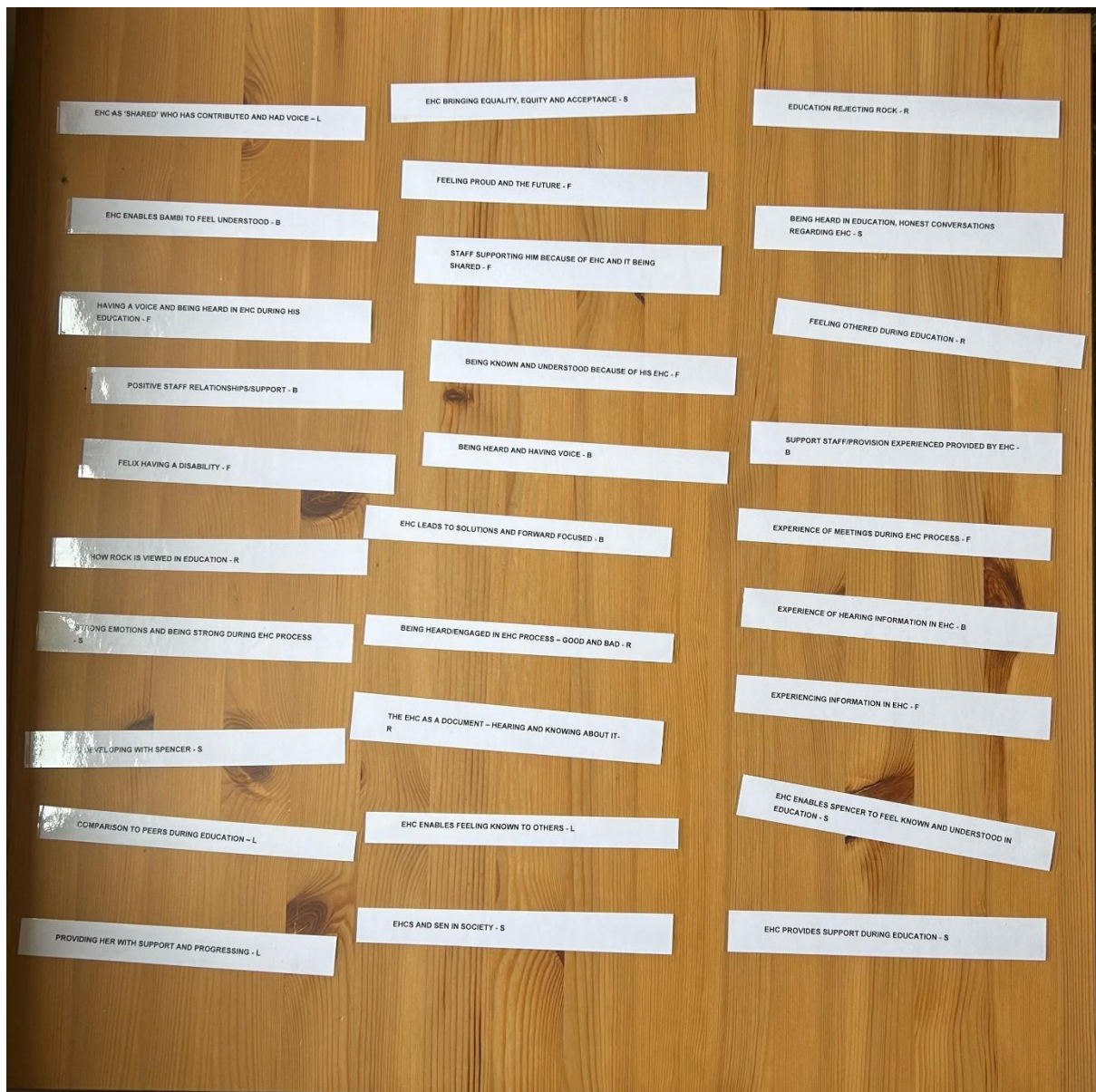
Diagnosis was an emotional time, a negative initial reaction to his diagnosis. p27 – F

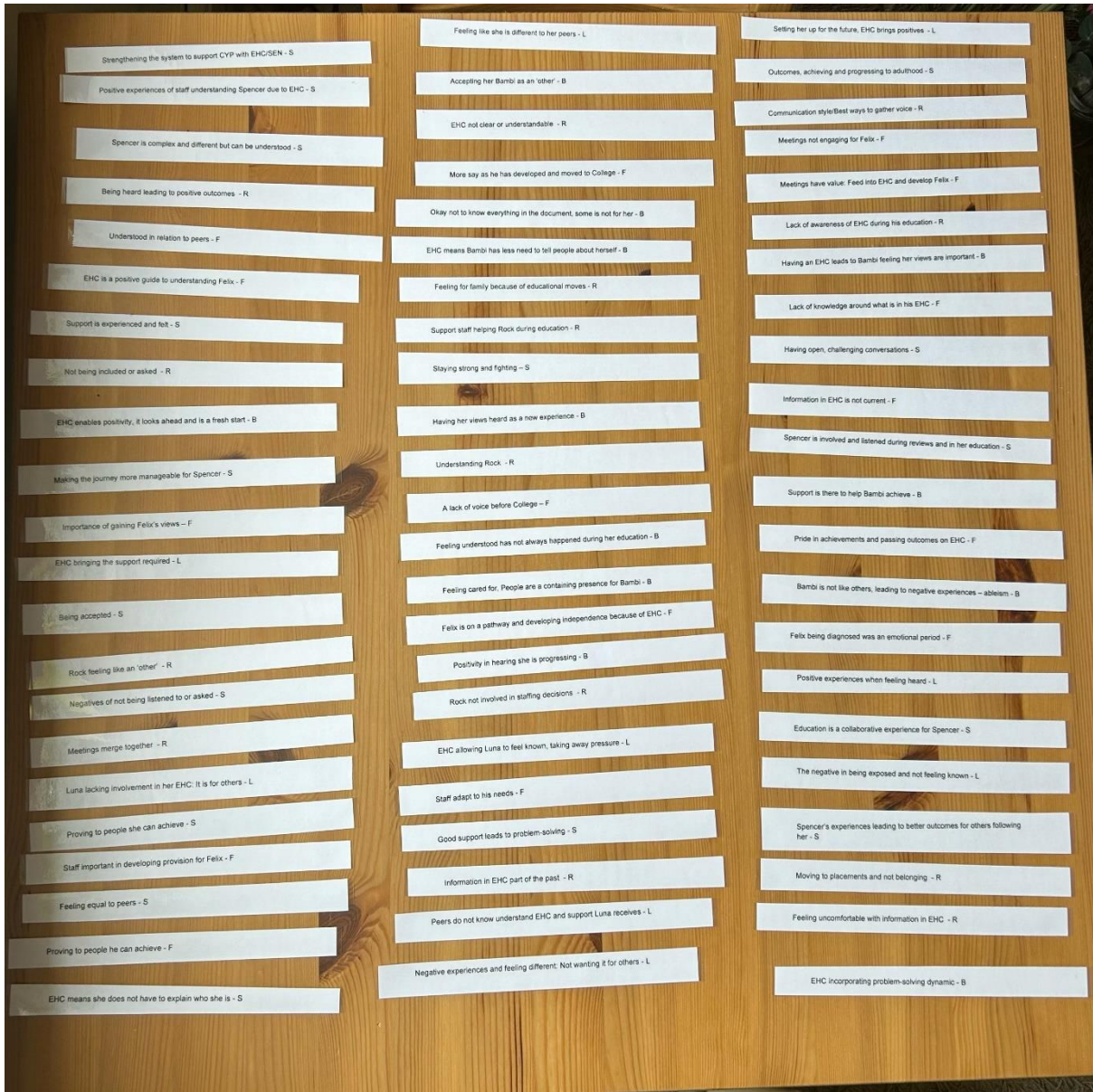
'Now obviously, um, you know, you are, um, I can remember my what, um, diagnosis that was, um, it was very, um, it was very, um, boring, but then obviously I remember, um, crying at, uh, one point'

Appendix 22: Excel spreadsheet to track progress

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1		Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6	Step 7	
2	Rock								
3	Spencer								
4	Luna								
5	Felix								
6	Bambi								
7									
8									

Appendix 23: Initial GETs grouping from participants PETs





EHC ENABLES SPENCER TO FEEL KNOWN AND UNDERSTOOD IN EDUCATION - S

EHC ENABLES FEELING KNOWN TO OTHERS - L

EHC ENABLES BAMBI TO FEEL UNDERSTOOD - B

BEING KNOWN AND UNDERSTOOD BECAUSE OF HIS EHC - F

BEING HEARD/ENGAGED IN EHC PROCESS – GOOD AND BAD - R

BEING HEARD AND HAVING VOICE - B

HAVING A VOICE AND BEING HEARD IN EHC DURING HIS EDUCATION - F

EHC AS 'SHARED' WHO HAS CONTRIBUTED AND HAD VOICE – L

BEING HEARD IN EDUCATION, HONEST CONVERSATIONS REGARDING EHC - S

SUPPORT STAFF/PROVISION EXPERIENCED PROVIDED BY EHC -

R

PROVIDING HER WITH SUPPORT AND PROGRESSING - L

EHC PROVIDES SUPPORT DURING EDUCATION - S

STAFF SUPPORTING HIM BECAUSE OF EHC AND IT BEING SHARED - F

POSITIVE STAFF RELATIONSHIPS/SUPPORT - B

THE EHC AS A DOCUMENT – HEARING AND KNOWING ABOUT IT - R

EXPERIENCE OF MEETINGS DURING EHC PROCESS - F

EXPERIENCING INFORMATION IN EHC - F

EXPERIENCE OF HEARING INFORMATION IN EHC - B

HOW ROCK IS VIEWED IN EDUCATION - R

EDUCATION REJECTING ROCK - R

FEELING OTHERED DURING EDUCATION - B

FELIX HAVING A DISABILITY - F

COMPARISON TO PEERS DURING EDUCATION – L

EHC BRINGING EQUALITY, EQUITY AND ACCEPTANCE - S

EHCs AND SEN IN SOCIETY - S

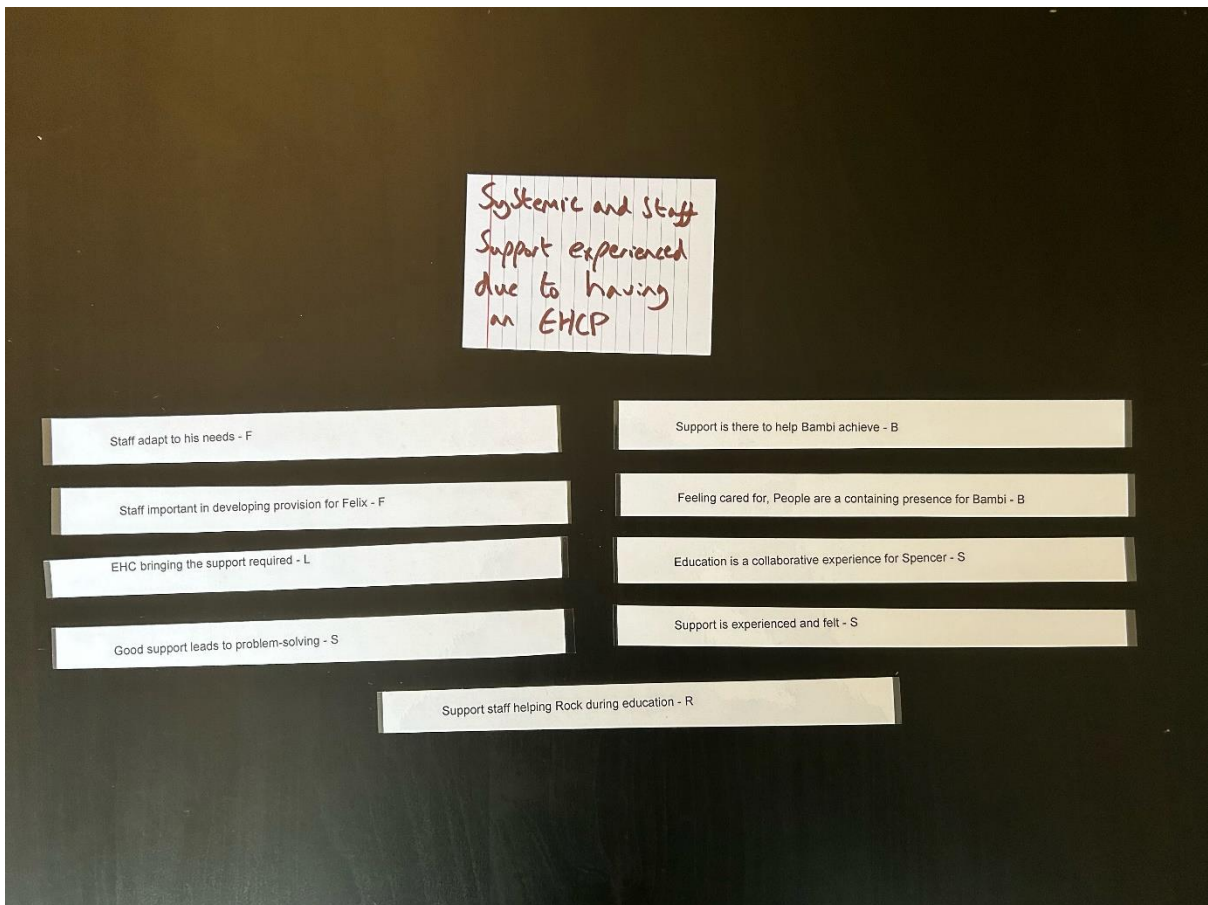
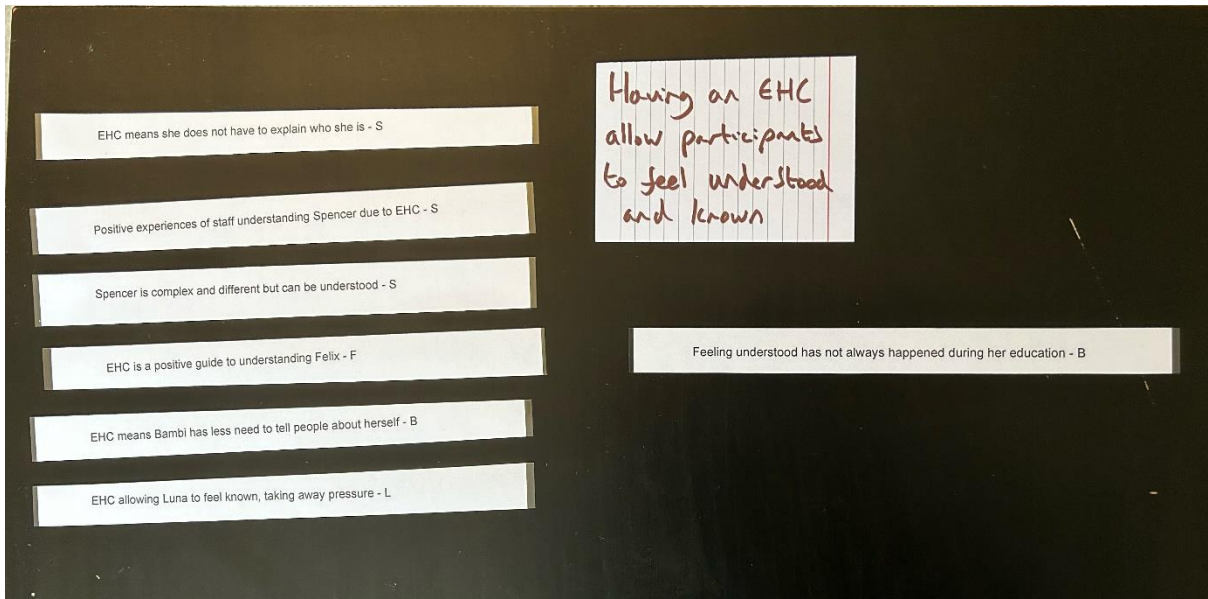
FEELING PROUD AND THE FUTURE - F

EHC LEADS TO SOLUTIONS AND FORWARD FOCUSED - B

EHC DEVELOPING WITH SPENCER - S

STRONG EMOTIONS AND BEING STRONG DURING EHC PROCESS - S

Appendix 24: GETs emerging following sorting process



EHCP represents
participants journey
it enables them
to progress

Proving to people she can achieve - S

Setting her up for the future, EHC brings positives - L

Outcomes, achieving and progressing to adulthood - S

EHC enables positivity, it looks ahead and is a fresh start - B

Proving to people he can achieve - F

Making the journey more manageable for Spencer - S

Felix is on a pathway and developing independence because of EHC - F

Experiencing Voice
While Having an
EHCP -
Good and Bad

Having an EHC leads to Bambi feeling her views are important - B

Positive experiences when feeling heard - L

Meetings have value: Feed into EHC and develop Felix - F

More say as he has developed and moved to College - F

Importance of gaining Felix's views - F

Spencer is involved and listened during reviews and in her education - S

Having open, challenging conversations - S

Being heard leading to positive outcomes - R

Meetings not engaging for Felix - F

Luna lacking involvement in her EHC: It is for others - L

Not being included or asked - R

Rock not involved in staffing decisions - R

Meetings merge together - R

Communication style/Best ways to gather voice - R

Negatives of not being listened to or asked - S

A lack of voice before College - F

Having her views heard as a new experience - B

Being an
'other' in education
with an EHCP

The negative in being exposed and not feeling known - L

Peers do not ~~know~~ understand EHC and support Luna receives - L

Feeling like she is different to her peers - L

Negative experiences and feeling different: Not wanting it for others - L

Bambi is not like others, leading to negative experiences – ableism - B

Strengthening the system to support CYP with EHC/SEN - S

Spencer's experiences leading to better outcomes for others following her - S

Rock feeling like an 'other' - R

Being accepted - S

Feeling equal to peers - S

Understood in relation to peers - F

Experience of
hearing content of
EHCP
Good and Bad

Information in EHC part of the past - R

Feeling uncomfortable with information in EHC - R

EHC not clear or understandable - R

Lack of awareness of EHC during his education - R

Lack of knowledge around what is in his EHC - F

Information in EHC is not current - F

Pride in achievements and passing outcomes on EHC - F

Positivity in hearing she is progressing - B

Okay not to know everything in the document, some is not for her - B

Appendix 25: Table of GETs (later amended slightly in the write-up and in main text)

Group Experiential Theme (GETs)	Group-level sub-themes	Participant example quotes	Participant's convergence/divergence in sub-themes
1. Experience of voice and involvement	1.1 Empowerment in having a voice in EHCP	Spencer - <i>'I get to be a participant in it, I'm not just a doll on a shelf and they're all talking about it around a table. I'm, I'm in on it and I'm at the table, I'm, uh, posing my views, I'm asking them questions, they're asking me questions.'</i> p. 29	B, L, F, S, R
	1.2 EHCP meetings and being part of the conversation	Felix - <i>'they've developed me massively, you know, they've helped me, uh, massively they've helped me really good.'</i> p. 27	F, S, R
	1.3 Past negative experiences not having a voice during education	Rock - <i>'Even the schools I could have gone to would've been different if I just had a say in things.'</i> p. 14	L, F, S, R
2. Feelings around being an 'other'	2.1 Having an EHCP/SEN in education and being compared to peers	Luna - <i>'whenever I try and explain to them, sometimes it's hard to say sometimes I'd say they do understand, but sometimes I'd say they don't, and I find it kind of really frustrating.'</i> p. 22	B, L, S, R
	2.2 Acceptance of 'otherness' – equality	Felix - <i>'it goes to show that like people with, um, disabilities, people with, um, autism and, you know, they can, they can do what, um, normal people can do'</i> p. 12	B, F, S
	2.3 Strengthening systems for the future	Spencer - <i>'she would know if someone else was to come in visually impaired, she would know how to, to cope and have those skills to be able to be comfortable.'</i> p. 26	F, S
3. EHCP as a guide to YP	3.1 EHCP is a guide to the individual	Spencer - <i>'it's like a box, like a very big box and I'm in the box and it's like everyone can see like all the information's on the walls and everyone can see it.'</i> p. 29	B, L, F, S
	3.2 Challenge when not feeling understood	Bambi - <i>'that's the most important thing because if nobody understands you, then you can't get help.'</i> p. 17	B, L, R
4. Experiencing support and relationships	4.1 EHCP enables staff/systems to adapt – meet individual needs	Luna – <i>'Well, and kind of without it, I wouldn't have had the help and that I had, um, in primary and secondary and now in college.'</i> p. 25	B, L, F, S, R
	4.2 EHCP is a joint endeavour to create positive outcomes	Felix - <i>'a lot of these people on there, on me plan with, they have like helped me and they've, and they've shaped me to where I am now.'</i> p. 26	B, L, F, S
5. Experience around YPs' progression	5.1 EHCP experienced as a path towards adulthood	Luna - <i>'to try and put me on that path and to get me into work'</i> p. 22 Felix - <i>'important because, you know, especially for someone with, um, a disability, because, because, you know, I think, I think that having that like pathway to go and achieve'</i> p. 7	B, L, F, S

6. Experience of hearing contents of their EHCP	6.1 Out-of-date and inaccessible language in EHCP	Bambi - <i>'Yes, it sounds like me, it's just put in a more filtered, an adult version.'</i> p .41 Rock - <i>'Yeah, the EHCP needs updating, when was the last time this was updated?'</i> p. 24	B, F, R
	6.2 Lack of awareness of EHCP	Felix - <i>'Um, I've seen it, a bit, but not that much.'</i> p. 9	B, F, R
	6.3 Pride and positivity	Felix - <i>'I feel as if they're, I've passed them, which is, which is actually in a way, it makes me feel quite proud to know them targets when I were little I've passed them'</i> p. 28	B, L, F, S

Appendix 26: GETs table with participants quotes related to GET/sub-themes

1. Experience of voice and involvement	1.1 Empowerment in having a voice in EHCP	Spencer - <i>'I get to be a participant in it, I'm not just a doll on a shelf and they're all talking about it around a table. I'm, I'm in on it and I'm at the table, I'm, uh, posing my views, I'm asking them questions, they're asking me questions.'</i> p. 29	B, L, F, S, R
	1.2 EHCP meetings and being part of the conversation	Felix - <i>'they've developed me massively, you know, they've helped me, uh, massively they've helped me really good.'</i> p. 27	F, S, R
	1.3 Past negative experiences not having a voice during education	Rock - <i>'Even the schools I could have gone to would've been different if I just had a say in things.'</i> p. 14	L, F, S, R

1.1

Bambi

'Yeah it doesn't happen now they always let me talk and you always like make sure I'm listened to.' p. 37

'Most important things' p. 16

'they can help with and it's just nice to have a voice and a rant, you know when you need it.' p. 32

'It was nerve-wracking' p. 10

Felix

'nowadays it's, it's, uh, vital more than ever that people, um, open up and share their, um, experiences and points of view on life, I think, I think it's right.' p. 31

'I think opening up, speaking out to people, especially with, um, educational needs is vital' p. 12

'so this will be my first year that I'll have had some involvement in it.' p. 5

Luna

'Um, I've had to fight, um, I've had to virtually fight and just to get them to listen to me and when they finally do it's like a weight that's been lifted off my shoulders.' p. 28

'I'm getting a kind of extra help and with my floristry and with my maths. Um, it's been hard and kind of getting the support, but I've got it' p. 7

Rock

'as I've got older, I've had more involvement and control over my life, but when I was younger, you don't really have a say or control of anything, I think that's, like a hurtful thing.' p. 13

'Computers are definitely the, like the best way for me to communicate because it feels a lot more com uh, comfortable than just writing it up and just showing someone than having to talk to them face to face, because some people like me, especially, I don't really like attention' p. 32

'It has an impact, but an impact on, on education, it's an impact on me, I don't think as much of an impact as it should' p.29

'Much easier, much more comfortable for me.' p. 31

Spencer

'I get to be a participant in it, I'm not just a doll on a shelf and they're all talking about it around a table. I'm, I'm in on it and I'm at the table, I'm, uh, posing my views, I'm asking them questions, they're asking me questions so it's a, you know, it's a, in a group or a one-to-one, I'm included and that's one of the things that is important to me about it, is that it's not just something that's been said about a person, it's for the person by the person. ' p. 29

'they'll ask me if I want to, um, have anything to be said about it or if I want any targets to be made myself from my point of view.' p. 5

'it just felt right sort of being able to say this is that is that, this is the way that it should be without having to have that hesitation of fear.' p. 9

'I think it was like the way that I say it was, right, because I've always been strongly stubborn and independent and wilful and moral, and it, it just felt right sort of being able to say this is that is that' p. 9

'So I think that having it is extremely necessary cause it does not just give them a voice, but it advocates for themselves, it gives them confidence, it gives them self-esteem' p. 28

'As a person it definitely makes me very, very, very independently empowered' p.12

1.2

Felix

'they've developed me massively, you know, they've helped me, uh, massively they've helped me really good.' p. 27

'they've been pretty, I'd say I'd say at that time for me boring' p. 26

'I've had you're general, uh, meetings, but, uh, yeah, I've had, I've had, uh, many. Like loads I've had' p. 27

Spencer

'we've had meetings annually, this is what's been said, this is what's been documented' p. 4

'Because in that way, it can raise any, uh, barriers or concerns that they may have regarding my learning, um, that may have been either missed or not addressed properly.' p. 23

'So we'll sit around a table and we'll just, uh, we'll talk about it, we'll go through each section separately, make sure that I understood what's there, what's been said' p. 5

Rock

'Uh only a handful of times that happened when I was, the first one I did was when I was 16' p. 12

'they basically talk about what I'm like currently and like what the plans are for my future and, to refer, they go by quite fast' p. 12

'they go by quite fast and I tend to forget them because it's kind of blurry for me' p. 12

'I don't think I have enough to say in a one to one because I don't really talk that much when people ask about me' p. 21

1.3

Luna

'Um, well, back in primary and secondary I didn't, uh, I didn't really know kind of what was going on.' p. 24

'they just, and told me and kind of what was said and what and they were planning to do.' p. 11

Felix

'I never could before I came to here, I couldn't never of told them.' p. 18

'because it was more, um, planned by my, um, education, uh, people at my primary of coming to, um, T (school)' p. 5

Spencer

'it's that and if you've got that, then it's an issue when it's not and I think that that really affects self-esteem, self-confidence, um, and overall their ability to do lot of things.' p. 28

'I have a lot of stereotypes that come with it and people assume...and I've had it like throughout life, where people have assumed that I can't talk for my own' p. 11

Rock

'Even the schools I could have gone to would've been different if I just had a say in things.' p. 14

'they just can't be arsed to listen, they all just don't take me seriously and that's it really.' p. 13

'you don't get to have a say in things and stuff, so many times in my life I've been forced to do things I don't want to do.' p. 14

'Because when people make decisions for you it's not very nice, you don't get to have a say in things and stuff' p. 14

'I'm not sure what, what support I want, I just want support that makes me feel like I'm being listened to, makes me feel comfortable, because the shoving staff in my lesson does not help if they don't know me' p. 18

'It's very mixed, I think some places listen to it and treat me well, some places listen to it and treat me bad, some places don't listen to it and treat me good, some places don't listen to it and treat me bad.' p. 29

2. Feelings around being an 'other'	2.1 Having an EHCP/SEN in education and being compared to peers	Luna - <i>'whenever I try and explain to them, sometimes it's hard to say sometimes I'd say they do understand, but sometimes I'd say they don't, and I find it kind of really frustrating.'</i> p. 22	B, L, S, R
	2.2 Acceptance of 'otherness' – equality	Felix - <i>'it goes to show that like people with, um, disabilities, people with, um, autism and, you know, they can, they can do what, um, normal people can do'</i> p. 12	B, F, S
	2.3 Strengthening systems for the future	Spencer - <i>'she would know if someone else was to come in visually impaired, she would know how to, to cope and have those skills to be able to be comfortable.'</i> p. 26	F, S

2.1

Bambi

'but as soon as you had a different thing and you weren't on the system they hated you, even if you were tiny bit different' p. 12

'and that's the names that I got in high school, that I were drunk and I were a puppet on a string, they were very nasty about it but it is just how you're seen, most people don't understand that a disability can just be like you' p. 33

'They're like instead supporting you they picked on you for being different' p. 3

'my dad don't realise how much he puts on me and how much he upsets me, but to anyone else, it will be fine, but...it hurts me 'cos he's trying to give me like vitamins all the time to try and fix my condition so I end up feeling like I'm broken' p. 31

'I've learnt from my friend, I'm not the only one that has it, it's like me and my friend go back and forwards 'cos obviously with this condition you don't fully know what it is' p. 23

'where you look like a normal person, there's nothing that is like physically wrong with you, you're a normal person, but suddenly you're not' p. 34

Luna

'...and that really, really, and kind of ticks me off because they know and kind of nothing about me, and for them to take the 'mick' I just find that unfair.' p. 5

'...and where a teacher just blurted it out to the entire class' p. 26

'whenever I try and explain to them, sometimes it's hard to say sometimes I'd say they do understand, but sometimes I'd say they don't, and I find it kind of really frustrating' p. 22

'I mean, and when I were little I didn't think and kind of anything of it and, but when I started to get a bit older, I started to question like, why was I being taken out?' p. 4

'I went home that day and I was fuming because I don't mind people knowing I've got one, but I don't want anybody to know and kind of what's on it because it's personal.'
p. 2

'then I feel bad and kind of for the other people and that need help because if I'm there and constantly asking for help and all the time and the other people don't get a chance.' p. 19

'people have asked me and what one is, and friends and stuff.' p. 12

Spencer

'but from a lot of people, I get a lot of stereotypes of, well, you can't do this because of this or you can't do that because of that' p. 18

'it's a lot of people just assume that because I can't see, I can't do things' p. 24

Rock

'I'm not really keen on having autism because it massively effects the way I get along in life and I feel like it's gonna be like that for the future, as you grow older, I feel like you learn to cope with it more' p. 8

'No, no. definitely, people just think I'm just like a normal person, where I get along with me like, like that, um, it doesn't work like that for me.' p. 19

'People who are, I guess not as independent as others, I can't or don't see the, the world the same way as other people do.' p. 7

'I was kicked out of the previous one for some reason or another, some of them were my fault, some them weren't' p. 4

2.2

Felix

'it goes to show that like people with, um, disabilities, people with, um, autism and, you know, they can, they can do what, um, normal people can do' p. 12

Bambi

'It just really awkward but when you get over it and you get over that hell, you feel a bit better cos you achieve something.' p. 42

Spencer

'being able to be inclusive, being able to make sure that I'm able to contribute as well as other people within the class.' p. 4

'very empowered because it allows me to have something that represents me as a person, not just focusing on my disabilities' p. 13

'I like this because it gives me independence, dignity, and it allows me to be a person instead of an object.' p. 23

'it makes me feel equal to others because it makes me feel like I can fit into society without having to go, oh, I can't do this, so you're gonna have to do it for me.' p. 23

'this is what needs to be done to be able to make sure that that person thrives in an environment that they love.' p. 27

'It gives me the right to live as an equal person, the right opportunities, so I'm not out-casted as that diverse person with special needs.' p. 11

'I think it was like the way that I say it was, right, because I've always been strongly stubborn and independent and wilful and moral,' p. 9

2.3

Spencer

'having these skills will build me not just as a person, but as a human being and will allow me to support others further, not just with my own conditions, but with everyone in general.' p. 24

'but also as an advocate for others, my role in this is powerful and it is honest and it is needed and it's right because that's what it is' p. 26

'she would know if someone else was to come in visually impaired, she would know how to, to cope and have those skills to be able to be comfortable.' p. 26

'it allows me just in general to educate people alongside not just my peers, but elder tutors that may have taught me or maybe have taught someone else that's similar to me throughout the years' p. 13

Felix

'I think it's amazing because I think, you know, to go out there and then show people who you are... given me opportunity to go out there to share my, um, experiences and so other, uh, people, you know, you know, look, look, it's fine, it's okay' p. 32

3. EHCP as a guide to YP	3.1 EHCP is a guide to the individual	Spencer - <i>'it's like a box, like a very big box and I'm in the box and it's like everyone can see like all the information's on the walls and everyone can see it.'</i> p. 29	B, L, F, S
	3.2 Challenge when not feeling understood	Bambi - <i>'that's the most important thing because if nobody understands you, then you can't get help.'</i> p. 17	B, L, R

3.1

Bambi

'the teachers know about your condition and about your needs. So you cannot, you're not in a class and you feel awkward.' p. 14

'but I'm guessing cos I'm on the system now, she's just looked into my case, so it's like straight away she like have a different, she adjusted to me straight off so it's good 'cos you don't feel any anxiety and distress' p. 45

'the EHCP they like made sure it didn't happen again. That's why I think I can speak more to people because they understand me, because they know about condition and when they don't know it's like K (staff) goes in and talks to them.' p. 14

'It feels a lot better 'cos I just feel like I can be myself, be just Bambi, I can turn up' p. 44

'So they sent me straight home and its things like that where they consider your ability and your mental capacity that makes them better because they care about you.' p. 30

Luna

'as the teachers and tutors know and that I've got like a kind of additional needs and kind of without me and having to tell them.' p. 8

Felix

'and yeah and then, and then also obviously what's what's needed for me in terms of, um, health-wise and what's, uh, and obviously when my, um, levels and whatnot on there to.' p. 3

'it's great that for this, you know, for people like yourself can see what, what, you know, other people need' p. 4

'I'd say it's been, it's been, uh, important, yeah, I mean, I mean, I think, you know, uh, every obviously educational setting I've been to, I've obviously had, I've had it with me, uh, and, and I think it's been, um, a massive, uh, part of me' p. 31

'it's your life that, that you're gonna, um, lead into it and it's, and it's obviously, it's a part of me.' p. 6

Spencer

'it's like a box, like a very big box and I'm in the box and it's like everyone can see like all the information's on the walls and everyone can see it.' p. 29

'but then I had it and it made my life a whole lot easier, because then I've got, uh, I can, you know, say to the tutor that I've got an EHCP plan, you can look at it, these are all my needs' p. 3

'because I always say that I have a range of disabilities and each one of those in particular do impact or influence multiple areas all at once.' p. 7

'So I'm not there stressing about it or repeating myself or, you know, um, having to...physically...sort of go through that process of right, this is my name, this is what I need, da, da, da, because it's right here' p. 29

'so having it documented in the EHCP does me a favour because then I'm not constantly repeating myself' p. 16

'I'm not getting stressed because I do sometimes, um, other people won't know of my condition so I have to sit down, have half an hour with them and explain what it is and how that affects my life' p. 16

'like a jigsaw to get a rounded person, like a person-centered approach, about the person just to get them overviewed.' p. 20

'it is a very important thing because it's got all the information as needed, so if anyone needs to look, they can say, right, I found this information, and now we can find solutions to help her.' p. 2

3.2

Bambi

'that's the most important thing because if nobody understands you, then you can't get help.' p. 17

'Yeah it helps to be known. because it were like Chinese whispers in high school.' P. 15

Luna

'...and if he had and taken the time and to actually read it, then I don't think, I don't think that incident, um, would've happened' p. 26

Rock

'because every place I've been to, not every place abides by the EHCP, some places I've been to will pay more attention to it than others, but some, some of the places I've been to just simply, don't care about it.' p. 28

'It's trying to make education more comfortable and easier for people who have special needs, because every place I've been to, not every place abides by the EHCP' p. 28

4. Experiencing support and relationships	4.1 EHCP enables staff/systems to adapt – meet individual needs	Luna – ‘Well, and kind of without it, I wouldn't have had the help and that I had, um, in primary and secondary and now in college.’ p. 25	B, L, F, S, R
	4.2 EHCP is a joint endeavour	Felix - ‘a lot of these people on there, on me plan with, they have like helped me and they've, and they've shaped me to where I am now.’ p. 26	B, L, F, S

4.1

Bambi

‘I think it happens, but I'm not aware, ‘cos it is like I talk to J, I talk to K (staff), it's just like a normal conversation, like how are you today?’ p. 27

‘If I have any problems, I've just had to, like, message on teams to J or to K (staff) and it's like they have my back or they send someone to have my back.’ p. 8

‘It's just me and J (staff) like to talk about that is kind of stuff so she is making sure I feel well, It's just to make sure I'm mentally well.’ p. 37

‘I feel like J and K (staff) are like my friends and they're the teachers, but they're like my friends and that's sort of nice to have.’ p. 28

‘but I know if I have a really bad day or if I'm not walking well I can lean on them.’ p. 29

‘I meet other PAs and sometimes K (staff) just do you know goes to the side with him and says she's got this, it affects this, this, and this and then done!’ p. 14

‘but K and J understand, um, more about me that's why they also dip into personal because my family don't get my condition or my stresses’ p. 31

Luna

‘Well, and kind of without it, I wouldn't have had the help and that I had, um, in primary and secondary and now in college.’ p. 25

‘I'm getting a kind of extra help and with my floristry and with my maths. Um, it's been hard and kind of getting the support, but I've got it’ p. 7

‘In primary and secondary I had like adults and kind of learner support, uh, workers like in nearly like every, like every lesson, but since I'm getting to college, I've had

them and less and less, it's been hard to kind of grasp, but I think I'm doing all right and kind of being kind of on my own' p. 18

'but I just like somebody just assigned to me because I find that easier' p. 19

Felix

'Yes, I do, I feel, um, I think, uh, yeah, I feel, um, I, I, the support is great here. I think, I think it is good.' p. 23

'because they try to explain sort of in a, in a way that you understand and you would get' p. 24

'experiences and so other, uh, people, you know, you know, look, look, it's fine, it's okay, you're not on your own' p. 32

Spencer

'if I've got a problem, um, I'll go to like J (staff) and they'll always be aware, not just like a negative, oh, well it's a problem that's, you know, we can't really do anything about that' p. 1

'and having that support within the classroom, having learning support sat next to me and teaching me and, and taking notes and being able to sit with a one-to-one through the support of the an EHCP, which is provided by the college has definitely helped me as a person to grow and develop and change' p. 7

'a one-to-one through the support of the an EHCP, which is provided by the college has definitely helped me as a person to grow and develop and change.' p. 7

'I think it is, like, there's definitely like enough support, definitely the right type of support. Yeah. Um, I love it 'cos it's like the, even though there might be like a problem, there's always a solution.' p. 1

'which I think is extremely important and it is needed in every school, college, university, whatnot, it is needed to ensure that every single student gets the right support.' p. 25

'it is important because it's not just a document on a paper, it's a lesson in itself, that's the way I put it. It's something that can be used on a daily basis supporting others to support students' p. 24

'it's important because if my needs weren't met appropriately, then I would not be able to flourish in terms of academics, in terms of social skills, um, and in terms of just learning in general' p. 4

'and I think that having the EHCP and all of them coordinate, uh, make sure that every, every base is covered' p. 23

'Because in that way, it can raise any, uh, barriers or concerns that they may have regarding my learning, um, that may have been either missed or not addressed properly.' p. 23

'it definitely, without a doubt does make our lives a whole lot easier in every aspect.' p. 23

Rock

'Definitely sounds helpful, but if I was to have one to one support, I'd be more for like, it'd be more for more my self-development than, uh, learning and helping me get work done' p. 22

'they kind of put it kind of vaguely and expect you to figure it out, ermm so like I need a support to like break it down for me to make it, make it understandable to me.' p. 22

'Yeah, it's happened here actually, especially like end of the year when they're still organising staff around and stuff, it's always staffing the lesson, but that's mostly gone now I've got the same staff now so okay.' p. 18

4.2

Bambi

'this college is connected to each other, they don't abandon each do ya know department, they all like link up at some point.' p. 15

'Yes me and my mom had to do it, our 'sens' to send it off to K and then when I found, like, came in last year, um, K sat down when me and my parents go through it again.' p. 10

Luna

'it would be my mum and sometimes as my dad and kind of whenever he can get the time off work. Um, and then it would be, and teachers that I had, um, and then it would be people like from the council and stuff that kind of deal with, and kind of additional needs and stuff like that.' p. 10

'both of my parents and have been involved, but it's always been, and kind of my mum and sometimes my dad' p. 6

Felix

'a lot of these people on there, on me plan with, they have like helped me and they've, and they've shaped me to where I am now.' p. 26

'Um, but yeah, so it'll be looking at that and it'll be, and it's, and and, um, um, making sure that we've, that we've fulfilled every criteria on there.' p. 6

'so I mean, I've been involved a bit, but like when I were obviously younger, it'll have been my, my, my, um, education team and the team at my schools and obviously my Mum that put that together.' p. 11

Spencer

'sort of different institutions, you could say in society. Uh, me, my mum, uh, my key worker, uh, my other support like LSAs, uh, tutors, um, heads of department' p. 6

'and just different professionals that have somewhat inclusiveness into my care.' p. 6

'having the EHCP plan and having everyone, um, not just write it but contribute to it from their point of view will allow them to bring together their point of view about how they think that I'm doing' p. 22

'Uh, me, my mum, uh, my key worker, uh, my other support like LSAs, uh, tutors, um, heads of department' p. 6

'which I think is extremely important and it is needed in every school, college, university, whatnot, it is needed to ensure that every single student gets the right support.' p. 25

5. Experience around YPs' progression	5.1 EHCP experienced as a path towards adulthood	Luna - 'to try and put me on that path and to get me into work' p. 22 Felix - 'important because, you know, especially for someone with, um, a disability, because, because, you know, I think, I think that having that like pathway to go and achieve' p. 7	B, L, F, S
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5.1

Bambi

'The first time you're doing something it is very difficult, maybe sometimes it takes quite a couple of times to get through work and then when you're over it you are like, Oh, I can do this now' p. 43

'college may do you know went above and beyond to help me and support and, and it's just they knew about my bad past so they went above and beyond to try and do you know, make sure that's past' p. 18

'I'm too disabled for a normal job, but I don't wanna sit around and do nothing.' p. 1
'what K (staff) is trying to put into place is she's trying to push me out and do you know, make me go out with friends and that' p. 41

Luna

'Well...I wouldn't have achieved and what I've achieved. Yeah, because in secondary I ended up passing kind of half of my GCSEs, um, I got a C and kind of in most of them um, I got a couple of merits and stuff like that in College, um, I've got a few and kind distinctions and merit and stuff like that.' p. 25

'to try and put me on that path and to get me into work' p. 22

Felix

'given me that, um, that sense of, uh, um, independence that I didn't really get in my, in my old school. Um, uh, it's, uh, you know, it, it, it is given me, um, you, it, it is given me the choice and, and chance to me obviously, um, and new friends' p. 2

'it's like helped me and actually shaped me to actually be, you know, to be half decent.' p. 18

'important because, you know, especially for someone with, um, a disability, because, because, you know, I think, I think I that having that like pathway to go and achieve' p. 13

'I think it's, uh, it's a much, much, uh, need needed to help them along the path.' p. 7

'because there's always gonna be bumps on the road and stuff that doesn't go well while you're getting there, but I mean that, um, planning, knowing how, how you can take them steps to get to where you want to be is vital, it's vital.' p. 13

'my condition is made me want to go out there and prove people wrong. Uh, you know, it is made me want to challenge myself and push myself to, to the limit really.' p. 8

Spencer

'my plan to ensure that my journey through education is smooth sailing. Um, 'cos at the end of the day, it doesn't just help me, it also helps further, you know, journeys' p. 26

'because it allows that person to be informed of the things that I can do and the things that I might need help with and building on that they can know, and then they can build on that themselves' p. 12

'So having those goals within the EHCP and allowing everyone to see them will allow them to build me as a person' p. 19

'will enable me to, uh, move on and graduate and get a job and learn skills that I haven't had in the past.' p. 23

'they'll do something that they think that I can't do, but it's important in the EHCP plan to make sure that they know that I can do it because it gives me independence.' p.

11

'will give me skills to help me, will, will overall be my further, wider support network to ensure that the goals are met.' p. 19

6. Experience of hearing contents of their EHCP	6.1 Out-of-date and inaccessible language in EHCP	Bambi - 'Yes, it sounds like me, it's just put in a more filtered, an adult version.' p. 41 Rock - 'Yeah, the EHCP needs updating, when was the last time this was updated?' p. 24	B, F, R
	6.2 Lack of awareness of EHCP	Felix - 'Um, I've seen it, a bit, but not that much.' p. 9	B, F, R
	6.3 Pride and positivity	Felix - 'I feel as if they're, I've passed them, which is, which is actually in a way, it makes me feel quite proud to know them targets when I were little I've passed them' p. 28	B, L, F, S

6.1

Bambi

Yes, it sounds like me, it's just put in a more filtered, an adult version.' p. 41

Felix

'some are still true, but the, but the rest of them they've I'm way, way, um, ahead of that, I feel.' p. 30

'I'd say most of these targets that are on here, I think are, are well I'm well past.' p.

18

Rock

'Yeah, the EHCP needs updating, when was the last time this was updated?' p. 24

'I'm not sure what it means by that.' p. 25

'I can't really contribute much since it's not like subject to change because it's just part of history, so I can't really like go back in time and change that' p. 11

'Some of it is, some of it isn't, but the only things that I really think that aren't is the things that are outdated.' p. 26

'I don't think it's really explained much in here, but, um, I don't have a very good attention span' p. 27

6.2

Bambi

'its tough to say, but stuff I don't know that's getting reported down, which I'm fine with, I'm fine with it' p. 40

'I only had it coming into college. I didn't have it in high school I got told do you know the person that sorts out the disabilities and everything?' p. 5

Felix

'Um, I've seen it, a bit, but not that much.' p. 9

'I, uh, was interested by some of the, um, topics that we've talked about on there and stuff like that.' p. 28

Rock

'I wasn't that aware of it because I don't think schools or teachers or anyone makes it really aware that you have one' p. 4

'I don't really understand much about the EHCPs.' p. 6

'I felt quite uncomfortable because I didn't know that, uh, everything I, I'd been through was documented.' p. 5

'but you should really take it with a grain of salt since this doesn't explain everything, like I don't want people to read that and like think oh, right, so he is like only socialise on his own terms, so that means he might only, like he might be like, want things or demand things, and it's like, that's not true. I don't want people to make assumptions based on just a little bit of info about me.' p. 10

'It's supposed to be a thing like, is it like a government thing or is it just a council thing? I think it's like a government thing and it's their way of like helping people who need, need it.' p. 7

6.3

Bambi

'I'm building towards it, I just haven't completely got there, but when you look from where I started to today, completely changed that's really good' p. 35

Luna

Um, it's better than how it sounded and when I were in a primary and secondary school already, uh, well in primary secondary school, it just, it used to focus and on the negatives.' p. 15

Felix

'I feel as if they're, I've passed them, which is, which is actually in a way, it makes me feel quite proud to know them targets when I were little I've passed them' p. 28

'but the most of these things now I'm able to do myself, I'm able to do it now.' p. 21

'you know, you know, look, look, it's fine, it's okay, you're not on your own go and go and fly.' p. 32

Spencer

'I think to me they are important, I think it empowers me to achieve them.' p. 18

'I think having that in the plan itself is important about that information about who I am um, is necessary, because it's, you have to take an holistic approach, not just, uh, a private sectioned off one' p. 10

Appendix 27: Table to track analysis of each participant (Nizza et al, 2021)

Markers of High Quality IPA Analysis

Bambi

Quality indicator	Brief description
Constructing a compelling, unfolding narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Narrative of Bambi's story is encouraged and prompted as evidenced in transcript - Linear reading/re-reading in step 1 of the analysis allowed me to begin to understand her narrative - Quotes selected and grouped as experiential statements as part of the analysis - Relating words to the interpretation of experience allowing the story to be told and heard - Reflection document after interview reflecting on Bambi's narrative explored
Developing a vigorous experiential and/or existential account	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experiential statements linked to text and lines of text recorded - Constant checking of PETs and sub-themes via self-editing process - Discussion with colleagues using IPA methodology about PETs and explaining why I have selected them - Re-evaluation of PETs a constant process and more viable using printed notes during the analysis
Close analytic reading of participants' words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Notes made during the interaction with the transcript text constant throughout analysis - Acknowledgment and reference to the double hermeneutic process when engaging with the text - Use of highlighter, underlining and bolding when text is of specific interest - Metaphors, idioms and other interesting examples of describing personal experience highlighted and discussed with colleagues when required - Constant reflection and reassessment of text throughout the steps of analysis, using physical and computerised copies
Attending to convergence and divergence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creation of GETs tables following step 7 of the IPA section in which I zoomed out and considered convergence of experiences for participants as well as divergence - Constant editing during the process using physical copies of GETs, both themes and sub-themes - Quotes relating to themes of convergence displayed in GETs documentation with page numbers present to refer back to the original transcript - Adherence to the idiographic nature of analysis alongside individuals' experiences, exploring GETs in a way that does not make claim to find a 'group norm' as explained during the analysis section of write-up

Spencer

Quality indicator	Brief description
Constructing a compelling, unfolding narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Narrative of Spencers' story is encouraged and prompted as evidenced in transcript - Linear reading/re-reading in step 1 of the analysis allowed me to begin to understand her narrative - Quotes selected and grouped as experiential statements as part of the analysis - Relating words to the interpretation of experience allowing the story to be told and heard

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reflection document after interview reflecting on Bambi's narrative explored
Developing a vigorous experiential and/or existential account	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experiential statements linked to text and lines of text recorded - Constant checking of PETs and sub-themes via self-editing process - Discussion with colleagues using IPA methodology about PETs and explaining why I have selected them - Re-evaluation of PETs a constant process and more viable using printed notes during the analysis
Close analytic reading of participants' words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Notes made during the interaction with the transcript text constant throughout analysis - Acknowledgment and reference to the double hermeneutic process when engaging with the text - Use of highlighter, underlining and bolding when text is of specific interest - Metaphors, idioms and other interesting examples of describing personal experience highlighted and discussed with colleagues when required - Constant reflection and reassessment of text throughout the steps of analysis, using physical and computerised copies
Attending to convergence and divergence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creation of GETs tables following step 7 of the IPA section in which I zoomed out and considered convergence of experiences for participants as well as divergence - Constant editing during the process using physical copies of GETs, both themes and sub-themes - Quotes relating to themes of convergence displayed in GETs documentation with page numbers present to refer back to the original transcript - Adherence to the idiographic nature of analysis alongside individuals' experiences, exploring GETs in a way that does not make claim to find a 'group norm' as explained during the analysis section of write-up

Luna

Quality indicator	Brief description
Constructing a compelling, unfolding narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Narrative of Lunas' story is encouraged and prompted as evidenced in transcript - Linear reading/re-reading in step 1 of the analysis allowed me to begin to understand her narrative - Quotes selected and grouped as experiential statements as part of the analysis - Relating words to the interpretation of experience allowing the story to be told and heard - Reflection document after interview reflecting on Bambi's narrative explored
Developing a vigorous experiential and/or existential account	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experiential statements linked to text and lines of text recorded - Constant checking of PETs and sub-themes via self-editing process - Discussion with colleagues using IPA methodology about PETs and explaining why I have selected them - Re-evaluation of PETs a constant process and more viable using printed notes during the analysis
Close analytic reading of participants' words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Notes made during the interaction with the transcript text constant throughout analysis - Acknowledgment and reference to the double hermeneutic process when engaging with the text - Use of highlighter, underlining and bolding when text is of specific interest

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Metaphors, idioms and other interesting examples of describing personal experience highlighted and discussed with colleagues when required - Constant reflection and reassessment of text throughout the steps of analysis, using physical and computerised copies
Attending to convergence and divergence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creation of GETs tables following step 7 of the IPA section in which I zoomed out and considered convergence of experiences for participants as well as divergence - Constant editing during the process using physical copies of GETs, both themes and sub-themes - Quotes relating to themes of convergence displayed in GETs documentation with page numbers present to refer back to the original transcript - Adherence to the idiographic nature of analysis alongside individuals' experiences, exploring GETs in a way that does not make claim to find a 'group norm' as explained during the analysis section of write-up

Rock

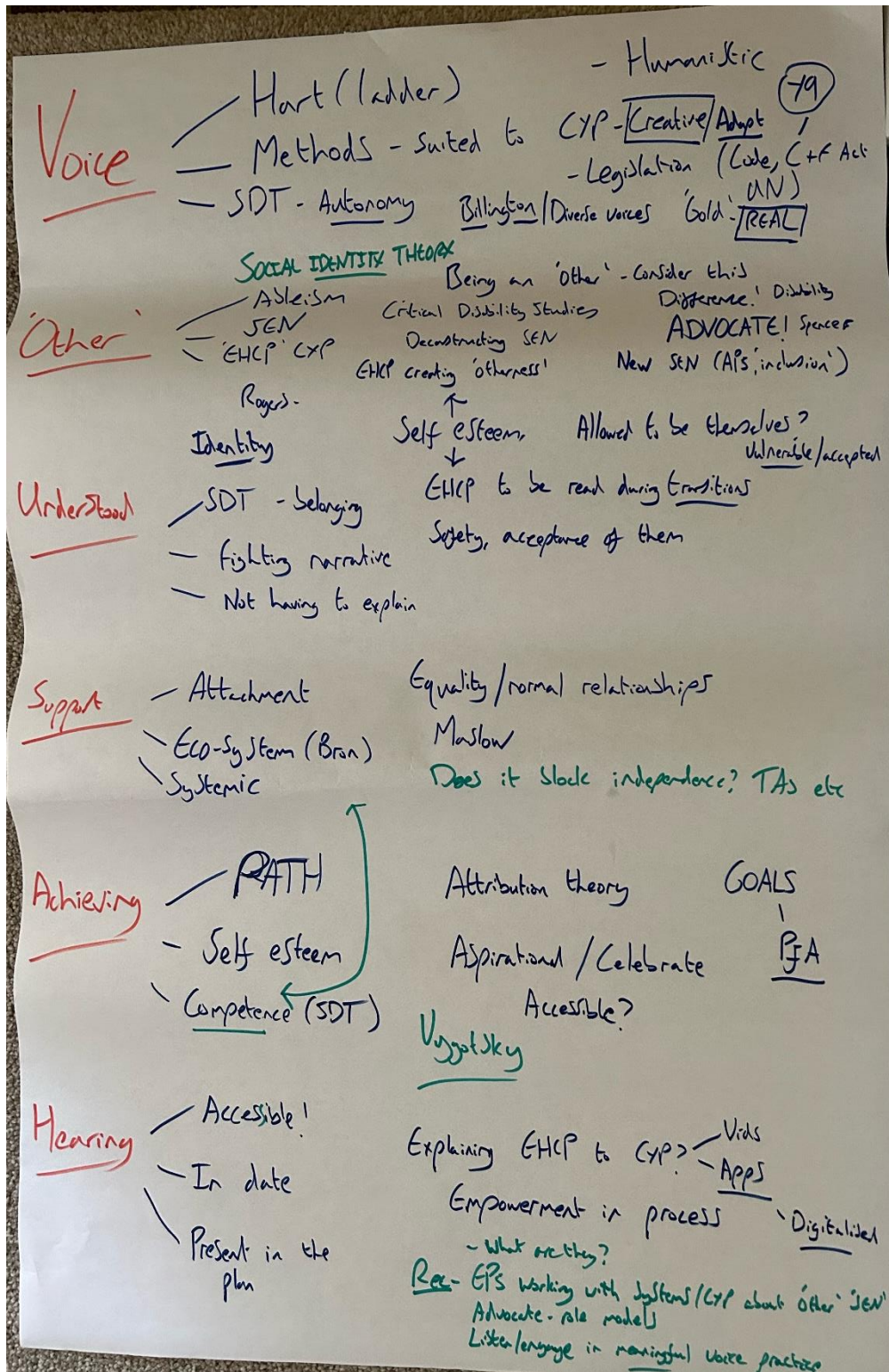
Quality indicator	Brief description
Constructing a compelling, unfolding narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Narrative of Rocks' story is encouraged and prompted as evidenced in transcript - Linear reading/re-reading in step 1 of the analysis allowed me to begin to understand her narrative - Quotes selected and grouped as experiential statements as part of the analysis - Relating words to the interpretation of experience allowing the story to be told and heard - Reflection document after interview reflecting on Bambi's narrative explored
Developing a vigorous experiential and/or existential account	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experiential statements linked to text and lines of text recorded - Constant checking of PETs and sub-themes via self-editing process - Discussion with colleagues using IPA methodology about PETs and explaining why I have selected them - Re-evaluation of PETs a constant process and more viable using printed notes during the analysis
Close analytic reading of participants' words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Notes made during the interaction with the transcript text constant throughout analysis - Acknowledgment and reference to the double hermeneutic process when engaging with the text - Use of highlighter, underlining and bolding when text is of specific interest - Metaphors, idioms and other interesting examples of describing personal experience highlighted and discussed with colleagues when required - Constant reflection and reassessment of text throughout the steps of analysis, using physical and computerised copies
Attending to convergence and divergence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creation of GETs tables following step 7 of the IPA section in which I zoomed out and considered convergence of experiences for participants as well as divergence - Constant editing during the process using physical copies of GETs, both themes and sub-themes - Quotes relating to themes of convergence displayed in GETs documentation with page numbers present to refer back to the original transcript - Adherence to the idiographic nature of analysis alongside individuals' experiences, exploring GETs in a way that does not

	make claim to find a 'group norm' as explained during the analysis section of write-up
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Felix

Quality indicator	Brief description
Constructing a compelling, unfolding narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Narrative of Felix's story is encouraged and prompted as evidenced in transcript - Linear reading/re-reading in step 1 of the analysis allowed me to begin to understand her narrative - Quotes selected and grouped as experiential statements as part of the analysis - Relating words to the interpretation of experience allowing the story to be told and heard - Reflection document after interview reflecting on Bambi's narrative explored
Developing a vigorous experiential and/or existential account	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experiential statements linked to text and lines of text recorded - Constant checking of PETs and sub-themes via self-editing process - Discussion with colleagues using IPA methodology about PETs and explaining why I have selected them - Re-evaluation of PETs a constant process and more viable using printed notes during the analysis
Close analytic reading of participants' words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Notes made during the interaction with the transcript text constant throughout analysis - Acknowledgment and reference to the double hermeneutic process when engaging with the text - Use of highlighter, underlining and bolding when text is of specific interest - Metaphors, idioms and other interesting examples of describing personal experience highlighted and discussed with colleagues when required - Constant reflection and reassessment of text throughout the steps of analysis, using physical and computerised copies
Attending to convergence and divergence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creation of GETs tables following step 7 of the IPA section in which I zoomed out and considered convergence of experiences for participants as well as divergence - Constant editing during the process using physical copies of GETs, both themes and sub-themes - Quotes relating to themes of convergence displayed in GETs documentation with page numbers present to refer back to the original transcript - Adherence to the idiographic nature of analysis alongside individuals' experiences, exploring GETs in a way that does not make claim to find a 'group norm' as explained during the analysis section of write-up

Appendix 28: Mind-mapping example of discussion ideas



Appendix 29: Qualitative rigour grid (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011)

<p>Credibility</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanation of the process around developing research questions in the literature review • Explanation of recruitment process, why steps were taken and areas such as ethics, safeguarding and consent discussed and evidenced • Evidence of the research journey featuring pictures of processes, documents outlining thought processes and development of PETs for each participant and overarching GETs, always referring back to transcripts/quotes • Findings section details the interpretation of participants' experiences, earlier transcripts evidence exploratory commenting and experiential statement development • Documented discussions with RS, cohort colleagues, and extracts of the reflective diary throughout the thesis
<p>Transferability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description given of each participant in pen profile portrait, thought given to providing them with anonymity by using pseudonyms • Inclusion criteria for the sample explained in the procedure section of the thesis, all participants fell into the homogenous sample • Reasons for focusing on a specific geographical region explained, i.e. wanting to carry out face-to-face interviews • Transferability of findings discussed tentatively as IPA invokes and idiographic philosophy, GETs highlight connections of experiences and individual participants always referenced in each GET and sub-theme
<p>Dependability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thesis provides a step-by-step account of research journey from beginning to end • Literature review outlines why the study is important and a gap in the literature • Procedure chapter explains how and why participants were selected • Explanation of how data was collected and the analysis steps that took place in the Procedure/Research sample chapters • How the analysis developed documented and pictures provided in the appendix of random samples from each participant • Discussion/conclusion sections linking to previous literature and psychology related to findings with references
<p>Confirmability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanation of my role, as a researcher, in the methodology chapter, reflecting on how I influence the research and how participants might interact with me • Took stance of 'naïve listener' during interviews, as explained in procedure • Documented discussions with RS, cohort colleagues, and extracts of the reflective diary throughout the thesis • Examples of personal reflection after each interview logged in the appendix section

Appendix 30: Reflection boxes typed from paper notes during research (Shepherd, 2006)

Reflection (02/09/22):

It has been interesting and at times challenging to find literature to discuss in the review. Because I know which area I want to focus on it is important that I discuss a wide range of research and psychology involved in my area of interest. Once I found these putting it all together, and presenting it in a way that makes sense and importantly connects to my topic is a skill, one that I am still trying to develop.

I think looking through the literature, especially in post-16 and EHCPs specific literature has made me feel invigorated in the topic, I am glad I bought the Apter et al (2018) book which focuses on EPs work with 16-25 year olds, it has given me some good insights and allowed me to consider EP work in this area further.

It also has been impactful in highlighting that this is an area of research that will be valuable, I was worried that topic area might be too broad but I actually think that makes it even more interesting and worthwhile. EHCPs are sort of assumed to be a 'good' thing by the people that have created them but we need to ask the people who actually have them what it is like to have one, I am quite passionate about this and this review has been beneficial in me developing ideas and seeing it as a real avenue to explore. I just need to do it in a way that makes sense, and develop the study to meet the aims of the research questions.

Reflection (23/09/22):

Following a research supervision I have been considering what I am looking to achieve with this study. My RS discussed with me that what might be enlightening is the experience of the YP in the room as we go through their EHCP. The document may be a springboard for further inquiries about what it is like to be them, how they are experiencing the content of the document in the room. The intention is to get to a point where they are in that moment not only reflecting at the time, but also being asked to reflect their educational experiences, through the lens of the EHCP.

It may be that I can open up lines of inquiry as the interview (assuming I use this method) progresses and ask them what it is like to be hearing this? what do they know about it? how were they involved in certain parts? (i.e. child voice sections) and what happened for them?. In this sense I am interested in them in the moment, with the opportunity to look back at their past and interpret how it feels for them to have an EHCP. This could be enlightening, as long as I stick to the principles of IPA. I am trying to situate them in that experience...what does it feel like to be you?

My mind has been active since this supervision, my reflection is I need to plan well, crucially sticking to the IPA structure. My comfort in chaos and messy situations may help me in this sense, I actually prefer things to be this way most of the time, and it does not fluster me to not have an outright 'plan' but these are things to consider.

Reflection (29/09/22):

It is challenging to develop questions for the semi-structured interviews. A task is making sure that I am clearly following IPA methodology guidelines. Making sure it relates to my research questions. My supervisor explained that I must use interview questions that focus on a person's lived experience, helping them, and me. Getting closer to what it is like to be living/experiencing something. I am not seeking to get their thoughts, ideas or reflections about the EHCP journey.

This is a delicate balance and one I am considering while I put my interview questions together. It will be important I use appropriate prompts that open up ideas about their experience when interviewing my participants. I will need to run ideas past my RS and use a pilot to develop my interview technique appropriately. It is important I constantly remind myself of the IPA philosophy and all that entails.

As Smith et al., (2022) explain; 'Remember you are trying, as far as possible, to allow the participant to tell you what it is like to live in their personal world' (p. 58).

Reflection (14/10/22):

First interview with young person today (Jimmy) -14/10/22. This interview will be a pilot and I agreed to carry out the interview at his house, as agreed by him and family the week before. It was a positive experience and Jimmy was accommodating. I have outlined my immediate thoughts below –

- I had my semi-structured interview questions with me but looked at them sparingly during the interview
- Trying to stick to the structure I found challenging as a novice
- Was specifically attempting to use open-ended questions based on experiences, i.e. tell me more... how did that feel...
- In the moment it can be challenging to stay on track and do the IPA method of questioning
- This will be a good experience to reflect on as I progress
- Some questions Jimmy could not answer and made a gesture, which is not obvious on an audio recording
- I need to think about how I ask questions as I do more interviews
- Picking up on threads that require explanation means active listening is essential in these situations
- I did wonder about how Jimmy felt hearing the descriptions of him in his plan
- It was challenging to know when to end, I should not keep 'digging' like I am looking for treasure but will work on how I end interviews
- It is important to have participants who can verbalise well, I will keep developing my interview style
- Doing it at Jimmy's house felt comfortable for him, he did not appear distracted and was willing to answer all questions

This was a valuable experience and will enable me to further develop my interview schedule after reflecting. I am looking forward to listening back and noting things to prepare me for future analysis.

Reflection (04/11/22):

Recruiting participants for my study is continuing and I feel I am on schedule to recruit YP who have EHCPs in my local College. I had a meeting with an EHCP coordinator there (01/11/22) and am going in next week to meet a few potential participants she suggested and felt would enjoy this type of project. I am positive and am hoping this will be a successful process. It has been important to clarify it is important the YP are able to verbally communicate in an interview scenario.

I have always believed it will be important to meet potential participants first, begin building rapport and explain my project to them. I can then contact parent/carers to inform them and send opt-out forms to them for YP who do want to be involved.

This process has made me feel a little anxious at times mainly due to the time it takes to get to the point that I can interview YP. I am learning about research and this is an area I have been reflecting on recently. There are various 'layers' you have to go through to 'get to' the YP. If I were interviewing staff, as an example this would not be the case, the process would be easier I believe. However, I feel this will make my research important in the end and getting to those YP who have EHCPs takes time and patience, but will be worth it. This might be a reason why there is not much literature on YPs opinions of EHCPs and their experiences I hope this research will be important.

Though it is taking time I am positive about my current situation. The colleges I am working with have been helpful and engaged. The potential mismatch in my eagerness to get going and being considerate of the College's position in taking time to engage the YP is an interesting factor to reflect on. The combination of patience while encouraging the setting to move forward is a skill. I do believe that having this preparation time has allowed me to refine my semi-structured interview questions style, I want to do data collection and write about IPA for my methodology section this will only benefit me in the long term.

Reflection (06/12/22):

I have completed six interviews with YP who have EHCPs. For each one I went through the consent procedures, gained consent from them and informed consent from parent/carers. For each interview I have recorded using a Dictaphone and laptop, downloading them onto my password-protected google drive afterward. I have also used an audio transcription service to document my audio files and provide me with written accounts of the interviews. After doing this I have then re-listened to the interviews and edited the transcripts. I have found this to be a successful way of documenting interviews after recording.

Reflecting on the interviews, I have some mixed feelings. It has been wonderful to meet this YP and have found them all to be willing to engage in the interviews to varying degrees. Some participants had lots to say about their experiences whereas some it took more skill to prompt and inquire about, my interview skills definitely developed as a result of this. In fact, I think the last interview I did was the time at which I had a much better idea of how to dig for those experiences, using follow up questions, prompts and focusing on certain IPA related lines of enquiry.

I kept to a similar structure throughout the interviews –

- 1) general inquiries about education having an EHCP and experience
- 2) reading through the EHCP with participants and searching for prompts around provision/outcomes/needs etc
- 3) attempting to reflect in the room about that experience of hearing about themselves.

I wonder if this worked as well as I imagined it might, I feel all had different levels of knowledge and awareness of the plan in general. I often was searching for words and not trying to influence or use 'loaded' language. I think I may have used the word 'important' too much, it is up to them to contemplate whether something is important, I should not lead in these cases.

I wonder if I got much from these interviews in terms of their experiences, and thus fitting with IPA methodology. It will be interesting to explore this during the analysis stage of my study. Overall, I am grateful for the YP time and most of them were happy to talk and engaged brilliantly. I have already learned a great deal about research, interview techniques and building rapport. One thing I will never get used to is hearing my own voice of audio!

Reflection (06/01/23):

I have begun analysing my interviews. I have decided to mix the order in which I analyse them, doing them two at a time. The 7 steps suggested in the IPA book is the method I have decided to follow, as a novice researcher having this structure feels comforting.

The exploratory comments and experiential statements can sometimes cross over, I am still learning about the differences between them and developing my IPA practice. I am aware that going over the data a few times helps with the rigour around my research so I have hand-written my notes afterwards inputted them on the computer, this is allowing me to look at the notes again and amend when necessary.

It is quite enjoyable doing this process. I was worried during the interviews that I was not getting answers that related to my research questions, it appears this was not the case, even small comments can have experiential relevance regarding my research. I have completed steps 1, 2 and 3 for two interviews (Spencer and Rock), the next step is to begin grouping the themes and naming them, I am excited to see what comes out of this analysis and am learning at a quick rate.

Reflection (13/02/23):

Today I have completed the seven steps of the IPA analysis phase for five interviews. It has been intense, and I hope, thorough process that has brought about six overall group themes, as explained in step 7 of the new IPA book.

As I have gone through the analysis I have tried to follow all of the ideas and strategies explained in the book. It has felt enlightening at times and also complex, going in and out of the transcripts, checking and re-checking my understanding of participants experiences has required a lot of time and at certain points felt a little overwhelming. I understand now how the process does become for about the 'I' in IPA as you progress, however it is important that you often go back and check the transcripts so you are still grounded in the data.

I have been using physical, laminated copies of participants experiential statements, PETs and GETs. I have made effort to photograph these processes as I have progressed so to keep an audit trail around my analysis. This has been challenging at times but I have been wedded to the process and experienced those 'aha' moments when seeing patterns and themes emerge, this is has been a highlight. I now understand the reason the authors of the book emphasise zooming in and out of the participants transcripts for example, there is nothing better than the process of actually trying to do something to learn on the job. At points where I have found things challenging I have taken myself away to give myself fresh perspective when I come back, this has worked overall I believe.

It has taken time and I have been mindful not to rush the analysis, stick to the process and not take shortcuts. Setting small targets/deadlines has helped me stay motivated whilst aiming to stay on track. What seemed like a mammoth task slowly became smaller and more manageable as I followed the process (my house is now a mass of paper and scribbles!).

Next, I will double-check my GETs with some colleagues who are also using IPA, as well as talk with my supervisor about my work. I feel positive and enthusiastic about my work and the upcoming write-up. I hope I have adhered to IPA values and have some research that is interesting and may be impactful for CYP who have EHCPs.

Reflection (03/03/23):

I have found it useful to look at past examples of the write up on findings chapters. Along with finding previous thesis' that have used IPA, I have been speaking to my cohort 'IPA group' and re-reading the IPA texts. The examples in previous work and the books has been helpful in my constructing of this chapter.

During a supervision my RS explained that the chapter should be coherent and contain complexity, connecting themes need to be interwoven into the text and it should not just be a descriptive account of the participants words but invoke my interpretations of what the experiences might be like for them. An important part of the hermeneutic circle is taking place here.

I have gone through each main theme and sub-theme in which I have put them in my themes table. I found this to be simple way of doing it and it once again enabled me to edit/amend as I went along. I did enjoy this process, I felt connected to the participants once again, I think during the analysis section you lose that sense a little. I was checking back to my transcripts and actually, at some points, adding more to the selected quotes, so they made sense to the potential reader. Some quotes felt a little out of context so an aim is to make them not only readable but understandable, it is after all my chance to really show my findings to an audience for the first time.

I did not add references to this section though this may change as I re-draft. I sent a copy to my supervisor to look at and advise. I am unsure about how I should deal with divergence in my write-up at his point. I have some themes that do have convergence but am cognoscente that IPA is not about finding a 'norm', it is about investigating diverse experiences as well, and representing this in the study.

I do have some ideas for my discussion section, I think areas of psychology and practice are standing out and will be discussed in this section. My plan is to move to this section next after a brainstorming session.

Reflection (20/03/23):

Having completed my analysis I have been completing my Discussion chapter. I felt it important to outline in my introduction to the chapter that though I am discussing GETs I am still fundamentally committed to this study embracing its idiographic nature. I am not looking for or extrapolating 'group norms', I am embracing convergence and divergence in my participants' accounts, I felt this important to say because I would feel uncomfortable if I did not make this clear. I think this is because my participants did have different experiences and I want to acknowledge this, to me this is vital to always keep in mind.

My discussion points I divided into the GETs themes and attempted to discuss each individually, using the participants' names throughout so I am referencing them, keeping them in mind when discussing. At first I did not put their names in but when I read through I re-considered this as it felt impersonal, when in reality this study is about these YP so I feel an obligation to reference them and keep them 'present'.

I attempted to link the discussion to theory, I made rough notes of which GET might relate to which theory and took it from there. I then spent time with each GET and read through various books and journals that I believe relate to them. For the theme of 'other' I spoke to an EP in my service who completed her thesis on this area, I found that really useful. This was challenging and I felt this chapter has been the most challenging so far.

Linking to theory was okay but there is often so much I could say and link to I am unsure of what is relevant and perhaps what is not, in this sense I have a feeling of not really being sure if I have done this section well. Self-Determination theory is a theme across the discussion, covering all three of the principles. This theory has come in a lot of Post-16 research so that is pleasing (I think), though I believe there is much more in this research of note that I need promote. I have ideas about implications for practice and that will be my next section to begin.

Reflection (03/04/23):

Following my discussion section I have been writing the final chapter, covering conclusions, recommendations and limitations. I actually found this part quite fun and creative, it was a point where because I had worked hard during my analysis and then linked findings to theory I could then think wider about what this might all mean. In this sense I am looking for my 'golden thread' through the study and then suggesting what this means and what might be useful for professionals working with CYP with EHCPs to do, I found it quite invigorating and exciting!

It is a practical part of research and it is nice to have things to talk about, always coming from the participant's experiences, then suggesting recommendations, I even created a tentative framework related to SDT linking to PfA because SDT was such a presence throughout the analysis. It felt positive to start rounding up what I have researched and reached a stage where I can confidently say what this might mean and what EPs and other professionals could do.

I do think at this point there is a nagging feeling about what I could have done to improve the study, I mention in my limitations about perhaps involving the participants more in the creating of recommendations, for example. This would have been valuable, but as a novice researcher there is a sense that 'I do not know what I do not know' here, next time doing research I might be more aware of avenues like this I could potentially take.

I feel my recommendations are all related to my findings, which is important. I am not making claims that cannot be linked back to findings, though I might want to I could not say they were part of my research. I had thought about suggesting an EHCP online or in-setting community, where CYP can share their views and experiences with other CYP with EHCPs but do not think I could have said this was a finding. Might be interesting to explore though.

I have really enjoyed doing this research, I have been through the full gambit of emotions throughout but have always tried to embrace every moment, no matter how challenging. At times when I have felt I have not been making progress I have reflected and spoken to helpful colleagues who have reassured me. I have also made sure I have taken breaks and come back to my work with 'fresh eyes' at certain points. It has been a journey for me, I hope this research has a place in the literature about EHCPs and spawns further research for CYP with them to help develop practice around them. I feel I have attempted to find some answers to all my research questions, so have stuck closely to my aims for this research.

Appendix 31: Developed SDT/PfA framework following analysis

SDT	Practices/ways of promoting construct <u>in</u> Educational setting	Practices/ways of promoting construct <u>outside</u> of Educational setting	Areas to focus on up to next review
<u>Autonomy</u>	Employment: <i>(example – CYP searched for jobs in session related to their interests)</i>	Employment: <i>(example – CYP volunteered at a local charity shop during the Summer)</i>	
	Independent Living: <i>(example – CYP encouraged and supported to buy own lunch during trip)</i>	Independent Living: <i>(example – CYP has begun to take responsibility for washing clothes at home)</i>	
	Community Inclusion: <i>(example – CYP took part in group project relating to areas of interest)</i>	Community Inclusion: <i>(example – CYP has joined a football team in the local community)</i>	
	Health Pathway: <i>(example – CYP took part in mental health session at College and researched themselves)</i>	Health Pathway: <i>(example – CYP attended dentist appointment independently after arranging themselves)</i>	
<u>Competence</u>	Employment:	Employment:	
	Independent Living:	Independent Living:	
	Health Pathway:	Health Pathway:	
<u>Relatedness</u>	Employment:	Employment:	
	Community Inclusion:	Community Inclusion:	

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