A qualitative study of specialist schools’ process of eliciting the views of young people with Autism Spectrum Disorders towards planning for their transition to adulthood

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Final word count: 18,991 (excluding appendices)
Abstract

A systematic review of the literature that explored the processes and perceived effectiveness of qualitative methods used to elicit the views of young people with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) about their educational experiences was conducted. Studies that were identified and screened using a trialled evaluation checklist and synthesised using the PRISMA guidelines identified data collection methods that were perceived to be useful. Limitations such as the over-representation of participants who were able to engage in verbal discussion and the lack of detailed description and evaluation of data collection methods were also identified.

A multiple case study research was then conducted to explore two special schools’ processes of eliciting the views of secondary school-aged pupils with ASD about their transition to adulthood and its perceived effectiveness. Qualitative data from semi-structured interviews with the school’s staff and an observation of a transition meeting were gathered and thematically analysed individually, then compared and contrasted within school level. The findings revealed that both schools’ processes of eliciting young people with ASD’s views about transition to adulthood is a long process which involves three phases and is underpinned by a person-centred ethos. Perceived strengths and limitations of the process were also identified.

Dissemination of the study’s findings will include presentations and consultations with key stakeholders such as mainstream and specialist secondary schools and local authority post-16 steering group to explore the utility of the findings in different contexts. Collaboration with other educational psychologists (EPs) will also be conducted to explore this study’s implications in the way they support schools in eliciting the views of young people with ASD.
Declaration

I declare that no portion of the work referred to in this thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.
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Acknowledgement

They say that ‘it takes a village to raise a child’. I must say that it took a special group of people to help me write this thesis. First of all, I would like to thank my wife Sarah for the unparalleled patience, support and love she has given me since my undergraduate thesis until now.

I would also like to thank my parents, sister, in-laws and Chichi for their continuous support and encouragement. Their belief in me helped me through the difficult times.

To my supervisor, Dr. Caroline Bond who remained calm and patient throughout my journey – thank you. Caroline showed me that it is possible to make time for those in need, despite an extremely busy schedule. Thank you Caroline for helping me grow as a researcher and as a practitioner.

I would also like to thank the wonderful individuals who participated in my study. Thank you for showing me what is possible.

Lastly, I would like to thank Dylan. Working with you throughout the years helped me develop my idea for this thesis. You and your family have shown me that anything is possible, and that despite the difficulties we face, we should always keep smiling. I am hoping that the information in this thesis will be of some help for you in the future.
Paper 1:

‘A systematic literature review of qualitative research methods for eliciting the views of young people with ASD about their educational experiences’

Prepared for in accordance with author guidelines for submission to the European Journal of Special Needs Education (Appendix 1).

Word Count: 7,649 (including references)
Abstract

Recent systematic reviews have found that the participation of adolescents and young people with ASD within research is limited despite an increasing international recognition of the importance of incorporating the views of all children and young people on matters that affect their lives.

The purpose of this current systematic review was to explore the mechanisms, processes and perceived effectiveness of the methods used to elicit the views of young people with ASD about their educational experiences within qualitative research studies. Databases such as ASSIA, web of knowledge, PsychInfo and web pages were searched for relevant studies between November 2015 and January 2016. 12 identified studies were then screened using a trialled evaluation checklist and synthesised using the PRISMA guidelines.

The current review identified data collection methods that were perceived to be useful in eliciting the views of young people with ASD about their educational experiences. Limitations such as the over-representation of participants who were able to engage in verbal discussion and the lack of detailed description of data collection and evaluation were also identified. Practical and research implications are also discussed.

Key words: Voice of the child; participation; autism spectrum disorder; ASD; research methods
A systematic literature review of qualitative research methods for eliciting the views of young people with ASD about their educational experiences

Introduction

All young people have the right to be included in making informed decisions on matters that will affect their lives (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989). This has been highlighted in government guidelines and legislation in many countries, for example New Zealand (Youth Participation Guide; Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2008), the USA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2004) and England (Special Educational Needs Code of Practice; DfE, 2014). Although views about the importance of the child’s voice and how this can be ethically elicited to inform provision has changed over time, their contribution continues to be essential. As such, professionals have an obligation to develop and use appropriate means of gaining the views of all participants regardless of their abilities. However, individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) are still being excluded in decision making, consultations and research (Pellicano, Dinsmore, & Chapman, 2014).

Specific supports such as Talking Mats (Cameron & Murphy, 2002) and inferential approaches (Ware, 2004) have been developed and used in research contexts to support pupils who struggle to communicate. However, such papers consider children and young people with (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) SEND as a homogeneous group and consequently overlook the effects of specific difficulties relating to social interaction which are experienced particularly by individuals with ASD (Norwich & Lewis, 2001). However there is still uncertainty surrounding effective methods for eliciting the views of children and young people who have ASD (Whyte, 2006) and research into the perceptions of
educational support for these students predominantly involves gathering the views of their parents, and not enough efforts are made to include the views of the students themselves (Baric et al., 2015). The absence of the views and perceptions of individuals with ASD within the literature is well documented, and as Milton (2012) stated, this has created a knowledge-base about ASD which is informed by non-autistic others and imposed upon people with ASD. Milton (2012) therefore questioned the reliability of this knowledge-base and called for an increase in the inclusion of individuals with ASD in the knowledge-construction about their experiences as well as the support they need.

**Potential issues in gathering and representing the voice of children and young people with ASD**

ASD is characterised by impairments in social communication and interaction skills, as well as having restricted, repetitive and stereotyped behaviour and interests (American Psychological Association, 2013). Lewis (2009) proposed that ASD’s diagnostic criteria could influence the assumptions of researchers regarding the individuals’ ability to participate, which in turn limited their inclusion in research. In a study by Haas et al. (2016), adults with high-functioning Autism (HFA) and Asperger’s Syndrome (AS) reported that the major deterrents for their participation in research include practical issues such as travel time and time required to complete activities, perceived ‘tokenism’, insensitivity of researchers, lack of opportunities to decline aspects of the research and a limited choice of modes of participation.

Within education, Norwich (1996) proposed that pupils have needs that are common to all, needs that are shared with some others and needs that are unique to each individual. This applies to individuals with ASD who as a group share some common characteristics but as individuals possess their own unique set of limitations.
and strengths (Wing, 1993). This, in addition to the changes in the definition of autism and the increasing heterogeneity of this population makes understanding the individual’s perspective and needs crucial (Runswick-Cole, Mallett & Timimi, 2016). Research should therefore take into account common needs of those with ASD, for instance their right to have their views heard, as well as their individual needs, such as specific accommodations they require to communicate.

Previous studies identified potential difficulties when eliciting the views of children with ASD. Preece and Jordan (2010) reported that the children and young people with ASD were less likely to initiate interactions used language in an idiosyncratic way and struggled to identify and express emotions. Other barriers include young people’s concrete thinking, reluctance to change and ability to access abstract or future questions (Beresford et al., 2004). Lastly, Winstone et al. (2014) warn that due to the power imbalance between participants and researcher, some children and young people with ASD may think that there is a single right answer to every question that researchers ask. Consideration of these potential limitations is therefore crucial when developing methods to actively engage individuals with ASD in research.

Researchers such as Lewis (2009) propose that using statements as opposed to questions; including more closed rather than open-ended questions and repeating questions may help increase understanding and engagement of individuals with ASD. Morris (2003) suggested that researchers should include pupils with ASD in the development of their interview schedules through piloting and adjusting following their feedback. Lastly, most individuals with ASD are motivated by using technology devices as they are easy to control and explore in their own terms (Porayska-Pomsta et al., 2012). There is also growing evidence that indicates that technology-aided instruction and intervention produce positive outcomes across key areas of
functioning and is likely to have potential for communicating views both in
education and in research contexts (see Bond et al. [2016] and Parsons et al. [2011]
for detailed reviews of ASD interventions, including those that are technology-
based).

Loyd (2013) cautioned that obtaining informed consent from children and
young people with ASD needs to be carefully planned. She proposed that doing so
should entail an individualised approach which includes providing information to
participants through the means within which they communicate such as though
Widgit literacy symbols (Detheridge, Whittle & Detheridge, 2002) and/or Social
Stories (Gray, 1998); ensuring on-going assent, and allowing each participant to
speak with the researchers at any point during the study to discuss what their
participation entails (BPS, 2010).

McLaughlin and Rafferty (2014) found that there is still a tendency for
researchers’ analyses and interpretations of the views of individuals with ASD to be
influenced by diagnostic criteria, for instance presenting findings under headings that
relate to characteristics that define diagnoses. McLaughlin and Rafferty (2014) and
Milton (2012) suggested that researchers should aim to accept the views of their
participants as truth since they are the experts in knowing about their own
experiences instead of interpreting them as confirmation of their diagnostic criteria.
However, changing researchers’ preferred means of analysis can be challenging since
choices of methodology and conceptualisations of knowledge stem from individuals’
ontological and epistemological positions (Scotland, 2012). At the very least,
researchers should acknowledge and report these biases and the limitations they
present.
The current study’s rationale and Literature Review Questions:

As McLaughlin and Rafferty (2014) pointed out, there is a wealth of literature about the experiences of younger children with ASD but not so with adolescents and young adults. Furthermore, the majority of the existing literature that focuses on the perspectives of children and young people with ASD neither describes nor evaluates their data collection tools, which limits the likelihood of replication and/or further refinements of their methods. This paper therefore aimed to build on McLaughlin and Rafferty’s efforts to highlight the experiences of adolescents and young people with autism. While McLaughlin and Rafferty’s review focused mainly on researchers’ analyses and interpretations of the views of adolescents with AS, the current paper adopts a broader focus as it provides a systematic review of qualitative studies that elicited the views of young people with ASD about their experiences in education to answer the following questions:

(1) What qualitative methods have researchers adopted to elicit the views of young people with ASD about their experiences in education?

(2) To what extent were these methods evaluated?

Methodology

The researcher and the researcher’s supervisor adopted an evaluative approach, which was derived from their critical realist epistemological position (Appendix 2) in order to understand the processes and mechanisms that enable the participation of young people with ASD in research. Initial scoping of the literature revealed that quantitative studies (for instance Locke, Ishijima, Kasari & London, 2010; Van Roekel, Scholte & Didden, 2010) describe and explore the process of participation much less than qualitative studies. In addition, while the author and the author’s
supervisor acknowledge the potential contribution of studies that adopted a mixed-method approach to this review, none were identified during the initial screening phase. The author and his supervisor therefore focused on qualitative research studies to illuminate how emerging methods might enable participants with a range of needs to convey their experiences and engage in the research process (Milton, 2012). This focus also enabled consideration of perceived effectiveness of each method, and implications for practice as it was anticipated that this review will be of use to practitioners given the increase in policy guidance stressing the importance of gaining the views of young people with ASD.

**Literature search strategy**

The current review adopted a systematic and rigorous search strategy that was guided by the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses (PRISMA), a 27-item checklist for identifying empirical studies (Moher, Liberatu, Tetzlaff & Altman, 2009). Although quantitative studies were excluded at several points during the process the checklist provides an overview of the range of work in the field and outlines the transparent process for identifying included studies. Figure 1 below outlines each stage of the literature search process
**Identification of studies**

Five databases Applied Social Science Index and Abstract (ASSIA), Web of Knowledge, PsychInfo and Education Resources Information Centre (ERIC) and, Google Scholar) were systematically searched from November 2015 until January 2016 to gather relevant studies. Terms for communication, autism, means of gathering the young people’s views, study participants, education and experience were combined to systematically search for papers (see table 1). This stage also involved searching for relevant references from the studies identified through searching the databases (reference harvesting) and consultations with colleagues.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Terms related to communication</th>
<th>Terms related to ASC</th>
<th>Terms related to means of gathering pupils’ voice</th>
<th>Terms related to participants</th>
<th>Terms related to education</th>
<th>Terms related to experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>communicat*</td>
<td>autis*</td>
<td>facilitat*</td>
<td>Student*</td>
<td>school</td>
<td>experienc *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participat*</td>
<td>ASD</td>
<td>gather*</td>
<td>Pupil*</td>
<td>education</td>
<td>* evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>view*</td>
<td>ASC</td>
<td>collect*</td>
<td>Child*</td>
<td>college</td>
<td>perception *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>voice</td>
<td>PDD-NOS</td>
<td>elicit*</td>
<td>Young</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perspective</td>
<td>Asperger</td>
<td></td>
<td>Person</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consult*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>adult</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>teen*</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The database search yielded 695 studies while reference harvesting and consultations returned 32 studies, which resulted in a total of 727 studies. A total of 588 studies were identified once duplicates were removed. 540 studies were excluded as most of them were opinion pieces (non-empirical papers), meta-analyses or systematic reviews. The abstracts of the remaining 48 studies were examined in relation to the seventh criteria indicated below which led to a further 25 studies being excluded as the majority solely collected quantitative data, while others focused on the participants’ experiences outside of education. This in turn yielded 23 studies to be examined by reading full texts.
Screening and inclusion criteria

The 23 included studies were screened using the following inclusion criteria:

(1) Published in a peer reviewed academic journal
(2) Written in English
(3) Reported primary data
(4) Includes qualitative data
(5) Published from 2000 onwards
(6) Includes at least one young person with ASD aged between 11-25 years. This age range was chosen as it reflects the changes in the UK’s SEN Code of Practice which state that pupils with SEND should begin planning for transition to adulthood at age 11 and because most young people with SEND transition to adult services after the age of 25 (DfE, 2014).
(7) Primary focus upon the views of young person/ people in relation to their experiences in education

A total of 11 studies were excluded as they failed to meet the inclusion criteria (see Appendix 3). The remaining 12 studies that met the inclusion criteria were subjected to the next stage which involved the assessment of eligibility.

Assessment of quality

Gough’s (2007) process for assessing research quality (Weight of Evidence A) and focus (Weight of Evidence C) was followed. As this was an investigative review, only Weight of Evidence A (WoE A) and WoE C were adopted. Methodological
quality (WoE A) was assessed using the scoring framework developed by Bond, Woods, Humphrey, Symes and Green (2013) (Appendix 4). This framework was adopted as it provides an indicator of research quality based on an integration of the criteria set by two established frameworks for evaluating qualitative studies (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1992; Spencer, Ritchie, Lewis & Dillon, 2003). While the current author and his supervisor acknowledge that the criteria are open to researcher interpretation, this limitation was addressed through inter-rater checking.

This framework gave credit in relation to the following 12 criteria:

1. Appropriateness of design
2. Clear sampling rationale
3. Well executed data collection
4. Analysis that was close to the data
5. Emergent theory related to the problem
6. Evidence of explicit reflexivity
7. Comprehensiveness of documentation
8. Negative case analysis
9. Clarity and coherence of reporting
10. Evidence of researcher-participant negotiation
11. Transferrable conclusions
12. Evidence of attention to ethical issues.

Studies received scores of 1 (indicating full alignment), 0 (indicating no alignment) and 0.5 (indicating partial alignment) for each criterion. Since the studies
included in this review were conducted with community samples, similar to those reviewed by Bond, Woods, Humphrey, Symes and Green (2013), their ‘cut off’ scores were adopted in this study. As such the studies that received a total score between 0-4 were considered ‘low quality’, 5-8 ‘medium quality’, and 9-12 ‘high quality’.

Inter-rater reliability

A Cohen’s kappa inter-rater reliability score of 0.93 was achieved following an independent scoring and moderation of three out of the 12 studies included in this review by both the author and the author’s supervisor (see Appendix 5). This high level of inter-rater agreement (Robson & McCartan, 2015) allowed the author to score the remaining eight papers independently.

Appropriateness of focus

All of the included studies were also evaluated for their ‘appropriateness of focus’ in relation to the research questions posed for this review (Weight of Evidence C; Gough, 2007). Since individuals with ASD are a heterogeneous group and that previous research suggest there is not a single ‘gold standard’ method of data collection (Lewis, 2009; Wing, 1993), the author and his supervisor decided to review studies in relation to the following criteria:

1. The extent to which the researchers described the participants’ characteristics beyond their age (for example participants’ language abilities, social interaction and cognitive skills)

2. An explicit evaluation of the data collection methods used
Clear descriptions of the studies’ sample, as well as evaluation of the methods used are important for the advancement of knowledge through replicating the studies and applying the research findings into practice (Robson & McCartan, 2015). Studies that met both criteria were evaluated as having ‘high methodological appropriateness’, whereas those that met only one were evaluated as having ‘medium methodological appropriateness’. Studies that did not meet any of the criteria were evaluated as having ‘low methodological appropriateness’. The studies were scored after an agreement was reached between the author and his supervisor regarding their interpretation of the criteria through discussions during on-going supervision.

Findings

Overview of the studies

All 12 studies were deemed eligible for the review, due to the small number of studies that met the inclusion criteria; the exploratory nature of this literature review (see table 2 for descriptive summaries of each study) and the variability in scores for methodological quality and appropriateness. The studies were all published in peer reviewed journals between 2007 and 2015. Eight studies were conducted in the United Kingdom, two in Australia (Harrington, Foster, Rodgers & Ashburner, 2013, Sagers, Hwang & Mercer, 2011), one in Singapore (Poon et al., 2014) and one in Belgium (Van Hees, Moyson, & Roeyers, 2015). One study was conducted by a practising social worker (Harrington, Foster, Rodgers & Ashburner, 2013) two by educational psychologists (EPs; McLaughlin & Rafferty, 2014; William & Hanke, 2007) and the rest of the studies were conducted by academic researchers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Sample (who and how many)</th>
<th>Aim focus</th>
<th>Data collection method(s)</th>
<th>Selected themes/findings</th>
<th>Limitations</th>
<th>Apparentness of Focus (WoE)</th>
<th>Quality assessment score (WoE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barrow &amp; O'Sullivan (2012)</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>What young people with autism feel is valued</td>
<td>1 semi-structured interview, 1 focus group</td>
<td>Communication, social skills, independence</td>
<td>Distincting</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>4.5, Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obrien &amp; Reddy (2009)</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Post-school transition experiences of young people with and without ASD</td>
<td>1 focus group interview, 1 focus group, 1 semi-structured interview</td>
<td>Communication, social skills, independence</td>
<td>Distincting</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>4.5, Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latham, Carter, &amp; Ashburner (2013)</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Views of pupils about mainstream education</td>
<td>1 semi-structured interview with visual support</td>
<td>Communication, social skills, independence</td>
<td>Distincting</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>6, Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lodi (2015)</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Teaching approaches that facilitated drama outcomes</td>
<td>10 pupils aged 16-18 diagnosed with autism at an FE college</td>
<td>Communication, social skills, independence</td>
<td>Distincting</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>6, Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Descriptive summaries of included studies
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Study Title</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>Key Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>McLaughlin &amp; Rafferty (2014)</td>
<td>Explore the lived experiences of young people with AS</td>
<td>• 1 female and 5 male pupils in years 10-13 (ages not specified) diagnosed with AS</td>
<td>1 semi-structured interview</td>
<td>• Pupils with ASD were able to participate meaningfully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Having AS feels like) something has been taken away from me – participants expressed anger for having AS, felt regret for their past behaviours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>(Having AS) does something to me – academic benefit, the possibility to change behavior; AS is a part of their identities.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>A desire to be normal – to have a choice on how they let other perceive them; the usefulness of others' support.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fitting in – effects on relationships</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Mitchell & Beresford (2014) | Views of young people regarding post-16 transition | • Sample: 18 VP aged 15-25 with HFA/AS  
• 4 female; 14 male | 1 standard semi-structured interview | • Need for a lead coordinator and emotional support  
• Different stages – different needs  
• Parents important role  
• Learning support not always available/ matched to the level available in school  
• Need to develop social skills,  
• Travel training  
• Practitioner needs to be known and reliable. |
| United Kingdom       |                                                                               |                                                                              |                                                                          |                                                                             |
| Poon et al (2014)     | Perspectives of students with HFA attending mainstream secondary school       | • 4 students aged 12-16:  
• 1 female; 3 male  
• 2 Asperger's Syndrome; 2 HFA | Standard semi-structured interview  
Observation in school before the interviews | • Negative, neutral, positive constructions of the HFA label  
• Description of an ideal friend  
• Difficulties with classmates  
• Bullying  
• Fear of failure – but not all |
<p>| Singapore            |                                                                               |                                                                              |                                                                          |                                                                             |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggers, Hwang &amp; Mercer (2011)</th>
<th>Educational experiences of adolescents with autism</th>
<th>9 high school students aged 13-16; 7 male; 2 female; 7 Asperger's Syndrome; 2 ASD</th>
<th>2 standard semi-structured interviews</th>
<th>Teacher, curriculum, support and environmental characteristics; Friendships/relationships with peers; Teasing and bullying</th>
<th>9; High</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shepherd (2015)</td>
<td>Evaluation of methodological approaches used in listening to the views of pupils with ASC</td>
<td>1 male pupil, with HFA and MLD, final year of secondary schooling</td>
<td>Semi-structured interview with practical activities; 30-min interview at home; Waiting interview at college</td>
<td>Use of tablet was helpful; Walking interview helped take the pressure off the social interaction; Participant led</td>
<td>3; Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Van Hees, Muyzen &amp; Reysse (2015)</td>
<td>Challenges for students with ASD during transition to HE</td>
<td>17 men; 6 women aged 18 and over who have attended HE for at least one year; Diagnosed with ASD, no intellectual disability</td>
<td>1 standardised semi-structured interview</td>
<td>Importance of individualised support: effects of transition and college on mental health and educational and daily living challenges</td>
<td>7; Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William &amp; Hanke (2007)</td>
<td>Views about the important features of school provision</td>
<td>15 participants with ASD - 8 Primary; 7 secondary (gender not specified); Aged 6-14</td>
<td>Interviewed using the 'ideal self-school' technique</td>
<td>Ideal school environment; staff characteristics and pupils' activities and feelings; Non-ideal school feelings</td>
<td>4.5; Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Quality appraisal (Weight of Evidence A and C)**

Table 2 above shows that four of the studies were judged as being of ‘low methodological quality’, five were judged as ‘medium methodological quality’ while only McLaughlin and Rafferty (2014), Saggers, et al. (2011) and Humphrey and Lewis (2008) were judged as ‘high methodological quality’. Only three studies were evaluated as having ‘high appropriateness of focus’ (Harrington, et al., 2013; Loyd, 2015; Shepherd, 2015); four were evaluated as ‘medium’, while another five were deemed ‘low’. It is important to note that the studies of Barrow and Hannah (2012), McLaughlin and Rafferty (2014), Mitchell and Beresford (2014) and Saggers, et al. (2011) did not include descriptions of their participants’ levels of language, social interaction and cognitive skills, and preferred communication medium, which affected the evaluation of their ‘appropriateness of focus’.

The replicability of the studies is limited due to the way in which they were reported. Only five studies (Barrow & Hannah, 2012; Harrington, et al., 2013; Loyd, 2015; Shepherd, 2015; William & Hanke, 2007) included detailed descriptions and evaluations of their methods of data collection while the other seven focused mainly on reporting their research findings but did not evaluate the process of collecting the pupils’ views.

The presentation of the findings relates to the categories in table 2, with particular focus on the key areas of the literature review questions, namely participants, methods of data collection, focus of the studies, and summary of findings.
**Participants**

While all studies included at least one pupil aged 11-25, the studies of Barrow and Hannah (2012) and William and Hanke (2007) included participants below the age of 11. Seven studies were conducted with pupils who were attending mainstream secondary schools; two included a combination of Primary and Secondary school pupils; two included pupils from both secondary and further education; one included only college students (Van Hees, et al., 2015) and one included pupils who were attending an ASD unit in a Further Education (FE) college which provides education for pupils between the ages of 16-19 (Loyd, 2015). The number of participants in the studies ranged from 1 to 23, with males outnumbering the females in all studies except that of Loyd (2015) where there were 6 girls and 4 boys.

It is important to note that the heterogeneity of ASD was not represented in the included studies as the majority of participants were diagnosed with AS or HFA and were able to engage in verbal communication. Browning, Osbourne and Reed (2009) purposely selected participants with ‘high language abilities’ as they deemed that doing so would ensure that the data they collect could be analysed, while Van Hees, et al., (2015) included only those without intellectual disabilities but gave no reasons for doing so. Only Loyd’s (2015) study was found to include pupils who communicated in ways other than speech (for instance, through symbols or Makaton). Furthermore, only one study (Poon et al., 2014) provided information about their participants’ cognitive abilities and academic performance. Two studies (Loyd, 2015; Shepherd, 2015) provided descriptions of their participants’ social and communication functioning, as well as preferred method of communication. Half of the studies provided no such information (Barrow & Hannah, 2012; Humphrey & Lewis, 2008; McLaughlin & Rafferty, 2014; Mitchell & Beresford, 2014; Saggers et al., 2011; Williams & Hanke, 2007). The studies that included participants below the
age of 18 gained informed consent from their participants’ parents and from relevant staff from the participants’ schools, as well as informed assent from the young people but only Harrington, Foster, Rodgers and Ashburner (2013), Humphrey and Lewis (2008) and McLaughlin and Rafferty (2014) described how assent was sought.

Overall, the majority of the studies appeared to focus only on representing the views of individuals with AS and HFA as opposed to the wider autism spectrum. The majority of the research also did not include information about their participants’ cognitive and communication abilities, as well as the ways in which they sought participants’ assent.

Methods of data collection

The views of the participants in all of the studies were predominantly collected through semi-structured interviews, the length of which varied between 5 to 147 minutes. Shepherd (2015) conducted an interview while walking around the participant’s college, while in the rest of the studies; the interviews took place in a quiet room either at the participants’ school or home, depending on the participants’ preference. Participants in three studies (Poon et al., 2014; Mitchell & Beresford, 2014; Barrow & Hannah, 2012) were given the option of having a familiar adult present during the interview to reduce possible anxieties.

Even though the interview schedules in each of the studies were developed by the researchers, only Harrington, Foster, Rodgers and Ashburner (2013), and Loyd (2015) sought advice and support during their development from other professionals such as Speech and Language Therapists (SALT), teachers and psychologists. Humphrey and Lewis’ (2008) asked for feedback from the participating schools’ staff about the appropriateness of their interview questions before conducting the
interviews. In addition, only Poon et al. (2014) piloted their interview schedule. These four studies were the only ones where researchers engaged in activities such as classroom observations and spending time with participants in their homes prior to any interviews due to the researchers’ aim of getting to know each individual participant and building rapport with them.

Browning et al., (2009), Mitchell and Beresford (2014), McLaughlin and Rafferty (2014), Poon et al. (2014) and Van Hees, et al., (2015) gathered their data exclusively by interviewing their participants only once, while Saggers, et al. (2011) conducted two and Shepherd (2015) conducted three interviews. Saggers, et al. (2011) did so to further explore the key themes they identified after the first interview, while Shepherd (2015) explored the lived experience of her participant before and after his transition to college.

The interview questions in ten studies were delivered verbally and only six studies provided copies of their interview schedules in their research reports (Loyd, 2015; McLaughlin & Rafferty, 2014; Poon et al., 2014; Saggers, et al., 2011; Van Hees, et al., 2015; Williams & Hanke, 2007). Only Harrington, Foster, Rodgers and Ashburner (2013) and Loyd (2015) presented interview questions verbally and with visual support such as Social Stories, Picture Communication Symbols, Widgit symbols, Talking Mats pictures, gestures or videos. The photographs and videos acted as prompts for Loyd’s (2015) participants to remember what they did during the drama lessons.

The participants in most of the studies responded verbally – even in studies that were investigating specific techniques to gather pupil voice. For instance, although the participants in William and Hanke’s study (2007) were encouraged to draw the components of their ‘ideal’ and ‘non-ideal’ schools, the data analysis still relied on recorded verbal responses. Similarly, the pupils in Barrow and Hannah’s
(2012) investigation of the use of the ‘In My Shoes’ (IMS) Computer Assisted Interview program, also responded verbally. Contrastingly, the participants in Loyd’s (2015), responded to interview questions using their preferred means of communication which included varying levels of speech (full sentences, two-word and single-word responses), pointing to pictures, and the use of Widgit Symbols and Talking Mats (Murphy, 1998). Shepherd’s (2015) interviews, although predominantly verbal, were punctuated by activities such as card sorting and collage making on a tablet, as well as taking photographs of different areas of the participant’s college.

Even though Humphrey and Lewis (2008) collected most of their data through semi-structured interviews, they triangulated these using the data from their participants’ pupil diaries. They also decided to include one participant’s drawings to supplement verbal answers, to take into account his social and communication difficulties. Humphrey and Lewis (2008) were also the only ones who invited their participants to provide comments on a ‘pupil-friendly’ summary of their findings before submitting their research for publication.

Taken altogether, the data in all of the studies were collected through semi-structured interviews with four that involved various modifications. The development of data collection methods in all of the studies included in this review did not involve any collaboration between researchers and their participants, although Harrington, Foster, Rodgers and Ashburner (2013), Humphrey and Lewis (2008), Loyd (2015) and Poon et al. (2014) aimed to get to know their participants through engaging in various activities prior to interviews.
Focus of the studies

The majority of the studies gathered their participants’ retrospective views of their experiences within educational settings. Three studies focused on pupils’ general experiences of mainstream secondary education (Saggers, et al., 2011; Poon et al., 2014; Humphrey & Lewis, 2008). Loyd’s (2015) study aimed to explore pupils’ experiences that were specific to drama lessons delivered at an autism unit in a mainstream college. Van Hees, et al., (2015) focused on the challenges that pupils encountered during their transition from school to colleges and their academic support needs. Mitchell and Beresford (2014) reported the views of young people regarding good practice and further needs regarding transition from school to further education settings. Browning, et al. (2009) on the other hand compared pupils with ASD’s perceptions of causes of stress and perceived coping ability to those of pupils without ASD. Lastly, while McLaughlin and Rafferty (2014) focused on their participants’ lived experience of having AS, their participants predominantly discussed their experiences in school.

The four remaining studies also elicited the views of young people with ASD about their experiences in education. However, their focus was on exploring the use of different techniques to modify interviews to enhance the engagement of young people with ASD in research. Three studies described and evaluated specific methods namely ‘Interrupted Interview’ (Shepherd, 2015), the ‘Ideal School Technique’ (William & Hanke, 2007) and ‘In My Shoes’ (Barrow & Hannah, 2012). Harrington, et al. (2013) discussed various modifications to their interview approach such as the inclusion of closed questions, visual prompts and extra time for participants to process and respond to questions. It should be noted that even though Barrow and Hannah’s (2012) and William and Hanke’s (2007) studies investigated the use of novel methods of eliciting views of individuals with ASD, their inclusion
of participants below 11 years of age as well as the limited available quotes from individual participants warrants further research to explore specific facilitators and barriers to participation that apply to the application of these methods to this review’s target age range.

Discussion

In order to attain knowledge that would contribute to the development of practice and policies relating to individuals with ASD, they need to be included in research. This systematic literature review revealed that while efforts have been made to do so, research is still in its infancy. This is highlighted by the relatively sparse available literature as only 12 studies met the inclusion criteria. The quality of these exploratory studies were also relatively weak as only three studies were judged to have high methodological quality (WoE A; Gough, 2007) and only three studies had high appropriateness of focus (WoE C; Gough, 2007). Furthermore, this review found that the current available literature do not represent the heterogeneity of the ASD population as it predominantly includes the views of young people with AS and HFA.

All of the studies were successful in gathering data through semi-structured interviews. However, caution should be exercised when adopting such an approach particularly with individuals across the autism spectrum in future since the studies reviewed do not represent the heterogeneity of the ASD population.

The lack of description of individual participants’ cognitive and communication abilities in half of the studies begs the question of whether these were considered by the researchers at all. Since these affect the participants’ likelihood to comprehend information that are relevant to their decision to provide informed consent, consideration of these factors can enhance the development of
data collection methods and the way in which informed consent or assent are gained (Nind, 2008). This is supported by the studies which did use individualised approaches in gaining assent.

Some studies highlighted the value of seeking the advice of relevant professionals, spending time to get to know the participants, and adopting a multi-modal approach to semi-structured interview that include the provision of visual supports such as videos and pictures, as well as Social Stories. However, the absence of detailed descriptions and evaluations of data collection methods in most of the studies limit their replicability as it is unclear which data collection methods facilitated the engagement of their participants and which aspects acted as barriers. This suggests that limited progress has been made since Preece and Jordan (2010) highlighted the negative impact this scarcity of such research has on the collective knowledge regarding effective methods of increasing the engagement of individuals from this population.

Furthermore, while the accessibility of the research for participants has been highlighted by previous research (Preece & Jordan, 2009), none of the participants in all of the studies reviewed were actively involved in the development of the data collection methods. Similar to Hass et al.’s (2016) findings, the participants’ choice of modes of participation in most of the included studies was limited.

Although the current systematic literature review is limited by its focus on only qualitative research studies it does highlight challenges for researchers. These relate to methods for eliciting the voice of young people with ASD and also to more fundamental issue about the way that people with ASD participate in research. This review highlights that research studies that attempted to elicit the views of young people with ASD about their experiences in education are still being conducted ‘to’ the participants and not ‘with’ them. This results in perceived power imbalance
between the researchers and participants which influence the participants’
engagement (Winstone et al., 2014) as well as the nature of knowledge produced
(Milton, 2012). One way to address this is to view individuals in the ASD
community (including those with co-occurring learning and communication
difficulties) as essential in producing knowledge and that they should be involved
throughout all of the stages of research (Milton, 2012). Collaboration with
participants may increase the accessibility of the research as well as develop other
modes of participation in future studies.

Researchers also need to describe the extent to which each aspect of their
methodology were successful as this would contribute to replication, refinements of
methods, and ultimately increase the participation of individuals with ASD in
research (Beresford, Tozer, Rabiee & Sloper, 2004). Such detailed documentation
could also provide a link between research and practice as it could serve as a
framework for practitioners who are looking to improve their process of eliciting the
views of this population.

The recognition of the importance of knowing each individual pupil’s
strengths, areas of needs and preferred means of communication in eliciting the
pupils’ views emphasise the importance of building a relationship which both
researchers and practitioners must aim to do. Therefore, collaboration between
researchers, practitioners and the individuals themselves can help improve the
appropriateness of the questions and the methods as a whole as each of them possess
knowledge about ways of building positive working relationships and effective
means of communicating (Milton, 2012; Morris, 2003). This also suggests that in
practice, young people should be actively involved in the development and
evaluation of ways in which professionals such as teachers, careers advisors and
educational psychologists elicit their views in matters that affect their lives.
Conclusions

This review highlighted that some researchers have recognised their responsibility to enable young people with ASD to express their views. However, the scarcity of qualitative research that elicited the views of young people with ASD about their educational experience reveal that this movement is still in its infancy and more needs to be done to actively push the boundaries of participation. While several methodological considerations that helped elicit the views of individuals with ASD have been identified, participants’ involvement in all aspects of research must be actively encouraged to inform the future direction of research in this field.

References:


Paper 2:

‘A qualitative study of specialist schools’ processes of eliciting the views of young people with Autism Spectrum Disorders in planning their transition to adulthood’

Prepared for in accordance with author guidelines for submission to the British Journal of Special Education (Appendix 6)

**Word Count:** 5,837 words (including references)
Abstract:

Government legislation and research literature highlight the importance of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders’ (ASD) participation in planning for their transition to adulthood. However, effective processes which enable their participation are under-researched. In this study by Rainart Fayette (trainee educational psychologist) and Caroline Bond (senior lecturer) from the University of Manchester, nine teaching staff from two specialist schools in the north-west of England were interviewed and a transition meeting was observed in one school to explore these processes. Analyses indicate that in both schools, enabling the participation of young people with ASD in the planning for their transition to adulthood involves three phases and is underpinned by a person-centred ethos. Although the processes were perceived to be effective, the participation of pupils is still limited as they still do not have the power to make the final decisions regarding their transition. The implications of these findings are discussed.

Key words: Voice of the child; transition; autism spectrum disorder; ASD; adulthood
‘A qualitative study of specialist schools’ processes of eliciting the views of young people with Autism Spectrum Disorders in planning their transition to adulthood’

Introduction

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a life-long neurodevelopmental condition characterised by varying degrees of difficulties in social communication and repetitive patterns of behaviour, interests or activities (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). These characteristics often translate to difficulties in socialising, organisation, planning, adjusting to new environments and adapting to new demands (Mitchell & Beresford, 2014). Baron-Cohen et al. (2009) estimated that 1 in 100 individuals in the UK are diagnosed with ASD. The figures from England’s Department of Education (DfE, 2014a) indicate that 10.7% of pupils with Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) in secondary mainstream schools and 22.5% in secondary special schools have a diagnosis of ASD (DfE, 2014a). Given that most pupils with ASD also have additional SEND, it is essential that young people are provided with appropriate support to promote positive post-secondary school outcomes including enrolment to higher education or employment, community participation, independent living and good health (DfE, 2014b). The need to improve transition practice is further highlighted by studies such as those of Knapp, Romeo and Beecham (2009) and Wittermeyer et al. (2011) which suggest that poor adult outcomes (relating to employment and independence) for individuals with ASD are linked with poor transition experiences. Disappointingly, Wittermeyer et al. (2011) found a dearth in policy and guidance regarding effective transition planning to achieve good adult outcomes. Parents and practitioners who participated in Wittermeyer et al.’s (2011) study also expressed that transition planning practices should improve.
Student participation in transition planning

The UK’s Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (SENCoP; DfE, 2014b) stated that planning for students’ transition to adulthood should begin when pupils are in Year 9 (aged 13/14) and that the process should involve a collaboration between relevant school staff, professionals, parents and the pupils themselves. This emphasis on student involvement is in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child’s (UNCRC) (1989) Article 12 which states that all children and young people (CYP) should be involved in making decisions about matters that affect their lives. Adults who work with CYP however, must be mindful of the level at which CYP participate. As Hart (1992) pointed out, there are varying levels of children and young people’s participation and that ‘non-participation’ (manipulation, decoration and tokenism, represented by the three bottom rungs of his 'ladder of participation', see figure 1) should be avoided, and the increasing levels of participation starting from assigning and informing children to having children share decisions with adults (represented by the top five rungs) should be aimed for. Sinclair (2004) added that pupil participation is only meaningful if it is integrated within the culture of the school, and not seen as a one-off event.

![The Ladder of Participation](image)

**Figure 1**: Ladder of participation (adapted from Hart, 1992)
A review of best transition practices by Hendricks and Wehman (2009) further emphasised the importance of student participation in transition planning meetings, particularly for pupils with ASD. Engaging in their own transition planning allows students to use their self-determination skills such as identifying their goals for the future, strengths, areas of improvements and interests (Wehmeyer et al., 2007). Participation in such meetings by students with ASD in the USA was found to correlate with an increase in high school academic performance and an increased likelihood of enrolment in postsecondary education (Chiang, Cheung, Hickson, Xiang & Tsai, 2012). Furthermore, Mason, McGahee-Kovac, Johnson and Stillerman (2002) found that students’ self-esteem, self-advocacy and sense of ownership of their plans tended to increase when transition meetings were led by the students themselves.

**Barriers to participation**

Despite the importance of students with ASD’s active participation in transition meetings, studies found that they were less likely to do so. In the UK, Beresford et al. (2013) found that very few students participated in transition meetings as students preferred their parents to attend the meetings and relay information to them. The pupils reasoned that their difficulties with and anxieties around communicating with people hindered their active participation. In the USA, Cameto, Levine and Wagner (2004) found that less than a third of pupils with ASD actively participated in transition meetings and only 3% led discussions.

Conceptualising beyond the present may also be difficult for those with ASD, making conversations about their future challenging and therefore affect their ability
to participate in making decisions during their transition planning (Hewitt, 2011). In addition, Wagner, Newman, Cameto, Levine and Marder's (2007) US study of nearly 1000 young people with ASD aged 13-26 found that young people with ASD’s perceptions of their own social abilities, feelings of autonomy and empowerment to be lower than those of young people with other disabilities, and is therefore likely to affect their ability to participate.

There is also a lack of empirical research to support practitioners working in this area. A recent systematic literature review of qualitative studies that aimed to elicit the views of young people with ASD about their educational experiences found an over-representation of individuals with Asperger’s Syndrome (AS) or High Functioning Autism (HFA) and a scarcity of studies that evaluated means of communicating with individuals with co-occurring communication and intellectual difficulties (Fayette & Bond, 2017). Evaluations of supports such as ‘Talking Mats’ in enabling young people with SEND to express their views during transition planning meetings have indicated some positive findings (Cameron & Murphy, 2002), however, individuals with ASD were only a small group within this study. Therefore, it is difficult to ascertain the efficacy of using these approaches to enable young pupils with ASD specifically to actively participate in the transition planning process.

**Research questions**

Both government legislation and academic literature state that planning for transition to adulthood is essential for young people with ASD. Given that the limited available literature focuses on participants with AS or HFA, it is important to reflect the diversity of the ASD population by researching processes to support pupils with
ASD and co-occurring communication and learning difficulties. Drawing on practitioners’ knowledge in relation to these processes can help shape future research and practices (Hargreaves, 1996).

This research aimed to address the following questions:

1. How do special schools elicit the views of young people with ASD in preparation for transition to adulthood?

2. To what extent are these processes perceived to be effective?

**Methodology**

**Research design**

This study adopted a case study design, reflecting the author’s critical realist epistemological position (Appendix 2), as this is recommended for areas where previous research is scarce (Yin, 2013). Qualitative data were collected from different sources between two different cases to enhance the study’s validity (see figure 2).

![Diagram of multiple case study design](image)

**Figure 2.** Diagram of multiple case study design
Sampling and Participant recruitment

A purposive sampling method was utilised in this study (Palys, 2008). The author asked four educational psychologists (EPs) who specialise in working with post-16 pupils and settings to identify educational provisions that have good practice in eliciting the views of young people with ASD in preparation for their transition to adulthood. ‘Good practice’ was conceptualised as having a process of developing individualised methods of meaningfully communicating with young people across the autism spectrum, including those with co-occurring learning difficulties.

‘Invitation for participation’ letters (Appendix 7) were sent to the head teachers of two specialist schools in the North West of England that were identified from this initial scoping exercise (Table 1). Upon agreeing to participate, the head teachers were asked to identify relevant staff members who supported students with ASD through the process of transition to adulthood. Information sheets and informed consent forms (Appendix 8) were then given to the identified members of staff. Head teachers were also asked to identify and approach parents of pupils with ASD who were about to have their transition planning meeting, for the author to observe.

Table 1: Descriptions of participating schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stance Specialist School (SSS)</td>
<td>This school provides education for 110 pupils (21 of whom are diagnosed with ASD) aged 11-19 who have statements of SEN or Education, Health and Care plans for moderate, severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties. Some students have additional sensory and/ or motor needs, as well as ASD. A third of the school’s population are in the sixth form.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Baden Specialist School (BSS) This school provides education for 125 pupils aged 11-19 who have statements of SEN or Education, Health and Care Plans for severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties, including 20 pupils who are diagnosed with ASD.

7 staff members from SSS and 2 from BSS agreed to be interviewed (see table 2). In addition, the parents of Ian (a year 11 pupil from SSS, diagnosed with ASD) gave permission for the author to observe their transition review meeting.

Table 2. Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SSS</td>
<td>Mrs. Jones</td>
<td>Assistant Head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ms. Gray</td>
<td>Teaching assistant (KS4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ms. Stevens</td>
<td>Teacher (KS3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mr. Clark</td>
<td>Teacher (KS4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ms. McCoy</td>
<td>Teaching Assistant (KS3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ms. Adams</td>
<td>Teaching Assistant (KS4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mrs. Troy</td>
<td>Teaching Assistant (KS3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mr and Mrs. Clarke</td>
<td>Parents of Ian - a Year 11 pupil whose transition planning meeting was observed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSS</td>
<td>Mrs. Smith</td>
<td>Assistant Head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mrs. Green</td>
<td>Teacher (KS4 lead)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data collection methods

Semi-structured interviews were chosen as these allowed the researcher to use an interview schedule (Appendix 9) whilst having the flexibility to explore unanticipated topics brought about by the participants (Fontana & Frey, 2000).
Interviews took place in each school for 45-60 minutes and were audio recorded. A running record of the author’s observation of Ian’s transition review meeting at SSS was also completed to corroborate the interview data (observation template can be found on Appendix 10). Unfortunately it was not possible to undertake a similar observation at BSS.

**Method of analysis**

The data gathered through interviews and observation were analysed at the semantic level through the use of thematic analysis following the methods outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). A hybrid approach of inductive and deductive analysis was utilised wherein themes emerged directly from the data but previous literature on pupil participation and person-centred approach influenced the assumptions of the researchers (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006).

The analysis was conducted in stages. First, each interview transcript was analysed separately. During this stage, two pages of the transcript were blindly coded by an independent researcher (fellow trainee educational psychologist [TEP]) and an 87.5% inter-rater agreement was calculated on codes and coded text. The emergent differences between the author and the independent researcher were then discussed which led to further refinement of the codes. Second, data was analysed within the school level. The data from the observation were integrated with the data from SSS, and were then coded using the same codes applied to the interview data. Third, the findings for each school were compared to account for similarities and differences between the schools’ processes and perceptions of efficacy. Lastly, the findings from both schools were integrated as the previous stages revealed that there were more commonalities than difference between the schools (see Appendix 11).
Ethical Statement

Ethical approval for this study was granted by the University of Manchester’s school Research Integrity Committee (RIC) (see Appendices 12-14).

Findings

Two main themes were identified following the analyses of the data. These are presented as a whole synthesis in this section as opposed to grouping them according to schools to avoid repetition. The sources of each excerpt are clearly marked to present the patterns within and across schools.

The process

Both schools’ processes for eliciting the views of young people with ASD about their transition to adulthood is a long one which involves three phases (illustrated in Figure 3) and is underpinned by their ethos. It begins by the time they start attending their schools and typically lasts until the pupils leave when they are either aged 16 or 19. These processes are underpinned by the staff’s understanding that pupils with ASD experience varying degrees of difficulties with communication, changing routines, conceptualising abstract concepts and planning for the future – all of which affect their conceptualisation of transition to adulthood and in turn, their ability to make informed decisions.
The Schools’ ethos

The schools’ person-centred ethos underpinned their willingness to develop their processes of eliciting the views of young people with ASD. There was a collective agreement amongst all of the participants that the students’ best interest should be placed at the centre of their transition planning processes and an expectation that pupils are all capable of contributing positively to their community.

“...they can go to employment... if you give one of our young people a job... that’s not a problem... There’s no reason why any person with Autism can’t do a job.” (Mrs. Smith; BSS)
Plans tailored to pupil’s best interests and collaboration between, school, the pupils, their parents and the local authority (LA) were viewed as key to a successful transition.

Phase one: Get to know each pupil

The staff from both schools stressed that the extent to which the pupils’ needs impact on their ability to participate in the transition planning process vary from one individual to the next. They reported that investing time to get to know each pupil allowed them to get to know the pupils’ strengths, areas of needs, interests, preferred communication medium, and even the number of choices they need to present everytime each pupil needs to make a decision. This enables them to tailor their approach to eliciting pupils’ views, as shown below.

“every student is different. What might work for one student may not work for another. So you’re constantly adapting what you’re doing.” (Mrs. Troy, SSS)

“Every student is done totally differently... as an individual... it's about finding out the best way to help each of our students individually to manage their transition” (Mrs. Smith, BSS)

While this phase continues throughout each student’s time in school and requires considerable amount of staff investment, they see the benefits of doing so such as “less [fewer] behavioural incidents” (Mrs. Jones, SSS) as staff become aware of the causes of these behaviours. The participants however cautioned that school
staff need to continue to notice and adjust their approach to take into account the changes in pupils’ development.

“what you put in place for one student at the beginning of the year will be completely different by the end of the year. You’re just constantly thinking about what you need to do…” (Mrs. Troy, SSS)

In addition, consistency within the school’s approach can be strengthened through sharing information between relevant staff.

“the previous teacher would have had a conversation with the new class teacher to say what they need to know about the children. (Mrs. Jones, SSS)

“When they move from class to class, or when they move from key stage to key stage, there’s always documentation that goes with them.” (Mrs. Smith, BSS)

Phase two: Support pupils to make informed choices

The second phase of the process involves providing the pupils with three types of support to make informed choices regarding the different aspects of adulthood.
Phase two A: Help pupils become accustomed to making choices

While transition planning and annual review meetings are spent discussing possible options regarding students’ lives after compulsory education, participants from both schools highlighted the importance of encouraging and supporting pupils to make their own choices throughout their time at school. These choices ranged from daily choices that impact only on them such as choosing foods or reward activities to decisions that impact not only themselves but the whole school, such as the school’s recruitment policy. The participants explained that giving their students daily opportunities to choose not only reinforces their belief that students are “free to go and make choices” (Mr. Clarke; SSS). It also helps “to ensure that they understand the choice-making procedure” (Mrs. Smith; BSS), and hence prepares them for transition.

“when you’re younger you start with the really early choice of what you want to eat or drink. As you get older, those choices change to what you want to do… Whether or not you want to go out to the community or stay inside... ” (Mrs. Smith, BSS)

The participants noted that choices offered are based on their knowledge of the pupils’ interests, preferred communication medium and the pupils’ mental capacity. This further highlights the importance of ensuring that Phase 1 is correctly done.

Phase two B: Turn abstract into concrete

Participants from both schools stressed the importance of providing concrete references for abstract concepts as they were aware that pupils with ASD experience
difficulties with conceptualising the future. Multiple opportunities to visit and experience a variety of employment and further education settings are provided to all students. In addition, SSS reported that every year, they invite former pupils with ASD who went to college or employment after transition. This provides current transition-aged students with the opportunity to meet them and ask questions about their experience. Staff believed that doing so would help the students have concrete references of what life after school would be like, and in turn, could help them make informed choices.

"Sometimes, a child may say ‘I want to do gardening’, but he has no idea what that entails. So letting them try things ....help them decide what they want to do." (Ms. Stevens; SSS)

“A lot of them have changed their minds after they have visited other colleges this year.” (Ms. Gray, SSS)

“We do a fantastic work experience programme here which... allows the students to understand what they can do” (Mrs. Green, BSS)

**Phase two C: Jointly evaluate choices**

Support is also provided for pupils to evaluate the choices that they have, particularly with regards to deciding between FE settings usually after each visit. However, the process of doing so differed between schools. Staff at SSS reported that they tend to discuss questions such as “‘did you like the college?’ or “what did you like about the college?” (Mrs. Jones), which pupils then record on their personal diaries. Pupils who attend BSS on the other hand wrote a list of at least five things that they want
FE settings to have which are based on what they like about their current school such as “seeing my friends... being able to play music, play sports’ (Mrs. Green). This checklist is then used to evaluate each FE setting that they visited. However, this does not apply to all pupils with ASD.

“For one of my students, we didn’t begin with the checklist until we’ve been to one of the colleges… (he) didn’t understand why we were making this list. So instead ..., we went to the college, had a look around and then we did a bit of a debrief…” (Mrs. Green)

**Phase three: Elicit the pupils’ views**

Eliciting the pupils’ views about their transition to adulthood depends on the success of the first two phases. The participants stated that communication is still modified even when pupils are able to communicate verbally.

“You don’t generally copy what they say. You give them a few options and discuss with them; draw things out, like why do they want to do that?” (Ms. Stevens, SSS)

The views of pupils who communicate non-verbally are elicited through the use of Talking Mats (Cameron & Murphy, 2002), symbols, Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS [Bondy & Frost, 1994]), and/or switches. The choice of which, and its efficacy, depend upon the staff’s knowledge of ASD and individual students.
“picking up on students’ behaviours, especially students with ASD. They will demonstrate through behaviour if they’re not happy with a situation or if … they feel that they’ve made the wrong choice” (Mrs. Smith, BSS)

Furthermore, participants mentioned that they typically ask students the same question multiple times to ensure that their responses are consistent, which also highlights the message that the pupils are allowed to change their minds without any repercussions.

“You won’t do it on just one occasion, You would present it several times; swapping sides or presenting it differently, then see if they go for the same choice every time.” (Mrs. Smith, BSS)

The pupils’ views are then recorded in ‘pupil voice booklets’ which are provided by the LA and are represented in person-centred annual reviews where the pupils’ previous targets are reviewed and their transition to adulthood are discussed with their parents, school staff, LA representatives, and other relevant professionals. Even though every pupil is invited to attend these reviews to present their own views, some choose not to do so. In such cases, their teacher would represent their views based on what they wrote in their pupil-voice booklets.
Perceived efficacy of the process

There were two subthemes that were identified with regards to the perceived efficacy of the schools’ processes of eliciting the views of young people with ASD (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Perceived efficacy of the process

Effective and person-centred

The staff from both schools reported that they do not yet have a process for evaluating the way they elicit the views of the pupils or how these views are represented in the final transition plan. However, they all perceived their processes to be effective in eliciting the views of all pupils with AS, regardless of communication levels. They also reported that anecdotal reports from parents and students indicate that there is an overall satisfaction with their process. Ian’s parents also said that the school “keeps them in the loop” throughout the planning stages. They also said that they were pleased with the review’s format as “Ian was included despite his needs.”

“more able students are better able to express themselves and be heard, but those who struggle to understand abstract concepts are still given the chance to get their voice heard despite their limited ability.” (Mr. Clark, SSS)
“Most of the feedback that we’ve had were generally positive. They are generally impressed with the amount of transition support that we provide such as the number of visits…, and the fact that we start transition early.” (Mrs. Green, BSS)

The staff and Ian’s parents further noted that the SENCoP’s (DfE, 2014b) emphasis on a person-centred approach influenced both schools to continue to develop their practices to elicit and incorporate the pupils’ views in meetings and in their plans.

“In the past, it (the meeting) was usually staff and parent led.”
(Mrs. Green, BSS)

“I think the format of the review lends itself better to being more able to express their views …. They are always given the first opportunity to write. Before, (the students’ views were) almost like a footnote” (Mrs. Jones, SSS)

The extent of pupils’ participation

While the process of eliciting and representing the views of young people have improved in both school, the extent to which their views are incorporated in the transition meetings and plans varied between SSS and BSS. Even though the staff at SSS gather the views of pupils and parents, they perceived themselves as adopting the ‘expert role’ particularly when deciding the pupils’ next educational or training placement, as they view this as a way to manage the anxieties and expectations of the parents.
"the parents are often led by us because they see us as experts and want us to guide them, and want the input" (Mrs. Jones, SSS)

In addition, the observed transition review at SSS showed that the meeting followed the format of a person-centred review and that Ian’s views were recorded in a ‘pupil voice booklet’ which Ian used as a prompt when Mrs. Jones asked him to write down his thoughts on the white board in front of the other attendees. The review however did not require further involvement from Ian as it mostly involved a discussion between Ian’s parents and Mrs. Jones, with Ian agreeing to most of what they said.

On the other hand, while BSS also supports each pupil and their parents during the planning process, they aim to place the views of the pupils at the centre of the planning process. Mrs. Smith commented that their new process is based on their belief that students know what they want and that most of them have the ability to make their own decisions. She also commented that this change in belief and process was explained to parents.

"The transition plan is all about the pupils' voice... We have to explain that to parents that it's not what they want... it's the young person's choice" (Mrs. Smith; BSS)
However, external factors such as the limited local authority funds and the scarcity of work experience places affect the extent to which schools are able to fulfil the wishes of the pupils.

“It’s difficult to ask a student about where they want to do their work experience and not deliver on it.” (Ms. Adams, SSS)

“It all depends on the funding though, which is absolutely awful. Colleges may say that ‘we’d love to have them but we need to make sure that we’re gonna get paid to have them’. Unfortunately, that’s the decision that takes the time.” (Mrs. Green, BSS)

Discussion

This study’s findings outline processes from two specialist schools that were perceived to be effective in meaningfully including the views of young people with ASD within their transition plans. Both schools appeared to comply with the UNCRC Article 12.1 (1989) as they were able to elicit the views of their pupils who were able to do so, regardless of their communication needs.

The findings indicate that an effective process of eliciting and including the views of young people with ASD requires a person-centred ethos and a commitment from all staff to elicit the pupils’ views and develop processes that enable pupils to make informed decisions throughout their time in school. Such a process is likely to enable pupils with ASD to participate meaningfully when their transition to adulthood begins, as opposed to only eliciting their views once (Sinclair, 2004). Both schools were also aware that pupils with ASD have ‘distinct needs’ (Norwich & Lewis, 2001) that require support throughout the transition period, such as their
difficulties conceptualising the future (Hewitt, 2011). All pupils with ASD were therefore given multiple opportunities to visit different post-16 educational provisions as well as relevant work experiences to enable them to evaluate their possible choices better. The importance of these experiences needs to be emphasised particularly in light of Beresford et al.’s (2013) study which found that such activities have been reduced due to financial constraints.

The findings also provided support for the use of communication tools such as Talking Mats, symbols, PECS, switches and/ or behavioural observations to elicit and record the views of pupils with ASD. While this is similar to, and therefore builds on Cameron and Murphy’s (2002) findings, the participants in this study implied that the efficacy of such tools can be increased if adults have a sound general knowledge of ASD and have spent time to build positive working relationships with each pupil to develop an individualised means of communicating with them (Loyd, 2015).

Even though both schools’ processes resemble the ‘consulted and informed’ rung of Hart’s (1992) participation ladder, the degree to which the views of the pupils shaped planning for their transition to adulthood varied between the schools. While BSS made every effort to accommodate the wishes of their pupils, the staff at SSS perceived themselves as adopting the expert role to support the parents.

The findings also indicate that whilst the pupils’ views are given ‘due weight’ throughout the decision-making process, it is only one of many factors including funding, limited work experience and college places that need to be considered to make the final decisions on what their transition to adulthood will entail. In addition, while the requirement to adopt the person-centred format of transition meetings (DfE, 2014b) was perceived to be a welcome change as it enables pupils to be heard, it still does not give the young people equal decision-making power since the final
decisions are still made by the school and the local authority. These suggest that since the extent of the young people’s participation only goes as far as providing their input, the next logical step is to actively include young people in the decision-making process. McNeish and Newman (2002) proposed that this can be achieved in part through recognising and changing attitudinal barriers, for instance. conceptualising the processes of eliciting the views of young people not as an end in itself, but as a means to an end of meaningful participation in the decision-making process, as well as adults’ willingness to fully include young people in the process. In addition, McNeish and Newman (2002) also proposed that steps should be taken to enhance young people’s motivation to participate.

**Limitations and directions for future research**

While some of this study’s findings can be incorporated in other contexts, caution should still be exercised when drawing wider implication from it. The fact that the sample consisted of staff members that were identified by head teachers necessitates further caution. In addition, an observation of a transition review was not conducted in BSS which prevented the researcher and the researcher’s supervisor corroborating the interview data.

Even though similar themes were identified in the two specialist schools included in this study, further case studies in other specialist schools in different localities would be useful. In addition, future studies should also aim to develop systematic and formal means for participants to evaluate schools’ processes of eliciting the views of pupils with ASD.
**Practical implications**

This study’s findings have implications in many areas. Firstly, the importance of taking time in building positive working relationships with young people with ASD should be taken into account by school staff as well as professionals such as EPs when they attempt to elicit the views of pupils with ASD, in any context. Secondly, staff, parents, pupils and relevant professionals should collaboratively review and adapt schools’ processes of enabling meaningful participation. Thirdly, the increasing number of pupils with ASD, effective practices should be developed and shared amongst those working with pupils with ASD. Lastly, local authorities should support schools to provide pupils with ASD the necessary experiences that will allow them to make informed decisions throughout their transition to adulthood.

**Conclusion**

This exploratory study demonstrated that facilitating meaningful participation of young people with ASD during the planning stages for their transition to adulthood does not only involve eliciting their views once. Pupils should be taught and encouraged to make informed decisions throughout their time at school by a group of staff who are not only knowledgeable about ASD, but also have a person-centred ethos. Lastly, the findings also indicate that while the SENCoP (DfE, 2014b) is perceived as positive step towards enabling pupil participation, there is still a lot of work that needs to be done to give pupils more decision-making power.
References:


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*Perceptions and Expectations of Youth With Disabilities. A Special Topic Report of Findings From the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2)*


Promoting self-determination and student-directed learning for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. *New York: Guilford.*


PAPER 3:

‘Dissemination of Findings to Professional Practice’

Word Count: 5, 241 (excluding references)
Introduction

The link between professional practice and the research base that informs it is strengthened by effective dissemination strategies. However, the path from research to practice is a complex and long one and is influenced by a variety of interconnected factors (Durlak & DuPre, 2008). These factors, along with research-based dissemination practices are explored in this paper as they informed the author’s plans for disseminating the findings from both papers 1 and 2.

This paper begins with an explanation of the differences between evidence-based practice (EBP) and practice-based evidence (PBE), which is followed by a brief literature review of effective dissemination practices, including those that are specific to autism-related research. These are then followed by an explanation of the author’s strategy for disseminating the findings of papers 1 and 2 of this thesis and the planned strategy for evaluating the dissemination and impact of the research.

Evidence-based practice and practice-based evidence within education and autism

Defining evidence-based practice and practice-based evidence

Evidence-based practice (EBP) has been advocated as best practice both in the health and education field (Hargreaves, 1996; Sackett, Rosenberg, Gray, Haynes & Richardson, 1996). EBP involves a decision-making process that is based on an integration of practitioners’ expertise gained through experience and the best available evidence (Hargreaves, 1999; Sackett, Rosenberg, Gray, Haynes & Richardson, 1996). The main aim of EBP is to overcome the limitations of decision-making practices that are solely based on practitioners’ intuition and/ or anecdotal reports (Sackett et al., 1996). The use of EBP also reduces the likelihood of
inconsistencies between practitioners and between services as well as inequality of service received by the public. Dunsmuir, Brown, Iyadurai and Monsen (2009) further explained that consulting the best available evidence enables practitioners to select educational interventions based on empirical evidence of their efficacy.

Within the discourse of EBP, ‘evidence’ is conceptualised as the knowledge that is acquired through empirical research (Biesta, 2010). Furthermore, while EBP allows for evidence to be drawn from different methodologies, there exists a hierarchy which assumes that the evidence acquired through systematic literature reviews, meta-analyses and randomised control trials (RCT) is more rigorous and scientifically valid than the knowledge acquired from case studies and personal experiences. (Scott, Shaw & Joughin, 2001; Slavin, 2002).

The advocacy for the adoption of EBP within the field of psychology and education has gained momentum since the last decade (Fox, 2011). However, a number of practitioners, including teachers and educational psychologists (EPs), have been reluctant to fully embrace EBP within education. Earlier resistance to EBP was said to be due to practitioners’ limited access to empirical research and also their apparent limited ability to interpret and analyse the evidence base (Ramachandrani, Joughlin & Zwi, 2001). Hemsley-Brown and Sharp (2001) also pointed out that some education practitioners are reluctant to read research papers as they are often written in language that is inaccessible, particularly those that are statistically driven. Other more recent arguments against EBP centre around the claim that evidence gained from RCTs (considered as the ‘gold standard’ of research) is limited as they fail to take into account important aspects of interventions such as the relationship between the client and the professional (Fox, 2011). Fox (2011) also pointed out that since RCTs work within the assumption that ‘one size fits all’, evidence for interventions drawn from them cannot be the sole basis of psychologists’ decisions, and that
psychologists must also build on their evidence base from experience. In addition, Frederickson (2002) also suggested that the results of RCTs do not usually reflect real-life situations, particularly in the field of education where variables are less easily controlled. These reasons therefore present a challenge to EPs with regards to adhering to - let alone promoting - the application of EBP within education settings through working with other education practitioners who themselves have questioned EBP. As such, the concept of practice-based evidence (PBE) was proposed. In contrast to EBP, PBE advocates a bottom-up approach to knowledge building which involves trialling innovative techniques within natural settings (Barkham, Hardy & Mellon-Clark, 2010).

Biesta (2010) claimed that the main reason why people’s views differ about what constitutes ‘good evidence’ and subsequently what role evidence plays within professional practice is their ontological and epistemological position. Ontology refers to people’s beliefs in what constitutes reality (Crotty, 1998), while epistemology refers to beliefs about how knowledge can be created and acquired (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Biesta (2010) outlined two competing epistemological positions: representational epistemology, under which experiments are viewed as a distortion or manipulation of reality, but one that sees the world as static; on the other end lies transactional epistemology which sees the world as ‘unfinished’ and views experiments as a way to continually shape reality. Biesta (2010) proposed that through adopting a transactional epistemological position, one would accept that research findings can only inform us of what worked in the past, but cannot guarantee that the same will be true in the future. Biesta (2010) extends that caution must be exercised when accepting the claims made within the existing evidence-base as different environments, with many different factors such as the individuals and their relationships between each other influence the efficacy of any
intervention. The importance of the context therefore highlights that the development of interventions and the studies of their efficacy should involve key stakeholders and should take into account the settings within which they are designed for (Fishman et al., 2013). Simpson (2005) highlighted that within the field of ASD, evidence gathered from research studies that adopted methodologies other than RCTs such as single-subject experiments or case studies should be valued.

This move away from considering RCTs as the ‘gold-standard’ and welcoming PBE fits within the field of education and within the study of autism spectrum disorders (ASD) in particular, due to the heterogeneity within this population.

Factors that affect successful utilisation of research evidence into practice

Despite the wide-spread international advocacy for EBP in education, there is still a worry that evidence-based interventions are not being implemented in schools (Odom, Brantlinger, Gersten, Horner, Thompson & Harris, 2005). Kratochwill and Shernoff (2004) pointed out that even though EPs may be aware of the empirical evidence of most interventions, they are less likely to integrate these into their practice due to the reservations they have with EBP as mentioned in the previous section and also due to practical constraints surrounding its implementation. Research by Burnham (2013) in the UK found that a majority of EPs were unaware of the research base of their profession, while Bramlett, Murphy, Johnson, Wallingsford and Hall’s (2002) study of school psychologists in the USA found that majority admit that they rarely use research evidence as the basis for their practice.

Slavin (2013) proposed that the lack of application of evidence-based interventions in school could be due to the following four reasons:
1. Not enough studies that evaluate the efficacy of new intervention programmes.

2. Ineffective dissemination strategies.

3. Not enough incentives for schools and local areas to implement new intervention programmes.

4. Limited technical assistance offered to practitioners which compromise fidelity.

Lendrum and Humphrey (2012) also proposed that practitioners’ lack of confidence in new approaches may stem from the multitude of interventions available. Such overload of initiatives may have reduced the confidence of teaching staff which could then result in their reluctance to implement new approaches (Lendrum & Humphrey, 2012). Within the field of special educational needs, Burns and Ysseldyke (2008) reported that teachers rarely use empirical evidence as a basis of their decision between different intervention programmes, which prompted researchers such as Simonson, Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers & Sugai (2008) to argue that teachers should be trained to use EBP. Simpson, Mundschink and Heffin (2011) also stated that teachers in mainstream schools should be provided with sufficient training and support in order for them to provide the best education for pupils with ASD. Furthermore, Ravet, Taylor, McGregor and Foster (2007) also suggested that nationwide continuing professional development (CPD) courses should be offered to teachers to further develop their understanding of both the nature of autism and the effectiveness of specific empirically tested school-based interventions. Kratochwill and Shernoff (2004) on the other hand stated that the responsibility for implementing EBP should be shared by the practitioners and researchers who are trained to assume
the scientist-practitioner approach and that assessment and intervention manuals should include information on issues that may arise when implementing them.

However, there is evidence which indicates that teachers’ decision not to follow evidence-based interventions is due to the contexts in which they work in rather than lack of training. For instance, Boardman, Arguelles, Vaughn, Hughes and Klingner (2005) found that special education teachers in their study made decisions about interventions depending on whether they were feasible within the educational provisions they work with and whether they match the children’s individual needs. This suggests that while the provision of manuals may support practitioners’ implementation of interventions, context-specific adaptations are inevitable, and therefore should be considered. Researchers are therefore advised to include detailed information about how change can still take effect in real-life contexts despite modifications to the ‘theoretically non-essential’ aspects of the interventions in question (Lendrum & Humphrey, 2012).

Simpson (2007) pointed out that parents of pupils with ASD and the practitioners who work with them have been known for trying out a multitude of interventions – even those that have limited empirical evidence - in the hope of producing improvements in key areas of the children’s development. Mackintosh, Myers and Goin-Kochel (2005) pointed out that this is due to parents’ frustration over the contradictory claims present in the literature. Charman et al. (2011) therefore proposed that subsequent research must be methodologically rigorous and that findings must be disseminated through the use of stakeholder-friendly summaries. At the same time, practitioners and parents must be aware of the characteristics (cognitive and communication abilities) of the research participants to ensure that they represent the individuals they intend to apply the interventions to (Simpson, 2005). Researchers therefore must provide explicit mention of which
individuals in which contexts are most likely to benefit from the interventions being researched, as well as the specific developmental area(s) each intervention is aimed to improve, to take into account the heterogeneity of the ASD community (Kasari, 2002). Parsons et al. (2013) extended this as they pointed out that since practitioners’ insight is vital to the efficacy of interventions they must be included in the research process.

Most importantly, the views of individuals with ASD should be taken into consideration when developing research studies, particularly as recent changes in government legislation highlights the importance of placing the views of children and young people at the centre of planning and implementation of matters that affect their education and adulthood (DfE, 2014). As Pellicano, Dinsmore and Charman (2014) found, the existing literature on ASD appear to have neglected the views of the individuals within this population. It is therefore vital to ensure that research studies aim to produce outcomes that are pertinent to this population. Milton (2012) also stated that individuals with ASD should also play an active role in initiating, developing, conducting and evaluating research projects to ensure that knowledge about the experiences of ASD are co-constructed by those that are representative of this population, not by researchers and/or academics alone.

Taken altogether, these highlight the main issue regarding EBP, which is the consideration of whether the evidence gathered is sufficient enough to underpin practice in specific settings. Within education, the evidence base should therefore be scrutinised particularly in light of the differences between pupils (particularly individuals with ASD) as well as between educational settings, before considering its implementation. This highlights the importance of the role of EPs as their long-standing relationships with schools as well as their theoretical understanding are likely allow for a collaborative approach to selecting evidence or practice based
interventions and their planning, implementation and evaluation. Through this collaboration, EPs and their role partners (teaching staff, parents and pupils), can develop their own evidence base following the identification of the limitations of the current literature such as its applicability in specific contexts through the adoption of PBE

**Literature review on effective dissemination practice**

It has been argued that the purpose of the majority of educational research is to produce new knowledge and to develop and improve educational practice (Vanderlinde & van Braak, 2010). Dissemination was defined by Wilson, Petticrew, Calnan and Nazareth (2010) as a process in which researchers communicate their findings to the group of people who will benefit directly from their research as well as policy makers (their target audience) for the purpose of changing their target audience’s practice in response to their research. Thyer (2001) stated that successful dissemination is the key to knowledge building within the community and the application of this knowledge to practice aims to benefit its target population. As the recognition of the need to improve the transfer of research knowledge into practice has grown, so has the amount of research into research dissemination practices (Wilson, Petticrew, Calnan & Nazareth, 2010). This section of the paper provides a brief review of the literature into dissemination practices.

Wilson, Petticrew, Calnan and Nazareth (2010) conducted a scoping literature review of the dissemination practices within health and social science. They found 33 dissemination frameworks, the majority of which were underpinned by one or a combination of three theories. Firstly, the Persuasive Communication Matrix, which states that persuasive communication is influenced by the source of the message, the message to be communicated, channels of communication, characteristics of the
target audience and the setting (McGuire, 1969). Secondly, the Diffusion or Innovations Theory which states that the new ideas have their own intrinsic characteristics and that their uptake occurs over time (see Rogers, 2010). The third theory was that of Social Marketing or the application of marketing and advertising principles to disseminating research (Kotler & Zaltman, 1971). The said literature review however did not evaluate the usefulness of adopting any of the 33 frameworks they identified, nor the theories in which they were based. As such, Wilson, Petticrew, Calnan and Nazareth (2010) proposed that the adoption of theoretically-driven dissemination strategies may promote systematic ways of evaluating dissemination practices.

Hamsworth and Turpin (2000) proposed that dissemination should be thought of as a three-level process. The first level (dissemination for awareness) entails increasing the target people’s awareness of one’s research activities and outcomes. The second level (dissemination for understanding) involves discussions between the researcher(s) and individuals and/ or groups who the researcher(s) believe will benefit from the study’s findings. In this level, discussions should provide the target individuals/ groups the opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of the research activities, findings and implications. Hamsworth and Turpin (2000) proposed that the engagement of target individuals and/ or groups in these two levels is the basis for their engagement in the third and last level of dissemination (dissemination for action). This involves a process of change in practice and/ or policy brought about by the target individuals/ groups’ decision to adopt the approaches offered by the research.

Hemsley-Brown (2004) warned that the way in which research findings are presented can act as a barrier for the target audience’s engagement. Therefore, effective dissemination must involve careful planning. Hamsworth and Turpin
(2000) proposed that when planning for dissemination, researchers should consider what they want to disseminate, to whom (i.e. their target audience), what form(s) of dissemination should they use and when. Becheikh, Ziam, Idrissi, Castonguay, and Landry’s (2010) systematic literature review found that the likelihood of transferring research knowledge within education is influenced by a number of factors including the findings’ relevance and applicability to specific educational contexts, research reports that use simple and clear language, amount of researchers’ dissemination experience, and practitioners’ motivation and competency. Becheikh et al. (2010) also emphasised the role of ‘linkage agents’ – individuals with links to both the researcher and practitioners who also act as gatekeepers of knowledge according to Brown and Duguid (1998). The ability of linkage agents to select appropriate issues within their educational contexts as well as their ability to synthesise research findings influence the likelihood of research findings being disseminated to practitioners (Hemsley-Brown, 2004; Becheikh et al., 2010). Within the context of the UK education system, schools’ senior leadership team members, head teachers, the local education authority and/ or EPs themselves can be seen as ‘linkage agents’.

**Dissemination of ASD research**

As stated in the previous section, there is still a wide gap between research evidence and practice, despite the marked increase in the number of people diagnosed with ASD as well as the increase in research within the field (Elsabbagh et al., 2014). Elsabbagh et al. (2014) pointed to the historic misrepresentation of ASD research as one of the main reasons for this problem. Well documented examples of these include the claim that ASD is caused by mothers who do not show affection to their children – known as ‘refrigerator mothers’ (Bettelheim, 1961) as well as the misleading claim that the measles, mumps rubella vaccine causes ASD (see Baker,
2008). In addition, the media’s premature claims about the efficacy of new interventions have also led majority of the ASD community to doubt scientific findings (Walsh, Elsabbagh, Bolton & Singh, 2011). Yudell et al. (2013) therefore pointed out that researchers and other stakeholders have a duty of care in carefully considering how they ethically communicate research findings – specifically those that relate to the ‘risk’ of developing ASD - to the ASD community. Yudell et al. (2013) however questioned the appropriateness of the use of the word ‘risk’, when referring to ASD, particularly as Walsh, Elsabbagh, Bolton and Singh (2011) found that this often undermines the part of the ASD community that advocates neurodiversity, or the belief that autism is a variation within the human population, rather than a disorder.

Yudell et al.’s (2013) paper identified the following four key priorities identified by a group of autism researchers, advocates, individuals with ASD and their parents regarding the dissemination of ASD research findings:

1. The role of clinicians and other providers in disseminating and translating findings
2. The role of researchers and the media in balancing the communication of scientific advances and continuing uncertainty
3. The importance of tailoring risk communication for autism to different communities and populations, and the role of advocacy organisation
4. The dissemination of research to participants

Their recommendations include risk communication training given to service providers in order for them to develop ways of effectively communicating research findings in the midst of the current climate of uncertainty within the field; the
creation of a centralised resource base to improve stakeholders’ access to recent research; the provision of training for ASD researchers in effective ways of working with members of the media; the development of guidelines for reporting findings in the media; the availability of bespoke dissemination materials that take into account the cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds of the ASD community. Yudell et al. (2013) also proposed that there should be a careful consideration of the balance between quantitative data and qualitative descriptions of results, as researchers and academics were found to prefer quantitative data, which are typically inaccessible to the wider ASD community (Condit & Shen, 2011). However, qualitative descriptions of research findings alone were found to increase the likelihood of misinterpretation of results (French & Maule, 2010). Furthermore, Yudell et al. (2013) also proposed that advocacy groups should continually be encouraged to both engage in discussions with researchers about their findings, and also help improve the public’s understanding of the research. Lastly, they also highlighted the importance of disseminating research findings to participants.

**Strategy for disseminating the current research**

This section outlines the author’s strategy for disseminating the first two papers of this thesis: a systematic literature review of qualitative research methods for eliciting the views of young people with ASD about their educational experiences (paper 1) and an original empirical case study of two specialist schools’ processes of eliciting the views of young people with ASD in planning their transition to adulthood (paper 2).
**Aim of the dissemination**

Since this research’s main aim was to explore current good practice of involving young people with ASD in planning for their transition to adulthood, the aim of its dissemination was to raise awareness of current good practice of eliciting the views of young people with ASD in planning their transition to adulthood within specialist schools, to stimulate discussions and encourage further research within the area.

**Planning stage**

The planning stage for the dissemination of this thesis was guided by the literature review outlined in the previous section. The author structured his dissemination planning in relation to the five variables that influence persuasive communication that were identified by McGuire (1969) and are outlined below. Persuasive communication theory was chosen by the author as it was one of the theories used by most of the dissemination studies identified in Wilson et al.’s (2010) review. The author also considered other factors that influence effective dissemination within these five factors.

**Variables 1 and 2: The source of the message and the message to be communicated**

National (DfE, 2014) and international policies (UNCRC, 1989) over the years have recognised the value of including the views of children and young people in decisions that affect their lives. Even though such policies exist, the availability of evidence-based guidance for practitioners on how to operationalise these is limited. Since the systematic literature (paper1) and the empirical study (paper 2) were conducted to address this, the author decided to disseminate their findings.
Paper 1 highlights the over-representation of young people with Asperger’s Syndrome (AS) and High Functioning Autism (HFA) in the current available qualitative literature that aimed to elicit their views about their experiences in education. As Yudell et al. (2013) stated, researchers have an ethical duty of care to inform consumers of ASD research, particularly in the case of this research, the educational practitioners who work with secondary-aged pupils with ASD (aged 11-16 in the UK). As such, the author aimed to discuss the reviewed studies’ methodological strengths and limitations. The systematic literature review itself highlights the contribution of qualitative ASD research and provides further interpretation and analyses of the reviewed studies’ methodologies. In addition, disseminating its findings through discussions with the target audience may further enhance their understanding, thus increasing their likelihood to change their practice accordingly (Ramachandran, Joughlin & Zwi, 2001).

The findings from the qualitative case study (paper 2) will also be disseminated as these will help inform key stakeholders about the current good practice identified in ‘real’ schools. It will be highlighted to the target audience that whilst the empirical study provides information about the key elements of participating schools’ good practice, the development of such processes in their respective educational provisions will be influenced by contextual factors such as the students’ levels of need, and the knowledge and commitment of the schools’ staff and hence would require collaborative work between the author and the members of the target audience.

Variable 3: Characteristics of the target audience

Key stakeholders or target audience must be identified before any dissemination can occur (Hemsworth & Turpin, 2000; McGuire, 1969). The author identified three
main groups as this research’s target audience. Firstly, national and international researchers were identified as it was hoped that they would conduct further research in this area, hence achieving one of the aims of this dissemination. Second, ‘linkage agents’ (EPs, the author’s local authority’s post-16 transition steering group) were identified. EPs were identified due to their strong links with secondary schools and also since their role involves consumption of research as well as building the capacity of school staff through training and consultation (Fallon, Woods & Rooney, 2010). The LA’s post-16 transition steering group was chosen due to their motivation and role to support schools, transition-aged pupils with ASD and their parents throughout the pupils’ transition to adulthood. Lastly, secondary school teaching staff - including those that participated in the empirical study - were also viewed as key audience as the information from this research can be used to inform their practice.

Variables 4 and 5: Channels of communication and settings

A multi-strand approach (Hemsworth & Turpin, 2000) was chosen by the author in order to reach the three target audience groups identified above. Although time-consuming, this enabled the author to tailor the content and the language used in each strand to take into account the different audience’s confidence, competence and motivation (Bechiekh et al., 2010; Yudell et al., 2013). Outlined below are the different dissemination strands within the local, national and international levels.

Local level

As recommended by Yudell et al. (2013), the findings of the exploratory case study were given to the two participating schools via email. The author aims to meet with
the participants to discuss the study’s findings. In addition, the author plans to conduct at least one ‘twilight session’ with the rest of the schools’ staff to stimulate further discussions about the findings as well as to collaboratively decide on the next steps in moving forward.

The findings of both the systematic literature review and the exploratory case study were disseminated at a CPD training day presentation at the researcher’s educational psychology service (EPS) (see Appendix 15). The discussions that occurred afterwards indicated that some of the EPs within the EPS were aware of the need for other secondary schools to be informed about the current good practice identified in paper 2. They then identified a need for further discussions within the team regarding consultations with secondary schools about eliciting the views of young people with ASD during transition planning, as well as the development of workshops for schools about this topic.

Further dissemination plans within this level include a presentation of findings and/or workshop with the LA’s post-16 transition steering group led by representatives from the National Autistic Society (NAS) and the LA’s post-16 coordinator. In addition, informal discussions and consultations with the teaching staff from the schools the author works with as a TEP are also planned. Lastly, due to the contextual factors that may influence the operationalisation of the development of good practice in different schools, it would be ideal to establish a local network or community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) that consists of secondary school staff, (T)EPs and representatives of the LA’s post-16 steering group who would meet on a regular basis. As previous research found, doing so was valued by participants as it enabled school staff to access support from other members of the network which help them improve their practice as well as provide a platform for them to share their
schools’ good practice (Bond & Hebron, 2016; Simpson, Mundschenk & Heffin, 2011).

National Level

The empirical study was written and submitted to the British Journal of Special Education (BJSE) which is accessed not just by academics and EPs, but also educational practitioners within the UK and internationally. The decision to submit the research paper to a practitioner-friendly journal such as the BJSE was due to the aim of the researcher to focus on improving the practice of meaningfully including young people with ASD in the planning for their transition to adulthood.

Even though the BJSE is aimed towards practitioners, its reach may still be limited due to the restrictions in its accessibility. In addition, Watt (1996) found that some practitioners perceived the consumption of peer-reviewed journals as a task undertaken by academic only. As such, subsequent dissemination plans at this level also included submitting a research summary article to non-peer-reviewed publications such as the British Psychological Society’s (BPS) The Psychologist magazine, the Division of Educational and Child Psychology’s (DECP) Debate and the SEN magazine. Doing so will widen the reach of the dissemination as each publication is read by a range of individuals such as undergraduate psychology students and psychology graduates (The Psychologist); EPs (DECP’s Debate), and SEN teachers (SEN magazine). The articles published in these magazines are hoped to stimulate interest and discussion, with the hope of conducting further research within this area. Furthermore, the findings of both papers 1 and 2 may also be presented at UK EP conferences ran by the Association of Educational Psychologists (AEP) or the DECP. This would provide the author an opportunity to engage in face-to-face discussions with (T)EPs from different LAs within the UK.
International level

The dissemination of this research’s findings at an international level involves a presentation by the researcher at the International School Psychology Association’s (ISPA) annual conference. Presenting at a conference to an audience that consists of EPs from different countries of the world would give the researcher an opportunity to reach a wider audience as well as to explore the wider issues of effective participation of young people with ASD in education with EPs from other countries.

In addition, since paper 1’s implications were more focused towards future research methodologies, it was submitted to the European Journal of Special Needs Education (EJSNE) whose readers are mostly researchers. EJSNE was also chosen due to its international reach.

A strategy for evaluating the dissemination and impact of the current research

Knowledge transfer through dissemination is a process that takes time. The success of which should be measured in relation to the aims of the dissemination (Hamsworth & Turpin, 2000). It was decided that the evaluation of the dissemination will be conducted by the author due to limited resources, as opposed to being conducted by individuals that are independent from the research. This last section outlines the ways in which the author would measure the success of his dissemination strategy over time.
**Local level**

As Bechiekh et al. (2010) suggested, the quality of interactions between researchers and practitioners over time influences the likelihood of success of any dissemination strategy. Since the role of (T)EPs (including the author) include consultation, assessment, intervention, research and training within the individual, group and organisational levels (Fallon, Woods & Rooney, 2010), they develop positive working relationships with staff members in different schools within the LA. They, along with the LA’s post-16 steering group, are best positioned to collaboratively develop the processes in which schools elicit the views of young people with ASD during transition to adulthood. It is therefore hoped that the establishment of a local network and the subsequent regular meetings with its members can be used to qualitatively ascertain the progress made with regards to raising their awareness, stimulation of discussions and change in practice since it can be challenging and time-consuming to quantitatively measure such progress.

**National and International level**

The presentation of the findings at the ISPA’s annual conference itself will partially meet the first two aims of this study’s dissemination. In addition, the author intends to monitor the citations of the published papers as another way to track the progress made towards meeting the aim of raising awareness about the research itself, particularly at the national and international level.

**Concluding remarks**

The purpose of this paper was to discuss the notions of EBP and PBE as it relates to education, ASD and to the profession of educational psychology. The complexity of
knowledge transfer through dissemination has been discussed as well as the factors that influence its effectiveness. This small-scale research has begun to address the gap in the literature through the identification of good practice in eliciting the views of young people with ASD during the planning stages of their transition to adulthood. It is hoped that the planned dissemination strategy will increase practitioners’ and researchers’ awareness, stimulate discussions and encourage further research over time.
References:


Slavin, R. (2013). Overcoming the Four Barriers to Evidence-based Education. *Education Week, 32* (29).


Appendix 1: EJSNE Author Guidelines

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Appendix 2: Philosophical orientation

Researchers need to outline their ontological, epistemological and axiological position in order for the readers to understand how their chosen methodology was influenced (Scotland, 2012). Ontology refers to people’s set of beliefs about what constitutes reality (Crotty, 1998); epistemology refers to people’s beliefs about how one must create and acquire knowledge (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011); while axiology refers to the study of judgements about values or what people consider ‘good’ (Chopra, 2005; Lobo, 1974).

Ontology

The author’s ontological position was that of critical realism. Critical realism assumes that an objective reality exists (similar to positivists) but acknowledges that such a reality may be impossible to find and that most of our reality is socially constructed (similar to interpretivists and social constructionists) (Easton, 2010; Sayer, 1992). Sayer (1992) also stated that critical realism acknowledges that while we aim to construct our reality by describing our observations of the world through our language, the real world sometimes contradict our conceptualisations since much of it is impossible to be accessed through research.

In assuming a critical realist’s ontological position, the researcher accepts that reality is not always accessible, but the meaning that people ascribe to objects or entities, must be understood. Easton (2010) argued that such meanings are inaccessible through positivist measures, i.e. they must not be viewed as ‘variables’ as doing so do not enable researchers to explain the deeper causes of events. These assumptions led the author to consider the entities he needed to focus on when planning this research, as well as their relationships, causal powers and liabilities (Easton, 2010).
As such, the author qualitatively explored the two schools’ processes (entities/objects) of eliciting the views of young people with ASD towards their transition planning, and in doing so also discovered that the schools’ person-centred ethos and positive beliefs about individuals with ASD underpinned their processes. The author acknowledged that the development of the research was also influenced by his belief that the schools as organisation (entities/objects) have the power to produce change (causal power) and are also susceptible to external influences such as national and local policies and financial constraints outside their control (liabilities).

**Epistemology**

The author developed and conducted this research from a critical realist’s epistemological position. While critical realism can accommodate the use of a multitude of research methods, Easton (2010) postulated that a case study is an ideal method of research for critical realists particularly when studying complex social entities such as organisations, relationships and beliefs.

Easton (2010) also stated that research questions must reflect critical realism’s quest for exploring the reasons “for events associated with the phenomenon to occur” (p.123). As such, the author developed a qualitative case study research aimed to answer two research questions that explored specialist schools’ processes of eliciting the views of young people with ASD in preparation for transition to adulthood as well as their perceived effectiveness. Data were gathered from multiple participants through semi-structured interviews and observation as doing so enabled the researcher to triangulate the data due to the absence of definitive criteria of what constitutes as ‘truth’ (Easton, 2010). These data collection methods also enabled the participants to reflect on their own actions and beliefs (Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor & Tindall, 1999). Lastly, since critical realism acknowledges that not all of
reality is socially constructed, the author utilised Fereday and Muir-Cochrane’s (2006) hybrid approach of deductive and inductive method of analysis that involved identification of themes based on the data as well as the available literature.

**Axiology**

This research’s focus on the processes of eliciting the views of young people with ASD throughout the planning for their transition to adulthood was influenced by the author’s belief in the importance of including young people – both with and without ASD – in planning, implementing and evaluating initiatives that impact their lives, which is embodied within the UNCRC (1989).

This exploratory case study was conceptualised and developed by the author with a long-term view of building the knowledge and capacity of teaching staff across the nation and developing a good practice guidelines in collaboration with practitioners. This was also reflected in the author’s choice to submit his research to a journal that is aimed towards teachers and other educational practitioners (BJSE). The author’s decision to utilise a qualitative approach which lends itself to findings that may not necessarily be generalizable to other schools was not only guided by his ontological and epistemological position, but also by his belief that the complexity of social structures as well as the heterogeneity of the ASD population requires processes that are bespoke to each school and each individual student. This belief was strengthened throughout his experiences of working in different capacities with children and young people with ASD and their families in mainstream and specialist primary and secondary schools.

**References:**


Appendix 3: Excluded studies and reasons for exclusion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Reasons for exclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beardon, L., Martin, N., &amp; Woolsey, I. (2009). What do students with Asperger syndrome or high functioning autism want at college and university? (In their own words). Good Autism Practice (GAP), 10(2), 35-43.</td>
<td>- This study was excluded because the article contained limited information about the study’s method of data collection to be used in the current review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolic Baric, V., Hellberg, K., Kjellberg, A., &amp; Hemmingsson, H. (2016). Support for learning goes beyond academic support: Voices of students with Asperger’s disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Autism, 20(2), 183-195.</td>
<td>- The analysis of this study combined the views of the participants with ASD and those with ADHD, therefore it was unclear whether the themes represented the views of YP with ASD or ADHD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brewster, S., &amp; Coleyshaw, L. (2011). Participation or exclusion? Perspectives of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders on their participation in leisure activities. British Journal of Learning Disabilities, 39(4), 284-291.</td>
<td>- Although this study aimed to elicit the views of young people with ASD, its focus was not on their educational experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrington, S., &amp; Graham, L. (2001). Perceptions of school by two teenage boys with Asperger syndrome and their</td>
<td>- While the study’s title and abstract seemed to be about the perceptions of two teenage boys with AS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mothers: A qualitative study. <em>Autism</em>, 5(1), 37-48.</td>
<td>and their mothers about school, the accounts of the two mothers were more represented in the article.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Humphrey, N., &amp; Lewis, S. (2008). What does ‘inclusion’ mean for pupils on the autistic spectrum in mainstream secondary schools?. <em>Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs</em>, 8(3), 132-140.</td>
<td>- This study was excluded because the views of the participating parents and school staff were more represented in the findings than those of the students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hwang, Y. S. (2014). ‘Miss mum’: mind and affective experience of Korean learners identified with autism spectrum and cognitive difficulties. <em>Disability &amp; Society</em>, 29(10), 1583-1600.</td>
<td>- Participants’ ages were below the target age for this study. This was not highlighted in the abstract.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manion, K., &amp; Nixon, P. (2012). Listening to experts: Children and young people’s participation. <em>Social Now</em>, 30, 30-39.</td>
<td>- This article was reviewed by reading its full text because there was no abstract available. - This article was an ‘opinion piece’; not a report on an empirical study, hence it was excluded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murray, R. (2015). “Yes They are Listening but Do They Hear Us?” Reflections on the Journey of the Barnardo's Participation Project. <em>Child</em></td>
<td>- This study reported on the authors’ reflections rather than the empirical study itself, hence it was excluded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Care in Practice, 21(1), 78-90.</strong></td>
<td>• This study was excluded because the parents’ views were more represented in the findings than those of the students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Winstone, N., Huntington, C., Goldsack, L., Kyrou, E., &amp; Millward, L. (2014). Eliciting rich dialogue through the use of activity-oriented interviews: Exploring self-identity in autistic young people. <em>Childhood, 21</em>(2), 190-206.</td>
<td>• While this study provides a description of the authors’ use of activity-oriented interviews to elicit the voice of young people with ASD, the focus of the study was not about the young people’s experiences in education, hence the study was excluded.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 4: Methodological quality assessment framework (Bond, Woods, Humphrey, Symes & Green, 2013)

Author(s):

Title:

Journal Reference:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Comment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appropriateness of the research design</td>
<td>1 0</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Clear sampling rationale</td>
<td>1 0</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Well executed data collection</td>
<td>1 0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analysis close to the data</td>
<td>1 0</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergent theory related to the problem</td>
<td>1 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of explicit reflexivity</td>
<td>1 0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comprehensiveness of documentation</td>
<td>1 0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Negative case analysis</td>
<td>1 0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clarity and coherence of the reporting</td>
<td>1 0</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Evidence of researcher-participant negotiation</td>
<td>1 0</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Transferable conclusions</td>
<td>1 0</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Evidence of attention to ethical issues</td>
<td>1 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>Max 12</strong></td>
<td>**</td>
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</table>
Appendix 5: Inter-rater scores table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference:</th>
<th>Author’s WoE A score:</th>
<th>Supervisor’s WoE A score:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mitchell, W., &amp; Beresford, B. (2014). Young people with high-functioning</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Cohen’s kappa inter-rater reliability score = 0.93
Appendix 6: BJSE Author Guidelines

The Journal and submission of articles for publication: The *British Journal of Special Education (BJSE)* is the quarterly journal of nasen. nasen draws its membership from the entire range of professionals who are responsible for educating and supporting children and adults with special educational needs. *BJSE*’s Editor therefore welcomes contributions focusing on any aspect of policy, provision or practice that relates to the pre-school, school or post-school experiences of those with special educational needs, whatever the degree of learning difficulty or disability. *BJSE* also welcomes articles relating to inclusion, inclusive education and international practice in relation to inclusive education and / or the experiences of individuals with Special Educational Needs. An article can only be considered for publication in *BJSE* on the understanding that it has not yet been published and that it is not being considered for publication elsewhere. Authors are expected to confirm the originality of their work when submitting articles for consideration and to ensure that all necessary permissions to publish have been obtained. Successful authors will be expected to sign a copyright assignment agreement and to provide brief biographical notes. All articles considered for publication in *BJSE* are subjected to peer review. Articles based upon empirical research should contain a clear indication of the rationale for the research; the methods used; the findings; and the implications of the findings for future practice. Authors must ensure that their work has been carried out within an ethical framework such as that provided by the British Educational Research Association.

Presentation Manuscripts should be submitted following the guidelines on ScholarOne Manuscripts. All articles should be between 4000 and 6000 words including references. *BJSE* does not use footnotes or appendices.
Materials such as tables, graphs, diagrams, flow charts and examples of pro formas, schedules or recording formats can be included in articles as Figures or Tables. Illustrative materials should be selected carefully to support points made in the text of an article. Articles should be lively and engaging, clearly argued and concisely written in plain English in order to be accessible to a diverse readership. When technical terms prove essential, the writer should provide brief explanations supported by contextual descriptions or examples. Prospective authors should avoid language that can be seen as discriminating against people on account of disability, race or gender.

References

References should be selective and easily accessible. Sources should be indicated in the manuscript by giving the author's surname with the year of publication in brackets; BJSE does not use footnotes. Page numbers should be given for direct quotations. Full details for all references should be listed in alphabetical order of authors' names in a section at the end of the article. The following examples cover the kinds of references most frequently used in BJSE and can be used as a style guide:


Dyson, A (2001) 'Special needs in the twenty-first century: where we've been and where we're going', *British Journal of Special Education*, 28 (1), 24-29.


Guidelines for Submission to the *British Journal of Special Education BJSE* has adopted ScholarOne Manuscripts, for online manuscript submission and peer review. The new system brings with it a whole host of benefits including:

- Quick and easy submission
- Administration centralised and reduced
- Significant decrease in peer review times

From now on all submissions to the journal must be submitted online at http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/bjse. Full instructions and support are available on the site and a user ID and password can be obtained on the first visit. If you require assistance then click the Get Help Now link which appears at the top right of every ScholarOne Manuscripts page. If you cannot submit online, please contact Graham Hallett in the Editorial Office (editorsbjse@gmail.com).

**Making Contact**
Further guidance for authors can be provided on request. It is often an advantage for prospective contributors to discuss the length, content and emphasis of a proposed article with the Editor prior to submission. Queries should be addressed to:

Fiona Hallett & Graham Hallett Editors Email: editorsbjse@gmail.com

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If the OnlineOpen option is not selected the corresponding author will be presented with the copyright transfer agreement (CTA) to sign. The terms and conditions of the CTA can be previewed in the samples associated with the Copyright FAQs below: CTA Terms and Conditions

http://authorservices.wiley.com/bauthor/faqs_copyright.asp

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http://authorservices.wiley.com/bauthor/faqs_copyright.asp and visit
http://www.wileyopenaccess.com/details/content/12f25db4c87/Copyright--
License.html.

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automated e-mails at key stages of production. The author will receive an e-
mail with a unique link that enables them to register and have their article
automatically added to the system. Please ensure that a complete e-mail
address is provided when submitting the manuscript. Visit
http://authorservices.wiley.com for more details on online production
tracking and for a wealth of resources including FAQs and tips on article
preparation, submission and more.
Appendix 7: ‘Invitation for participation’ email

Dear __________ (Head Teacher),

My name is ___________ and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist studying at The University of Manchester. I am writing this email to inform you of a research that I hope to conduct as a part of my training.

**Brief Introduction to the research and the reason why your school was contacted**

My research aims to explore the practice of your school for eliciting the views of pupils with ASD in the planning for their transition to adulthood. I hope that through my research, we can identify the good practice that your school has which may help other educational settings to develop their own practice.

**Who will participate in the study and what would they need to do?**

I am aiming to include all of your school staff members who are involved in the transition to adulthood process for your pupils with ASD. I also wish to observe a transition review meeting.

Participants will be invited to participate in a focus group (or one-to-one) interview(s) which will involve discussions around their roles in working with transition-aged pupils with ASD, the tools and strategies they use to enable this group of pupils to be active participants in their transition planning, the representation of the pupils’ views in the transition plans and the efficacy of their schools’ processes.

The interviews will be audio-recorded for transcription purposes. I must emphasise that participants and your school will be anonymised throughout the study, including the final report. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout unless circumstances such as Child Protection issue disclosures are made.
The purpose of my attendance of the transition review meeting is solely to observe the process and find out the strengths of the meeting. I will not interact with any of the meetings’ attendees during the meeting.

Participation is fully voluntary and participants are free to withdraw at any point during the study.

**What are the next steps should you agree for your student(s) and staff to participate in this study?**

If you decide to take part in this study, please contact me through email. I will discuss the study further with you.

**Please do not hesitate to contact me and/or my university supervisor if you have any queries or would like to discuss this research further:**

- My email address is:
- My university supervisor, Dr. Caroline Bond’s email address is:
Appendix 8: Participant information sheet and consent form

An exploratory case study on special schools’ practice of eliciting the views of pupils with ASD for transition to adulthood

Participant Information Sheet

As a practitioner in an educational setting which identified a need to improve their practice in collecting and including the views of pupils with ASD to inform the planning of their transition to adulthood and who is involved with the transition of students with Autism, you are being invited to take part in a research study that will contribute to the completion of my Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology.

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

Who will conduct the research?

Rainart Fayette,
Trainee Educational Psychologist
Manchester Institute of Education, Ellen Wilkinson Building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL

Title of the Research

An exploratory case study on special schools’ practice of eliciting the views of pupils with ASD for transition to adulthood
What is the aim of the research?

This research aims to explore special schools’ practice of eliciting the views of pupils with ASD to contribute to the planning for their transition to adulthood. Some of the areas that this research will explore are:

- The ways in which special schools elicit the views of young pupils in with Autism Spectrum Conditions with the view of transition to adulthood.
- The extent to which are these processes effective?

Why have I been chosen?

You have been asked to participate in this study as you are a practitioner who has been involved in of pupils with Autism’s transition to adulthood.

What would I be asked to do if I took part?

Participants will be invited to participate in a focus group (or one-to-one) interview(s) which will involve discussions around their roles in working with transition-aged pupils with ASD, the tools and strategies they use to enable this group of pupils to be active participants in their transition planning, the representation of the pupils’ views in the transition plans and the efficacy of their schools’ processes.

What happens to the data collected?
The interviews will be audio-recorded for transcription purposes. All of the information collected throughout this study will be strictly confidential.

Audio-recordings of interviews and focus group discussions will only be listened to by the researcher. Direct quotes might be used in the final report of this researcher but participants are assured that pseudonyms will be used in order to protect your anonymity. All the physical data such as the audio-recordings, transcriptions and other confidential data will be kept in a locked cupboard, while electronic data will be kept on an encrypted data stick. All the data will be securely kept for five years after being collected, as per university regulations.

How is confidentiality maintained?

Both paper and electronic copies of all the research data will be kept in a securely locked cupboard which can only be accessed by me and by doing so, only I will know the participants’ identities. Data will be destroyed as soon as it is no longer needed for research. However, in there may be instances where confidential information may be passed on to relevant authorities, e.g. when child protection issues arise.

What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

Will I be paid for participating in the research?
There will be no payment provided for the participants in this research project. I am thankful for the participants’ time during this research as it will help improve the school’s practice of collecting and including the views of pupils with ASD to inform the planning for their transition to adulthood.

**What is the duration of the research?**

The interviews will last for no longer than 1 hour each. The data collection for this research may continue until July 2016.

**Where will the research be conducted?**

The research project will be conducted at your school. The dates and times of the research activities will be negotiated between you, your school management team and the researcher.

**Will the outcomes of the research be published?**

The key themes and the direct quotes that inform them will be included in a research project that I will write and submit as a part of my Doctorate. Publication may occur after the research has been conducted. Please be assured that the quotes used will be anonymised throughout. I will also provide you with a written summary of the research once it is completed.

**Disclosure and Barring Service check (if applicable)**

I can confirm that I have undergone a satisfactory criminal records check and can provide evidence of this upon request.
Contact for further information

If you wish to contact me for further details about this research, please feel free to send me an email on: rainart.fayette@manchester.ac.uk

You may also contact my university supervisor Dr. Caroline Bond at the University of Manchester on: caroline.bond@manchester.ac.uk

What if something goes wrong?

If you would like to seek further clarification and/ or advice regarding the research at any point, please feel free to contact any or both of the people listed above.

If there are any issues regarding this research that you would prefer not to discuss with members of the research team, please contact the Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator by either writing to 'The Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator, Research Office, Christie Building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL', by emailing: Research-Governance@manchester.ac.uk, or by telephoning 0161 275 7583 or 275 8093

Thank you very much for considering to participate in my study.
An exploratory case study on special schools’ practice of eliciting the views of pupils with ASD for transition to adulthood

CONSENT FORM (school staff)

If you are happy to participate please complete and sign the consent form below

1. I confirm that I have read the attached information sheet on the above study and have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions and had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

3. I understand that the interviews will be audio-recorded

4. I agree to the use of anonymous quotes

5. I agree that any data collected may be used as a part of the researcher’s doctoral thesis.

6. I agree that any data collected may be published in anonymous form in academic books or journals.

I agree to take part in the above project
Appendix 9: Semi-structured interview schedule

- Please explain your role in relation to pupils’ transition to adulthood

- To what extent do pupils in this school express their choices?
  - What does the staff do to help the pupils make their own choices?
  - To what extent are their choices considered/ honoured?

- Can you comment on the school’s transition to adulthood process?
  - Who else is involved?
  - To what extent is the process different for each pupil?
  - Age/ need
  - Is it the same for pupils with ASD?

- Are you a part of the review process?

- Can you explain the ways in which the staff gather the views of pupils to inform the planning for their transition to adulthood?

- What techniques do you find most helpful?
  - How are these individualised?
  - How are their views represented in the transition meeting?
  - To what extent do the pupils’ voice influence the subsequent transition plans?

- What happens if their views are different from other ‘stakeholders’?
  - Who makes the final decision?
  - Are there times when their views/ wishes are not honoured? What happens then?

- Do you know what the pupils/ family think about the ways in which the school gathers the views of the pupils and the transition process in general?
• Do you have any methods (formal or otherwise) of collecting the pupils’ and families’ reflection of the process?

• In your opinion, how effective are your school’s processes/ ways of eliciting these pupils’ views?

• Tell me about the times when they (processes) worked well/ less well?

• Can anything be changed about these processes?
Appendix 10: Observation record template

Pupil’s pseudonym: ____________________________
School: ________________________________
Date of transition meeting: ______________________
Time started: ______________________________
Time ended: _______________________________

Attendees:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym:</th>
<th>Role/relationship to pupil:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Apologies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym:</th>
<th>Role/relationship to pupil:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Running record of observations</td>
<td>Researcher’s thoughts:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 11: Sample of Interview Excerpts, their codes and themes

School-level analysis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excerpt</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“This is a dialogue that is constantly going on between the staff, the children and their families, genuinely with their best interest at heart”</td>
<td>Young person’s best interest</td>
<td>School’s ethos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I mean he’s so nervous with any change, let alone college even though it’s a long time from now. He would need a lot more preparation than others. Also, if you watch him butter bread, he struggles. Also, Mum does a lot for him. You won’t know that they have these problems until you watch them closely. It is really important to get to know them.”</td>
<td>Spending time with pupils</td>
<td>Get to know the pupils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“there’s a hand-over period over the summer holidays. So the previous teacher would have had a conversation with the new class teacher to say what they need to know about the children. We have lots of documents to support that as well.”</td>
<td>Sharing information between relevant staff</td>
<td>Get to know the pupils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“We won’t use it with Jefferson because he’s verbal and articulate. He’s able to tell you what he wants, needs, what he likes and doesn’t”</td>
<td>Every child is different</td>
<td>Get to know the pupils</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“It’s about letting them understand that they’re free to go and make choices.”

Explicitly let pupils know that they are free to choose

Help pupils become accustomed to making choices

“on a daily basis... More than daily basis throughout the day.”

Daily opportunities to choose

Help pupils become accustomed to making choices

“Having a concrete example helps.”

Concrete representations

Turn abstract to concrete

“It means they have a lot of taster days to help them decide. So those pupils who struggle with the abstract will be able to be more informed of the choices that they have”

Taster days

Turn abstract to concrete

“So, ‘did you like the college?’ or ‘what did you like about the college?’ Or they’d say ‘I don’t like that because...’ We don’t have a formalised recording. They would have some form of diary entry in that.”

Verbal discussion and diary entry

Jointly evaluate choices

“Sometimes they might have some anecdotal evidence. It might be that a member of staff knew that the child has expressed a certain interest in something that would be written as something that you’ve witnessed.”

Anecdotal evidence

Elicit the pupils ‘views
“Chances are, verbal communication would be limited. So in that scenario, we would identify the behaviour.”

“You don’t generally copy what they say. You give them a few options and discuss with them; draw things out, like why do they want to do that? Just question them”

“Ian was included despite his needs”

“I think we are very good at getting pupils’ voice.”

“the parents are often led by us because they see us as experts and want us to guide them, and want the input”

“So it’s never my decision. It’s never one person’s decision. It’s never the parents’ decision. It’s done... What is best for that young person.”

“So it has to be a success. The one thing we never want to do is to set up pupils to fail. So it has to be as successful as we can possibly make it.”
“To ensure that transition from Baden school to which ever provision is a smooth one and that everybody involved understands that person, and really understand what their needs are.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sharing information between relevant staff</th>
<th>Get to know the pupils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

“We just get to know them because of the amount of time we spend with them. We are with them all day every school day so we very quickly get to know them.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount of time spent with pupils</th>
<th>Get to know the pupils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

“That’s what we promote right the way through school. So when you’re younger you start with the really early choice of what you want to eat or drink. As you get older, those choices change to what you want to do... Umm... Whether or not you want to go out to the community or stay inside... You change that choice but again, you’re making it. It’s a big way of letting students have a voice”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Help pupils to get used to choosing</th>
<th>Help pupils become accustomed to making choices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

“So we go and visit the placements that we have got links with so that they have got an idea of what college actually is.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College visits</th>
<th>Turn abstract to concrete</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

“Some students will only go once or twice to their colleges because they don’t need it.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multiple visits</th>
<th>Turn abstract to concrete</th>
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</thead>
</table>

“So for some of our students, that means pictures or a list of pictures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Checklist</th>
<th>Jointly evaluate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
of things that they like in school and want to be continued in their colleges. For most of our students, it was five pictures. It ranged from having a good canteen, having spaces for me to play football, staff that understand me... A huge variety of things. Some students even said that they wanted things really specific about the environment such as ‘a classroom big enough for…’"

| “Watching them and observing them is the biggest tool” | Observation | Elicit the pupils’ views |
| “A lot of it is listening to them and writing down what they said.” | Write what they say | Elicit the pupils’ views |
| “You won’t do it on just one occasion, You would present it several times; swapping sides or presenting it differently, then see if they go for the same choice every time.” | More than once | Elicit the pupils’ views |
| “Most of the feedback that we’ve had are generally positive. They are generally impressed with the amount of transition support that we provide such as the number of visits their children are allowed to go to, and the fact that we start transition early.” | Positive feedback | Better than before |
| “In general, the feedback is that they are happy that we do a lot.” | Positive feedback | Better than before |
"The transition plan is all about the pupils' voice... We have to explain that to parents that it’s not what they want. It’s not their choice of college. It’s that young person’s choice”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The extent of pupils’ participation</th>
<th>It’s the young person’s choice</th>
<th>Integration of findings from both schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Schools 1 and 2 combined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Main Theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The process</td>
<td></td>
<td>The process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Support pupils to make informed choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Subthemes:</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Elicit the pupils’ views</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived efficacy of the process</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Better than before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. The extent of pupils’ participation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 12: Ethical Approval email and confirmation of approval for minor amendments

Manchester Institute of Education

UREC Approved Template Application Summary - MEDIUM Risk Research Projects

RIC Member Screening: Zaynne Onat-Stelma

SECTION 1: Student Details [Identification of the person responsible for the research]

Title of Research Project: An exploratory case study on special schools’ practice of eliciting the views of pupils with ASC for transition to adulthood

1.1 Student Name: Darian Fawzy

1.2 Programme: BSc in Educational and Child Psychology

1.3 The project is to be conducted by a student within the Manchester Institute of Education: X

1.4 Start date does not pre date approval: X

1.5 Student studying a course in NIE: X

1.6 The supervisor has assessed and supports the study: X

SECTION 2: PROJECT DETAILS

1. Aims and Objectives of the Project and the main ethical issues which may arise

3.1 Principal research question clearly laid out: X

I found the four research questions a bit difficult to understand but it appears to me about the extent to which the school’s practices have changed with the use of a certain framework of practice. It might also help to write ASC and PARO in their full form for the research questions. I appreciate these may not be the final wording of the research questions and that they will be altered along the way.
1.2 The academic justification for the research has been fully detailed.  

2. Methodology

2.1 Project Design: The proposed design is appropriate for the study.

2.2 Data Collection Methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No Personal Contact with the Participants</th>
<th>Personal Contact with Participants</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.2.3-2.2.7</strong> Activities to be undertaken</td>
<td>2.2.3.1-2.2.7.2.3.2.2.4-2.2.2.2-2.2.8.8 Activities to be undertaken</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.3.1 One or more postal questionnaires (or online questionnaire, if online is required) will be sent to potential participants in an appropriate format</td>
<td>2.2.3.1 Attending an interview/toucan group – format appropriate to participant group</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.3.2 Other indirect activity appropriate to participant group</td>
<td>2.2.3.2 Questionnaire administered by the researcher – format appropriate to participant group</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.3.3 Participating in an activity that is observed by the researcher</td>
<td>2.2.3.3 Participating in an activity that is observed by the researcher</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.4 Keeping a diary – format appropriate to participant group</td>
<td>2.2.4 Keeping a diary – format appropriate to participant group</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.6.1 Other activity appropriate to participant group</td>
<td>2.2.6.1 Other activity appropriate to participant group</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.6.2 Video or still image data collection – meets MRE guidance</td>
<td>2.2.6.2 Video or still image data collection – meets MRE guidance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.2.8 Research Experience in undertaking Interventions/Assessments</strong></td>
<td>2.2.8.1 Experience in undertaking Interventions/Assessments</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA - None required</td>
<td>None other than those taught as part of the students' professional training or forming part of existing professional role</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional role constitutes evidence of qualification and authorised current practice</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BSc: Speech and Language Therapy and current membership of professional body</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First degree plus PGCE or BA Primary/Secondary Education and current employment in relevant health setting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree/Diploma in Nursing and current employment in relevant health setting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree in Psychology/Counselling/Educational Psychology plus current membership of related professional body</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Experience in research methodology:  
Training constitutes successful completion of an EDUQ course unit.

| Training constitutes successful completion of an EDUQ course unit |  
|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| X | X |

2.3 Sampling is appropriate for the proposed research  

2.4 Analysis method is appropriate for the proposed design  

2.5 Ethical issues

**Adults:**  
The two main ethical issues have been clearly identified.  
The ethical considerations/ issues reflect the amount of interventional contact the participant will have with the participants.  
This is whether the contact is indirect or direct. For example, a large quantitative survey which is completed anonymously so the participant cannot be identified, is not going to raise the same ethical considerations as a project which is the main aim is carry out in-depth interviews with participants.

**Children/Young Adults:**  
The ethical considerations/ issues have been clearly identified.  
Reflect that the study requires that the methodology is not only appropriate for children but that it takes into consideration the need to take extra care.

Demonstrate prepared to be adaptable and have thought through appropriate mechanisms to take account of participants becoming distressed or upset whilst participating in the research.

Convenience purposive sampling.
### 3. Participants

#### 3.1 Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>✔️</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of participants appropriate for study</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex and Age - Appropriate for study</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type - Appropriate for study</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The research participants are adults able to consent x
The research participants are children/young people

#### 3.2 Vulnerable groups

Vulnerable participant group is adequately justified

The researcher has Disclosures and Barriers Scheme (DBS) check/other evidence of background check shows research involves adults with learning difficulties or children/young people, and agrees to inform AEP if status changes.

### 4. Recruitment

#### 4.1 Permissions

**4.1.1** Permission for the study to take place has been gained from relevant authority/organisation/management: X

**4.1.2** Additional permissions have been gained from persons responsible for activities within sub-settings of organisations [e.g., college principal and course director] N/A

### 4.2 Participant Recruitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indirect Contact with the Participants</th>
<th>Direct Contact with Participants</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directors'/Sectoral Register/Database in the public domain</td>
<td>Personal letters/emails/face-to-face interviews</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website/Internet group</td>
<td>Twitter/Advertisements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Known or named client groups (students, etc) Where group includes pupils, junior colleagues etc, they will be approached by a neutral third party.</td>
<td>Website/Internet group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Person in authority via organisational records:**
Known or named client groups (students, etc) Where group includes pupils, junior colleagues etc, they will be approached by a neutral third party.

**Notes:**
Person in position of authority via organisational records X
Networks and recommendations

#### 4.3 Information giving

**4.3.1 Information giving**
All information sheet has been prepared which gives participants full details of the project:

- X

A non-reply will not be pursued beyond a single reminder:
An information giving event has been fully described

- Other alternative and appropriate information giving procedure is provided.

**4.3.4 Informer**

Participants will be informed about the research by:

- X

The student researcher

**Person in authority**

- Person in authority

Neutral third party (where researcher known to potential participants)

Other procedures (describe)

#### 4.5.5 Accessibility of information

**4.5.5 Accessibility of information**

The information giving procedure has been prepared in a format that meets all individuals' communication needs:

- X

**4.5.8 Decision time**

The maximum decision time will be determined by the cut off date for return of questionnaires / completion of online questionnaires for the study (no maximum decide time):

**4.5.9 Use of Incentives**

- None

**4.5.9 Use of Incentives**

- None
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4.2.8 Unintended coercion</th>
<th>Expenses or gift taken not exceeding £20</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4.3 Record of Consent</th>
<th>4.3.1(4.3.2) Return of completion of consent form</th>
<th>X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

5. Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.1 Duration</th>
<th>Individuals group interviews - minimum 2 hours</th>
<th>X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observation - maximum 4 hours</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clary - maximum 20 minutes per day over 2 months</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For adults with learning difficulties / children / young adults</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observation - maximum 4 hours</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clary - maximum 20 minutes per day over 1 month</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2 Benefits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.2.2 Benefits</th>
<th>Indirect benefits due to contribution of research to field</th>
<th>X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

5.3 Defects

| 5.3.1 Defects | Disruption to regular activity | X |

4 Risks and Safeguards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.1 Physical risks</th>
<th>Potential adverse effects/risks</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| No foreseeable adverse physical effects or risks including potential for pain, discomfort, distress, inconvenience or changes to lifestyle have been identified, at the time of application, for research participants. | No or minimal adverse physical effects, risks or hazards to research participants are anticipated - including potential for pain, discomfort, distress, or changes to lifestyle - at the time of application, for research participants. | X |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.1.2 Precautions/Measures</th>
<th>NA</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| If the activity is inconvenient to the participant, it will either be cancelled or rearranged for a time that is convenient to the participant. | If participants work in the same organisation where the research is being carried out then due care will be taken to ensure that the research will not interrupt normal organisational procedures. | X |

| It participants unavoidably miss out on a service or benefit, by attending a data collection session, arrangements will be made to compensate or reschedule the service for them. | |

5.3 Psychological risks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.2.1 Potential adverse effects/risks</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| No individual questions will ask questions on any topic or issues that would be considered by a reasonable person to be sensitive, embarrassing, upsetting, or likely to reveal criminal or other disclosures requiring action. | No individual or group interviews/questionnaires will discuss topics or issues that would be considered by a reasonable person to be sensitive, embarrassing, upsetting, or likely to result in criminal or other disclosures requiring action. However, it is recognised that some topics may cause unexpected upset or distress in rare cases. | X |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.2.2 Precautions/Measures</th>
<th>NA</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| If it is considered that there may be a marginal likelihood of a topic or issue being sensitive, difficulties are to be avoided by a procedure of gaining ongoing consent. This will provide participants an opportunity to decline to answer particular questions or discuss particular topics. | X |
6.3 Risks for the researcher

There are no foreseeable potential adverse effects, risks of hazards, pain, discomfort, distress, or inconvenience to the researchers themselves. X

6.4 Early termination of the research

6.4.1 Criterion
Any unforeseen harm that cannot be resolved X

6.4.2 Declaration
The researcher will inform supervision/IRC of adverse event requiring radical change of methodology X

7. Data Protection and Confidentiality

7.1 Data activities and storage of personal data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Match</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Electronic transfer by magnetic or optical media, email or computer networks</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of personal addresses, postcodes, dates, emails or telephone numbers</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publication of direct quotations from respondents</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of audiovisual recording devices</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing data with other organizations</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Export of data outside EU</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Storage of personal data:

- Manual file
- Home or other personal computers X

7.2 Confidentiality

Anonymity will be preserved by the removal of identifiers and the use of U numbers or pseudonyms, breaking the link between data and identifiable individuals X

Where links need to be preserved in order to match data sets in a repeated measures design, coding frames including participant identifiers are to be kept securely in a locked drawer or other secure location, e.g. encrypted data stick accessible only by the researcher and separate from the data base. X

Photographs or videos of participants will be stored as directed in the RIE policy on Video and Image Research

7.3 Monitoring and auditing

The student’s supervisor will monitor the research X

7.4 Data Protection

Data Protection Act

- Fairly and lawfully processed X
- Processed for limited purposes as outlined in the application and only used in the way(s) for which consent has been given X
- Adequate, relevant and not excessive X
- Accurate X
- Not kept longer than necessary X
- Processed in accordance with the participant’s rights X
- Secured—on an encrypted storage device X
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University Data Protection Policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Will comply with UEPF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper/orage devices kept in locked drawer/office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UG: Data shredded/deleted when study completed/degree awarded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PGR: Data passed to sponsor on completion for archiving for 5 years after which will be shredded/deleted.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.5 Privacy during data analysis

The analysis is to take place in a private study area by the student researcher conducting the study.

7.6 Custody and control of the data

The student's supervisor will act as custodian for the data generated by the study.

The student researcher will have control of the data. The student will be advised to tick this box.

7.7 Access to the data

The student researcher will have access to the data generated by the study. In addition the supervisor of the student researcher may see the data, or order to guide the student in analysis of the data, but only when all links that could identify individual participants have been removed.

7.8 Use of data in future studies

Only with consent of participants. Where applicable, has been addressed in information giving and consent taking processes.

8. Reporting Arrangements

8.1 Dissemination

Peer-reviewed scientific journals

Notes

8.2 Participant and community feedback

Written feedback to research participants.

No individual feedback to be given to participants as links between the data and individuals will have been broken.

Presentation to participants or community groups.

Other (e.g. creative work)

9. Research Sponsorship

9.1 External Funding

No external funding

9.2 Sponsoring organisation

University of Manchester is the sponsoring organisation and therefore responsible for governance and ensuring the research activities.

10 Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest has been identified at the point of application. Should a conflict of interest become apparent as the study progresses then UREC will be informed.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supporting Documents Summary</th>
<th>Appendixed (Y or NA)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data collection Instruments</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copies of all drafts (questionnaire / focus group / interview-questions / observation framework / diary format or description of main topics / areas to be used) are appropriate to the study and participant groups.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text of letter seeking permission from the organisation involved to conduct research on the premises gives:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. full details of the proposed research;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. only UoM contact details for the researcher;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or Copy of letter from organisation involved confirming permission to conduct research on the premises is attached.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or Justification for not seeking such permission is provided.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment advertisement:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test of proposed poster/email/presentation informing potential participants about the study:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. is accurate;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. is appropriate to the participant groups;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. does not advertise details of incentives;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. contains only UoM contact details for the researcher.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Information sheet/letter information giving procedure:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. is provided for each participant group;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. is in an accessible format for potential participants;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. provides information on all the relevant readings and follows guidance in the University of Manchester Participant Information Sheet Template;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. provides only UoM contact details for the researcher in the address/telephone number.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further it is clear:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. No one will be made to participate in the research study against their will, and we endeavour to influence will be exerted in order to persuade the participant to take part in the research.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Participation is entirely voluntary and refusal will attract no sanctions and no reasons for non-participation is required.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Participants are informed that if they agree to participate in the study, they are free to leave the study at any time without being required to give reasons for leaving.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained. But, where relevant exceptions would be if person revealed that they are being harmed in any way, or, the participant states that they have, or intend to harm someone else. In this instance, the researcher has a duty to report to an appropriate authority. This will be done with the person’s knowledge and I will be agreed with them before to tell.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consent taking form (written or alternative)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. are provided in a suitable format for each potential participant group.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fieldwork Risk Assessment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed FRA form, approved by authorised signatory (Alan Jenkin) is appended.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section D of RREA form, completed and signed, is appended.

Application signed by Student and Supervisor (or supervisor name typed but validated by excerpt of document from supervisor email account). X

Research Integrity Committee Member
I confirm that the application named above matches the Ethical Approval Template approved by UREC meeting 11th December 2009.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Zempa Orul-Stema</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>03/09/2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Administrator for Ethics and Fieldwork

Decision Recorded Date

Student and Supervisor Notified Date

Signed

Application for Approval of Minor Amendment1 to a Research Study

RIE Member Declaration

I agree that the amendment proposed does not change the character of the research or the participant groups.

I confirm that the research risk assessment for the study as MEDIUM remains.

---

1 A minor amendment is one that does not alter the character of the research, or its participant groups.
Appendix 13: Ethics forms

RESEARCH RISK AND ETHICS ASSESSMENT
Manchester Institute of Education, University of Manchester

The Manchester Institute of Education is committed to developing and supporting the highest standards of research in education and its associated fields. The Research Risk and Ethics Assessment (REA) resource has been created in order to maintain these high academic standards and associated codes of good research practice. The research portfolio within the Manchester Institute of Education (MIE) covers a wide range of fields and perspectives. Research within each of these areas places responsibilities of a differing nature on supervisors and students: subject to course, level, focus and participants. The aim of the Research Risk and Ethics Assessment is to assist supervisors and students in assessing these factors.

The Manchester Institute of Education has determined three levels of Research Risk each of which has a number of associated criteria and have implications for the degree of ethical review required. In general, the research risk level is considered to be:

- **High** IF the research focuses on groups within society in need of special support, or where it may be non-standard, or if there is a possibility the research may be contentious in one or more ways.
- **Medium** IF the research follows standard procedures and established research methodologies and is considered non-contentious.
- **Low** IF the research is of routine nature and is considered non-contentious.

The form guides you in assessing the research against each of these risk levels in turn. Agreement to proceed with research at each of these levels is provided by an appropriate University Research Ethics Committee, a MIE Research Integrity Committee member, or by the supervisor/tutor respectively.

How to complete the Research Risk and Ethics Assessment (REA) form:
This form should be completed, in consultation with the MIE Ethical Practice Policy Guidelines, by Manchester Institute of Education students and their supervisors in all cases, except where a pre-approved assignment template currently exists. A separate Fieldwork Risk Assessment (FRA) form must be completed if you will be making fieldwork visits but are not able to agree with all the criteria in the LOW Risk Fieldwork Statement (Section C). This is so you can plan how safety issues will be responded to during fieldwork visits. The FRA form is available on the MIE ethics website.

Instructions on this and subsequent stages of the REA process are provided within each of the following sections:

**ANY student**
- Section A – Summary of Research Proposal (page 1)
- Section B – Description of Research (page 2)
- Section C – LOW risk Fieldwork Declaration (page 3)
- Section D.0-D.1 – Criteria for HIGH risk research (page 6)
- Section D.2 – Criteria for MEDIUM risk research (page 7)
- Section D.3 – Criteria for LOW risk research (page 8)

**LOW Risk UG / PCT / Doctoral: Pilot studies / Research Paper only**
- Section E.1 – Criteria for LOW risk ethical approval (page 10)

Supervisors and tutor approval of LOW risk student research
- Section E.2 – Supervisor confirmation that research matches LOW risk criteria (page 11)

Minor amendments to MEDIUM OR LOW risk approval:
- Section F.1 – Minor Amendments to MEDIUM OR LOW risk approvals (page 12)

---

1 A reasonable person would agree that this the study includes no issues of public or private objection, or of a sensitive nature.
2 [http://www.sed.manchester.ac.uk/studenttraining/miestudenthome/integrityethics/](http://www.sed.manchester.ac.uk/studenttraining/miestudenthome/integrityethics/)
3 For courses with approved templates see: [http://www.sed.manchester.ac.uk/studenttraining/miestudenthome/integrityethics/](http://www.sed.manchester.ac.uk/studenttraining/miestudenthome/integrityethics/)

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**RESEARCH RISK AND ETHICS ASSESSMENT**
Manchester Institute of Education, University of Manchester

*To be completed by AEF administrator*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RL4 reference</th>
<th>Date received</th>
<th>Date approved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**SECTION A - SUMMARY OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL**
This section should be completed by the person undertaking the research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A1. Name of Person/Student:</th>
<th>Rainart Fayette</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A2. Student ID (quoted on library/swipe card):</td>
<td>8044781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3. Email Address:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rainart.fayette@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk">rainart.fayette@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4. Name of Supervisor:</td>
<td>Dr. Caroline Bond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A5. Supervisor email address:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:caroline.bond@manchester.ac.uk">caroline.bond@manchester.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A6. Programme (e.g. PhD, Med, MSc, PGCE, BA etc):</td>
<td>D.Ed. in Educational and Child Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A7. Year of Study</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A10. Title of Project:</td>
<td>'Collaborative Action Research to Develop Ways of Effectively Enacting the Views of Pupils with ASC and Co-occurring Learning Difficulties to Inform the Planning for their Transition to Adulthood'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A11. Project Submission Date:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A12. Fieldwork visit dates</td>
<td>Start Date: Upon receipt of ethical approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A13. Geographic location(s) where the project will be carried out:</td>
<td>Within the premises of an participating specialist school in the North West of England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A14. Student Signature:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A15. Assessed Risk Level</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A16. Supervisor Signature</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION B – DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH

This section should be completed by the person undertaking the research.

B1. Provide an outline description of the planned research (250 words max)

Principal Research aim(s):
This research aims to develop a framework for practice for a school to effectively elicit the views of young people with ASC and learning difficulties to inform the planning for their transition to adulthood. Given the nature of action research, further, more specific research questions will be formulated following discussions between the researcher and the research participants. Some of the areas that this research will explore are:

- The tools that can be used to effectively enable pupils with ASC to have a voice, particularly during transition planning
- The efficacy the collaboratively developed framework in eliciting the views of young people with ASC and co-occurring learning difficulties

Academic justification:
Transition to adulthood can be a particularly stressful experience for young people with ASC due to the multiple changes that happen during this time and the numerous decisions that they and the people around them make that impact multiple aspects of their lives such as education, employment and living arrangements (Rydlewski, 2012; Schuleinberg & Schoon, 2012). With an increasing emphasis on future outcomes of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including those with ASC placed upon local authorities and professionals by the UK’s government through the recent SEN Code of Practice (SENCoP, DfE, 2014) and England’s National Strategy for Adults with Autism (ESMG, 2014), the need for effective transition planning should be addressed.

The UK’s recent SENCoP (DfE, 2014) emphasized that transition planning should be person-centred, which highlights the importance of including young people with SEN, including those with ASC, throughout the transition planning process. However, despite the importance of students’ active participation in transition meetings, students with ASC are less likely to do so. Studies that included a nationally representative sample of individuals with various SEND aged 11-19 found that compared with students with other SEND, those with ASC were less likely to attend, participate and lead on such meetings. A qualitative study in the UK conducted by Beresford et al. (2013) also found that very few students participated in transition meetings. The results of their interviews indicated that students preferred their parents to attend the meetings and relay information to them.

B2. The principal research methods and methodologies are (250 words max)
Project Design:
An action research (AR) design will be adopted to meet the aims of this research as it promotes change at both an individual and an organisational level (Robson, 2002). It is a collaborative process wherein the researcher, amongst other things, facilitates interactions and summarises key points (Wenzel & Lücke, 1996). The researcher chose to follow the RADIO model as it provides a clear systematic and collaborative approach which could bring about positive changes in an organisation (Ashton, 2005). It is a 12-step model of action research (see Table 1 below) that was developed with the mature educational psychologists researchers in mind (Timmins, Shepherd & Kelly, 2003).

Data Collection Method:
'Reference group' interviews
The development of the framework for practice will involve interviews with the members of the 'expert reference group'. Interviews will either be through meetings (either face-to-face or via the internet, e.g. Skype), a telephone or email conversation. In these interviews, the researcher will ask each member about their effective practices of eliciting the views of pupils with ASC to inform the planning for their transition to adulthood.

Pre-measure questionnaire and focus group
The development of the framework for practice will also involve administration of a pre-measure questionnaire and focus group interviews with the relevant staff members in the school. These questionnaires and focus group interviews will include questions about the staff members' previous experience in working with transition-aged pupils with ASC, the tools and strategies they use to enable this group of pupils to be active participants in their transition planning, and the skills that they wish to develop in this area.

Observations and trialling techniques
Based on initial discussions with practitioners the types of activities which may be trialled as part of the framework include attending reviews, use of ICT, Talking Mats and or MAPS. However it should be noted that these tentative ideas will only form a starting point for discussion and further development work with staff. The activities will therefore evolve dynamically in response to school need and as part of the research process. Trialling of the framework will begin once the researcher and the staff collaboratively agree on the techniques that will be included in the framework. The researchers will conduct observations of staff using these techniques with the students. Observations will be recorded on the researcher's diary and will also inform subsequent stages of the research, which includes making the necessary adjustments to the framework.

Post-measure questionnaire and focus group to evaluate the approaches
Towards the end of the spring term (June 2016), the school's staff members will be asked to fill in a post-measure questionnaire and to take part in a focus group interview (copies of the post-measure focus group interview schedule and post-measure questionnaire are appended). The data from these will be used to evaluate the framework for practice.

One to one interviews with the head teacher
One-to-one interviews with the school's head teacher will be conducted to further evaluate the framework for practice and the likelihood in which the school will be able to continue to use it in the future (the interview schedule is appended). It should be noted that these interviews will mostly be informal in nature and will be recorded in the researcher's diary (see below). However, should the need arise for a formal one-to-one interview arise particularly towards the end of the study, it will be conducted.

Research diary
The researcher will keep a research diary which will record the researcher's thoughts, interpretations and reflections of relevant events throughout the study, including practical and logistical issues. This will allow the researcher to record as much of the study's activities as possible, keep a reflective stance throughout the duration of the study, and make necessary adjustments along the way (Nadin & Cassell, 2006; Robson, 2002).

It should be noted that due to the nature of action research and the stages of the RADIO model, further methods of data gathering will be decided through discussions with the study's participants. In these events, the researcher will be back to the ethics committee to seek further ethical approval.
Sampling:
The selection criteria for the study’s participants are as follows:

- The participants who will form the study’s ‘expert reference group’ must have experienced working with pupils with ASC aged 14-19, i.e. during the planning stages of their transition to adulthood and/or the pupils’ parents and relevant staff members in England. Due to time restrictions, this group will have no more than 3 members.
- The school in which the research will take place must have an identified need to improve the ways in which they collect and consider the voice of pupils with ASC to inform the planning for their transition to adulthood. This can be achieved through informal initial discussions with the researcher.
- The school must be located within northwest of England.
- The staff members who are involved in the transition planning of pupils with ASC from the school that meets the previous criterion will also be invited to participate.
- The researcher conducted an initial mapping exercise to find out local schools’ practice around transition planning for pupils with ASC.

The researcher conducted informal discussions with school staff and educational psychologists who have established links with the university’s educational psychology course tutor team. Following these informal interviews, initial interest has been expressed by an 11-19 specialist school’s assistant head teacher and an educational psychologist working mostly with post-16 pupils to become members of the study’s expert reference group (an email from a school whose assistant head teacher expressed an interest in becoming a member of the group is available on Appendix 1). Furthermore, one school has expressed a need to improve their practice and have provided an initial consent to participate subject to the study’s ethical approval (see Appendix 2 for email confirmation of an initial meeting between the researcher and the head teacher).

Method(s) of Analysis:
The qualitative questions in the pre- and post-measure questionnaires, audio-recorded interviews, and research diary will be analysed using the Thematic Analysis framework laid out by Braun and Clarke (2006). Descriptive statistical analysis will be used to analyse the quantitative data from the questionnaires.

NB: If your research methods include collection of images or video data, you must complete the Video And Still Image REsearch (VESIRE) document (regardless of research risk). See http://www.isic.man.ac.uk/index.php?action=download&option=vesire_document.rst.

B3. Please indicate which of the following groups are expected to participate in this research:

- Children under 16, other than those in school, youth club, or other accredited organisations.
- Adults with learning difficulties, other than those in familiar, supportive environments.
- Adults who are unable to self-consent.
- Adults with mental illness/traumatic illness/dementia/residential care home.
- Adults or children in emergency situations.
- Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the researcher.
- Prisoners.
- Young Offenders.
- Other vulnerable groups (please detail).

OR

*The person with learning difficulties has appropriate support within the setting from accredited support workers or family members.
None of the above groups are involved in this study.

B4. Total number of expected research participants: 15
   Number of different participant groups:
   (e.g. teacher, parent, pupil = 3 groups requiring differentiated information/consent sheets)

B5. The research will take place (tick all that apply):
   X within the UK
   within the researcher’s home country if outside the UK
   wholly or partly outside the UK and not in the home country of the researcher*

* You must complete a separate Fieldwork Risk Assessment form.

---

*The researcher's 'home country' is defined as one in which (1) the researcher holds a current passport through birthright or foreign birth registration, (2) a country where the researcher has resident status, or (3) where the researcher holds a permit or visa to work, has a contract of employment, and is not a UK taxpayer.
C. LOW Risk Fieldwork Statement and Declaration

If you are making fieldwork visits, BUT CANNOT TICK ALL the low risk fieldwork criteria in the Statement below, YOU MUST COMPLETE THE SEPARATE FIELDWORK RISK ASSESSMENT (FRA) FORM.

C.1 Fieldwork visits

(If you will not make any fieldwork visit, tick the alternative items in C.2)

Fieldwork Statement

I confirm:

X I will not travel outside the UK or my home nation.
X I will not visit any country where the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has issued a warning against travel.
X The fieldwork does not require overnight stays in hotels or other types of public temporary accommodation.
X Public and private travel to and from the research location(s) are familiar to me and offer no discernable risk.
X I will not travel through or work in research locations which have known hazards to health or safety such as unit areas, derelict areas, cliffs, or local endemic diseases.
X I will carry only necessary personal items when travelling to, and within, research locations.
X No specific vaccinations are required / Have had specific vaccinations required to undertake this research.
X First aid provision and a trained first aider are available where appropriate.
X I will only operate machinery / electrical equipment / workplace vehicles, or handle / work with animals, at the research location(s) where I have clear competence to do so / will be under close supervision from a qualified person.
X The fieldwork will be carried out within normal working hours of a time convenient to participants.
X I will not give out personal telephone information to participants, or owners of secondary data resources, in relation to the research project.
X I am fully aware of, and sensitive to, cultural and religious practices of participant groups, and will act accordingly.
X This research will not involve fieldwork visits to private homes, other than those of friends or relatives.
X This research will not involve fieldwork visits to organisations’ premises, other than those with which I have an existing established relationship through placement, employment or volunteering.
X I will provide a regularly updated fieldwork visit schedule to a nominated University contact, unless visits only involve travel to the homes of friends or relatives.
X I will carry a Manchester Institute of Education Emergency Contact Information Card during all fieldwork visits, unless visits only involve travel to the homes of friends or relatives.

OR

---

*Fieldwork visits involve travel to research locations off campus to collect data.*

*This can be checked on this website [https://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/travel-advice-by-country/]*

*For example, in the UK normal working hours are between 8am and 6pm Mon-Fri inclusive.*
I am making fieldwork visits but I am unable to tick ALL the criteria above, I have therefore completed a separate full Fieldwork Risk Assessment (FRA). Go to Section D page 5
C.2 No Fieldwork visits

Fieldwork Statement
I confirm:

- [ ] this research does not involve fieldwork visits of any kind
- [ ] I will not give out personal telephone information to participants, or owners of secondary data resources, in relation to the research project

LOW Risk Fieldwork Declaration:

Students and Supervisors please complete C.3 / C.4 respectively

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C.3 Student Declaration:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By signing this declaration, I declare that the completed statement above is accurate to the best of my knowledge and that I will complete any actions that I have indicated I will complete.</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<th>Signature:</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name (in capitals):</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ramani Fayette</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C.4 Supervisor Declaration:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By signing this declaration, I confirm that I have reviewed the health and safety aspects of this research with this student and that the completed statement above is accurate to the best of my knowledge.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
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<th>Signature:</th>
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<th>Name (in capitals):</th>
<th>Date:</th>
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<td></td>
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</table>
SECTION D - RESEARCH RISK ASSESSMENT

The following sections should be completed by the person undertaking the research in discussion with their supervisor/mentor.

D.0 – Criteria for research classified as HIGH RISK – Health Research Authority (HRA) review

- The study involves primary research with adults who are unable to self-consent
- The study involves primary research with NHS patients
- The study involves primary research with prisoners/young offenders

Students: If any of these options apply, you should complete an HRA application. See your supervisor for further guidance.

Supervisors: Forward the REEFA form to ethics.education@manchester.ac.uk when you are satisfied that the project requires approval through the HRA operated Integrated Research Application System (IRAS).10

D.1 – Criteria for research classified as HIGH RISK (tick any that apply)

I confirm that this research:

- Involves vulnerable or potentially vulnerable individuals or groups as indicated in B1
- Addresses themes or issues in respect of participant’s personal experience which may be of a sensitive nature (i.e. the research has the potential to create a degree of discomfort or anxiety amongst one or more participants)
- Cannot be completed without data collection or associated activities which place the participants at personal risk
- Requires participant informed consent and/or withdrawal procedures which are not consistent with accepted University practice
- Addresses an area where access to personal records (e.g. medical), in collaboration with an authorised person, is not possible
- Involves data collection on an area of public or social objection (e.g. terrorism, paedophilia)
- Makes use of video or other images captured by the researcher, and/or research study participants, where the researcher cannot guarantee controlled access to authorised viewing.

If ONE OR MORE of the HIGH risk criteria have been selected DO NOT COMPLETE FURTHER SECTIONS OF THIS FORM. Ethical approval must be sought from a UREC committee. In all other cases, go on to Section D.2.

ACTIONS – HIGH RISK RESEARCH

1. You and your supervisor should first agree this risk assessment.
2. You should then complete the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) form (available on the MIE (KX) ethics section site11) and all supporting documents11, and give these to your supervisor for review and feedback.
3. When satisfied with the application, your supervisor will submit:
   1. The completed REEFA form
   2. Your completed UREC form – appending ALL supporting documents.
   3. Your completed and approved Fieldwork Risk Assessment (FRA) form - where indicated

These documents should be submitted by your supervisor to: Ethics.Education@manchester.ac.uk

10 For full details see http://www.hra.nhs.uk/resources/applying-for-review/
11 http://www.see.man.ac.uk/college/lesseh/ih/researchethics/ beidenhsheets/
11 Supporting documents include recruitment letters/emails, draft questionnaires / interview topic guides, information sheets and consent forms.
In doing so, supervisors confirm that they have agreed the assessed risk level and that the documents are complete and correct. The Effect Administrator will arrange School authorization for your documents to be submitted to UREC.
D.2 – Criteria for research classified as MEDIUM RISK (tick any that apply)

I confirm that this:

X

- research involving children or other vulnerable groups which involves direct contact with participants.
- study is on a subject that a reasonable person would agree addresses issues of legitimate interest, where there is a possibility that the topic may result in distress or upset in rare instances.
- research which involves substantial direct contact with adults in non-professional roles (e.g., parents).
- research which focuses on data collection from professionals responding to questions outside of their professional concerns.
- research with practitioners involving topics of a sensitive nature which are not personal to these participants.
- involves visits to site(s) where a specific risk to participants has been identified, and the researcher may not be closely supervised throughout.

If ONE OR MORE of the MEDIUM risk criteria have been selected, DO NOT COMPLETE FURTHER SECTIONS OF THIS FORM. Ethical approval must be sought from the Manchester Institute of Education (MIE) Research Integrity Committee (RIC). In all other cases, go on to Section D.3.

ACTIONS – MEDIUM RISK RESEARCH

1. You and your supervisor should first agree this risk assessment.
2. You should then complete the MIE Ethical Approval Application form (available on the MIE Ethics Website) and all supporting documents, and give these to your supervisor for review and feedback.
3. When satisfied with the application, your supervisor will submit:
   1. This completed REA form
   2. Your completed MIE form – appending ALL supporting documents.
   3. Your completed and approved Fieldwork Risk Assessment (FRA) form – where indicated.

These documents should be submitted by your supervisor to: Ethics.Education@manchester.ac.uk

In doing so, supervisors confirm that they have agreed the assessed risk level and that the documents are complete and correct. The Ethics Administrator will arrange review of your documents to be undertaken by a member of the MIE Research Integrity Committee and approval against our UREC Ethics Templates.

---

10. This does not include research in locations where children are present if they are not the focus of the research.
11. For example, in focus groups or one-to-one interviews in private locations, and “street research” which is characterised by brief interaction with randomly selected individuals in public locations.
12. This document and guidelines can be downloaded from: http://www.sect.manchester.ac.uk/studentresources/mied/integrity/privacy/
13. Supporting documents include recruitment adverts/emails, draft questionnaires / interview topic guides, information sheets and consent forms.
D3 – Criteria for research classified as LOW RISK

D3.1 NO human participants
I confirm that this research (tick as appropriate):

- is Secondary research (i.e. it will use material that has already been published or is in the public domain)

- is Secondary data analysis (i.e. it will involve data from an established data archive)

If you have ticked one of the options in D3.1 above, and D3.2 does not apply, you should now complete section D3.3 below.

D3.2 Human participants
I confirm that this (tick as appropriate):

- research does not constitute high or medium risk to the participants, as indicated by the criteria provided in sections D0, D.1 and D.2 respectively.

- a reasonable person would agree that the study addresses issues of legitimate interest without being in any way likely to inflame opinion or cause distress 10

- is research on my practice (involving data collection on issues relating to my professional role, or for comparison against national or other target or standards) in a setting where I am employed or on a placement.

- is research on the professional practice of others in professional roles and is conducted in my work / placement setting.

- is Market research (i.e. the research may involve data collection from the general public approached or observed in public locations for the purpose of market investigation).

- is research using a questionnaire completed and returned by participants who will have no direct contact with me.

- is part of a research methods course and participant groups are limited to peers, colleagues, family members and friends.

- is a Prior Study

D3.3 Research context
I confirm (tick as appropriate):

- I am not in a position to coerce potential participants/secondary data owners

- the research involves no vulnerable group (as indicated in question B3).

---

10 A reasonable person would agree that the study includes no issues of public or private objection, or of a sensitive nature.
If ONE OR MORE of the LOW risk criteria above have been selected, ethical approval must be sought from the Manchester Institute of Education (MIE) Research Integrity Committee (RIC).

**ACTIONS – LOW RISK DOCTORAL RESEARCH**

1. You and your supervisor should first agree this risk assessment.
2. You should then complete the MIE Ethical Approval Application form (available on the MIE Ethics intranet)\(^*\) and all supporting documents\(^\d\), and give these to your supervisor for review and feedback.
3. When satisfied with the application, your supervisor will submit:
   1. This completed RREA form
   2. Your completed MIE form – appending ALL supporting documents.
   3. Your completed and approved Fieldwork Risk Assessment (FRA) form - where indicated.

These documents should be submitted by your supervisor to: Ethics.Education@manchester.ac.uk. In doing so, supervisors confirm that they have agreed the assessed risk level and that the documents are complete and correct. The Ethics Administrator will arrange review of your documents to be completed by a member of the MIE Research Integrity Committee for approval against our UREC Template.

---
\(^*\) This document and guidance can be downloaded from: [http://www.seee.manchester.ac.uk/studieninstr/misteudentelease/integrity/](http://www.seee.manchester.ac.uk/studieninstr/misteudentelease/integrity/)

\(^\d\) Supporting documents include recruitment adverts/emails, draft questionnaires/interview topic guides, information sheets and consent forms.
SECTION E. Ethical Approval Application for LOW risk research

UG / PGT Research OR Doctorate Pilot Studies/Research Papers

Section E.1 to be completed by student. Section E.2 to be completed by supervisor/tutor.

E.1 Research ethics criteria

Tick as appropriate and/or indicate NA against items in bold where they do not apply to this research.

I confirm:

Codes of Practice

☐ I have read and understood the Manchester Institute of Education Ethical Practice and Policy Guidelines.

☐ I will abide by the Manchester Institute of Education's Ethical Protocol detailed therein.

☐ I am aware of and will abide by any organisation's code of conduct relevant to this research.

Researcher skills/checks:

☐ All necessary training procedures for this research have been completed.

☐ All appropriate permissions have been obtained to use any database or resource to be analysed in Secondary research.

☐ All relevant enhanced DBS or other checks have been completed.

I will inform the Ethics Administrator if my DBS (or related) status changes.

☐ Permission to be on the site to conduct research has been received.

Rights of participants:

☒ Participant information sheets (PIS), consent forms, questionnaires, and all other documentation relevant to this research have been discussed with supervisor/tutor named in A.5.

☒ PIS and consent forms have been confirmed with the supervisor named in A.5, as covering requirements illustrated in the MIE Participant Information and Consent templates, AND that they are written in an accessible way for each proposed participant group.

☒ I understand the Data Protection Act and the University Data Protection Policy and all data will be handled confidentially and securely, including storage on encrypted devices.

Research Integrity:

☒ No data will be collected before ethical approval of the study is confirmed by any supervisor/tutor.

☒ I will immediately report any issues arising during the course of the study that conflict with the MIE protocol, to my supervisor who has signed the ethics approval, and suspend data collection pending advice from that supervisor/tutor.

☒ I will report any proposed deviation from the research specification outlined in this assessment to my supervisor/tutor to update the current assessment or clarify any need for further approval before such changes are made.

Research output:

☒ The only publication output from this research on my practice or research methods study will be my assignment or dissertation.

☒ The only publication output from this research on professional practice / market research / questionnaire survey will be my assignment or dissertation unless consent has been obtained from participants for further dissemination.

ACTION: LOW RISK RESEARCH

1. You should email your final, completed REA form (with ALL required supporting documents appended to it, including your research proposal, or equivalent document giving full detail of the research) to your supervisor.

2. Your supervisor will first agree that this is LOW risk research. They will then confirm that your proposed research matches our LOW RISK ethics criteria and that in doing so, that it is approved under our UREC ethics.
3. Your supervisor will send you an email to confirm this assessment.
4. The ethics administrator will send formal confirmation of approval once all relevant documents have been received.
E.2 Supervisor confirmation that research matches LOW risk criteria above.

When satisfied that this assessment is correct, supervisors should complete this section.

**SUPERVISOR ACTION: LOW RISK RESEARCH**

1. Confirm items in bold by ticking or machine as NA if not applicable to this research, and one or more of the specific research criteria as appropriate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I confirm:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This submission has been discussed and agreed with the student undertaking the research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student has had appropriate training and has the skills to undertake this study, or has close, qualified supervision in place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The research activities outlined in the proposal involve no substantive risks to the student researcher or potential participant.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

AND one or more of the following as appropriate:

| This research will not address issues of public or social objection, or of a sensitive nature. |
| Information giving and consent taking procedures follow Manchester Institute of Education guidance. |
| Where fieldwork visits do not correspond to ALL items in the LOW Risk Fieldwork Declaration, a separate Fieldwork Risk Assessment form has been completed and approved. |
| This secondary research assignment/project has appropriate resource or database access permissions. |
| I will act as custodian for data used for any study that results in a publication (Masters/PhD dissertation or other output) and will work for archiving of data with MIE for a minimum period of 3 years. |

Confirm that the proposed research matches the low risk ethics criteria (indicated in E.1) and that the documents supplied are complete and correct.

| Please specify:                                                                 |
| Number submitted:                                                                 |
| Documents:                                                                 |
| 1 Completed BREA form                                                                 |
| 1 Student research proposal, or equivalent, on which the assessment is based. |
| Completed and approved Fieldwork Risk Assessment form - where indicated |
| Supporting documents: Draft questionnaires / interview topic guide / other data collection tools |
| Recruitment email / advertisement |
| Participant Information Sheet / page / letter (PIS) for each group |
| Consent form (or alternative) for each participant group |

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<tr>
<th>Supervisor’s signature:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
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3. Submit for confirmation of Approval to ethics.education@manchester.ac.uk. To validate this confirmation of approval, a full set of documents must be submitted electronically for archiving and audit.

---

1 Fieldwork visits involve travel to research locations off campus to collect data.
2 For audit purposes a personalisation within the research outlined in Section must be able to ascertain the full details of the student project, therefore the study proposal or an equivalent document giving full details (e.g. assignment description) is required.
NB: The Ethics Administrator can only provide formal confirmation of ethical approval via email to both student and supervisor when a complete set of documents are supplied. Copies of all documents should be retained by the supervisor.
F.1 Minor amendments to LOW risk research design

Any minor amendment to low risk approved research submissions should be detailed below.

LOW risk research amendments should be checked and agreed by the supervisor as constituting a 'minor' change then signed-off below. Substantial changes to research will require a reassessment and revised ethical approvals. The revised copy of the RREA showing the approved amendments, and any amended additional supporting documents, should be forwarded electronically to the ethics administrator at ethics.education@manchester.ac.uk

The Ethics Administrator will provide formal acknowledgement of approval of the change by email. A copy should be retained by the supervisor.

To be completed if/when applicable:

| Minor amendment to assessed research agreed (1): |
| Details of amendment |

This section will record any applications made during the life time of the Project regarding minor changes from what was approved.

| Supervisor’s signature: | Date: |

---

*Minor deviations from previously approved research submissions are defined as those which neither change the nature of the study nor deviate from any participation research groups previously identified. Supervisors should contact a member of the NRE Research Integrity Committee for advice if in doubt.*
Manchester Institute of Education
Ethical Approval Application Form

This ethical approval application form has been revised to incorporate changes made to the new

<table>
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<tr>
<th>RIA reference</th>
<th>Date received</th>
<th>Date approved</th>
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</table>

University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) Form. It has been designed to incorporate prompts for information needed to ascertain whether the proposed research matches MIE’s research template pre-approved by UREC and to facilitate completion of the form to a standard that will allow quicker review, and approval, by XIC members. Please follow all directions contained in this document.

SECTION 1: Student Details / Identification of the person responsible for the research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Student:</th>
<th>Raniart Fayete</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student ID (quoted on library/swipe card):</td>
<td>0044761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email Address:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:raniart.fayete@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk">raniart.fayete@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of Supervisor:</td>
<td>Dr. Caroline Bond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor Email:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:caroline.bond@manchester.ac.uk">caroline.bond@manchester.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme (PhD, Prof Doc, MED, PGCE, MSc, BA etc):</td>
<td>DEd in Educational and Child Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year of Study</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full/Part-time</td>
<td>Full time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title of Research Project:</td>
<td>Collaborative Action Research to Develop Ways of Effectively Eliciting the Views of Pupils with ASC and co-occurring Learning Difficulties to Inform the Planning for their Transition to Adulthood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment and Data Collection</td>
<td>Start Date: On receipt of confirmation of ethical approval</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>End Date: June 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location(s) where the project will be carried out:</td>
<td>Within the premises of a specialist school in the North West of England</td>
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</table>

Student Signature:

Supervisor Signature:

** Supervisor signature confirms that the student has the relevant experience, knowledge and skills to carry out the study in an appropriate manner.
SECTION 2: PROJECT DETAILS
(please write your answers in the boxes provided. Boxes will expand to fit answers as necessary)

1. Aims and Objectives of the Project

1.1 Research Question

This research aims to develop a framework for practice for a school effectively elicit the views of young people with ASC and co-occurring learning difficulties to inform the planning for their transition to adulthood. Given the nature of action research, further, more specific research questions will be formulated following discussions between the researcher and the research participants. Some of the areas that this research will explore are:

- The tools that can be used to effectively enable pupils with ASC and co-occurring learning difficulties to have a voice, particularly during transition planning.
- The efficacy the collaboratively developed framework in eliciting the views of young people with ASC and co-occurring learning difficulties.

1.2 Academic justification

Transition to adulthood can be a particularly stressful experience for young people with ASC due to the multiple changes that happen during this time and the numerous decisions that they and the people around them make that impact multiple aspects of their lives, such as education, employment and living arrangements (Kowal, 2012; Schuchard & Schoon, 2012). With an increasing emphasis on future outcomes of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including those with ASC placed upon local authorities and professionally by the UK’s government through the recent SEN Code of Practice (SENCoP; DfE, 2014) and England’s National Strategy for Adults with Autism (HEM, 2014), the need for effective transition planning should be addressed.

The UK’s recent SENCoP (DfE, 2014) emphasized that transition planning should be person-centred, which highlights the importance of including young people with SEN, including those with ASC, throughout the transition planning process. However, despite the importance of students’ active participation in transition meetings, studies with ASC are less likely to do so. Studies that included a nationally representative sample of individuals with various SEND aged 11-13 found that compared with students with other SEND, those with ASC were less likely to attend, participate and lead on such meetings. A qualitative study in the UK conducted by Battersford et al. (2013) also found that very few students participated in transition meetings. The results of their interviews indicated that students preferred their parents to attend the meetings and relay information to them.

Current available research around effective ways in enabling young people with ASC to actively participate in the planning for their transition to adulthood is relatively sparse.

2. Methodology

2.1 Project Design:
Please briefly outline the design and methodological approach of the project, including the theoretical framework that informs it.
Project Design:
The researchers chose to follow the RADIO model as it provides a clear systematic and collaborative approach which could bring about positive changes in an organization (Achton, 2009). It is a 12-step model of action research that was developed with the Adult and Community Education (ACE) group of educators and researchers in mind (Timms, Shepard & Kelly, 2003). Even though this research will follow the 12 stages outlined below, it will focus on stages 5-8.

Data Collection Methods:

Reference group interviews:
The development of the framework for practice will involve interviews with the members of the ‘expert reference group’. Interviews will either be through meeting (either face-to-face or via the internet, e.g. Skype), a telephone or email conversation. In these interviews, the researcher will ask each member about their effective practices of assisting the transition of pupils with ASC to inform the planning for their transition to adulthood.

Pre-measure questionnaire and focus group:
The development of the framework for practice will also involve administration of a pre-measure questionnaire and focus group interviews with the school’s transition team, the school’s special education leader and the school’s special education assistant. These questionnaires and focus group interviews will include questions about the school’s transition team’s experience in working with transition-aged pupils with ASC, the tools and strategies they use to enable the group of pupils to be active participants in their transition plans, and the skills that they wish to develop during this period.

Observations and trialling techniques
Based on initial discussion with practitioners, the types of activities, which may be included as part of the framework include attending review meetings, use of HLT, Talking Mats and/or MAPS. However, it should be noted that any tentative ideas will only form a starting point for discussion and further development work with staff. The activities will therefore evolve dynamically in response to school need and as part of the research process.

Training of the framework will begin once the research team and the school’s transition team have agreed on the techniques that will be included in the framework. The researcher will conduct observations of staff using these techniques with the students.

Observations will be recorded on the researcher’s diary and will also inform subsequent stages of the research, which includes making the necessary adjustments to the framework.

Post-measure questionnaire and focus group to evaluate the approaches:

Towards the end of the spring term (July 2016), the school’s transition team will be asked to fill in a post-measure questionnaire and to take part in a focus group interview (copies of the post-measure focus group interview schedule and post-measure questionnaire are appended). The data from these will be used to evaluate the framework for practice.

One-to-one interview with the head teacher:
This will be conducted to further evaluate the framework for practice and the likelihood in which the school will be able to continue to use it in the future (the interview schedule is appended). It should be noted that these interviews will mostly be informal in nature and will be recorded in the researcher’s diary (see below). However, should the need arise for information from a formal one-to-one interview arise particularly towards the end of the study, it will be conducted.

Research diary
The researcher will keep a research diary which will record the researcher’s thoughts, interpretations and reflections of relevant events throughout the study, including practical and logistical issues. This will allow the researcher to record as much of the study’s activities as possible, keep a reflective stance throughout the duration of the study, and make necessary adjustments along the way (Nixon & Consell, 2002).

It should be noted that due to the nature of action research and the stages of the RADIO framework, further methods of data gathering will be decided through discussions with the school’s transition team. In these events, the researcher will come back to the ethics committee to seek further ethical approval.

Sampling:
The selection criteria for the study’s participants are as follows:

- The participants who will form the study’s ‘expert reference group’ must have experienced working with pupils with ASC aged 14-19, i.e. the planning stages of their transition to adulthood and/or the pupils’ parents and relevant staff members, in England. Due to time restrictions, this group will have no more than 3 members.
- The school in which the researcher will take place must have an identified need to improve the ways in which they collect and consider the voice of pupils with ASC to inform the planning for their transition to adulthood. This can be achieved through informal initial discussions with the researcher. The school must be located within the northwest of England.
- The staff members who are involved in the transition planning of pupils with ASC from the school that the previous criterion will also be invited to participate.

The researcher had informal discussions with the school staff and educational psychologists who have established links with the university’s educational psychology course tutor team. Following these informal discussions, initial interest have been expressed by an 11-19 specialist school’s assistant head teacher and an educational psychologist working mostly with post-16 pupils to become members of the study’s expert reference group. One school has expressed a need to improve their practice and have provided an initial consent to participate subject to the study’s ethical approval.
2.2 Data Collection Methods

Describe the research procedures/activities as they affect the study participants and any other parties involved. Which of the following will your research involve and what will you be asking your participants to do.

2.2.1. Interviews  
Yes [ ]  No [ ]

If yes, describe how these are to be conducted (Append your interview guide):

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with professionals who have previous experience in working with pupils with Autism Spectrum Conditions, particularly during the time of their transition to adulthood and staff members of the participating school who are involved in the transition to adulthood process of pupils with ASC.

The development of the framework for practice will also involve a focus group interview with the relevant staff members in the school. This will include questions about the staff members’ previous experience in working with transition-aged pupils with ASC, the tools and strategies they use to enable this group of pupils to be active participants in their transition planning, and the skills that they wish to develop in this area.

Towards the end of the spring term (June 2016), the school’s staff members will be asked to take part in a focus group interview (a copy of the post-measure focus group interview schedule is appended). The data from this will be used to evaluate the framework for practice.

One to one interviews with the head teacher will be conducted to further evaluate the framework for practice and the likelihood in which the school will be able to continue to use it in the future (the interview schedule is appended). It should be noted that these interviews will mostly be informal in nature and will be recorded in the researcher’s diary (see below). However, should the need arise for a formal one-to-one interview arise particularly towards the end of the study, it will be conducted.

2.2.2. Questionnaires  
Yes [ ]  No [ ]

If yes, how will these be delivered to and collected from participants? (Append your draft questionnaire(s)):

Questionnaires will be distributed by the participating member of the school’s senior leadership team to the relevant staff and will be collected by the researcher. (Please see appended questionnaire)

2.2.3. Observations  
Yes [ ]  No [ ]

If yes, describe the context for the observation and what participants will be engaged in. (Append copy of any observation framework or other data collection guide to be used):

Based on initial discussion with practitioners the types of activities which may be trialled as part of the framework include attending reviews, use of ICT, Talking Mats and/or MAPS. However it should be noted that these tentative ideas will only form a starting point for discussion and further development work with staff. The activities will therefore evolve dynamically in response to school need and as part of the research process.

Trialling of the framework will begin once the researcher and the staff collaboratively agree on the techniques that will be included in the framework. The researcher will conduct observations of staff using these techniques with the students. Observations will be recorded on the researcher’s diary and will also inform subsequent stages of the research, which includes making the necessary adjustments to the framework.

The researcher will submit the necessary request for amendments to the ethics committee should when the objectives and methods of the observations (if needed) have been agreed.
2.2.4 Diary
Yes [x] No [ ]
If yes, describe the context for use of the diary and what participants will be asked to do. (Append copy of the diary instructions and format).

The research diary will be used on a regular basis to record the researcher’s thoughts, interpretations and reflections of relevant events throughout the study, including practical and logistical issues. It will contain descriptions of events, notes and reflections on methodologies and a plan for any necessary adjustments. Please see appended diary format.

2.2.5 Intervention
Yes [ ] No [x]
If yes, describe the intervention and what participants will be asked to do. (Append a detailed description and any images necessary to support the description):

2.2.6 Assessments
Yes [ ] No [x]
If yes, give full details of the assessment(s) and what participants will be asked to do. (Append a copy of the assessment schedules to be used).

2.2.7 Other
Yes [x] No [ ]
If yes, give full details and what participants will be asked to do. (Append supporting documentation as appropriate).

Such is the nature of action research that further methods of data gathering have yet to be decided as they depend on collaborative discussions with the study’s participants. Please be assured that the researcher will submit the necessary request for amendments to the ethics committee should the objectives and methods of the observations (if needed) have been agreed.

2.2.8 Does data collection use video or still image?
Yes [ ] No [x]

If Yes, complete the VASTRE documentation - Available from: http://www.seed.manchester.ac.uk/studentinfo/integrativethics/stillimagerecording/

2.2.9 Research Experience

Please state your experience in conducting these research interventions or assessments (where applicable) and methodologies outlined above – provide supporting evidence (e.g. course unit code).

I am currently in my first year of training as an Educational Psychologist. Prior to this, I have worked with pupils with ASC for 8 years in a variety of educational settings which gave me the opportunity to deliver interventions and hone my communication and interaction skills that may be required for my research.

I have conducted semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews, descriptive statistical analysis and thematic analysis during my Bachelor’s and Master’s degree which were completed in 2009 and 2012, respectively. In addition, I have also attended lectures about the said methodologies as part of my current training.

2.3 Sampling
What type of sampling method do you propose to use?
2.3.1. Statistical  
Yes ☐ No ☑

**If Yes, describe the type, your justification for taking this approach and proposed sample size:**

2.3.2. Other  
Yes ☑ No ☐

**If Yes, describe the type, your justification for taking this approach and proposed sample size:**

The participant recruitment strategy that will be adopted in this research is convenience purposive sampling that is time-efficient and has been identified to be sufficient in exploratory studies of topic areas that have not been researched extensively (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011; Robson, 2002). This technique may be criticized, as the sample drawn may be unrepresentative of the target population (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). However, due to geographical limitations brought about by the monetary constraints of the researcher, the population from which the participants were to be drawn from is limited.

2.4 Analysis method

What type of analyses do you propose to use to explore this data?

2.4.1 Quantitative analyses  
Yes ☑ No ☐

**If Yes, please give details:**

Quantitative analyses will be utilised through the use of descriptive statistics using the data gathered from the quantitative questions in the pre- and post- questionnaires.

2.4.2 Qualitative analyses  
Yes ☑ No ☐

**If Yes, please give details:**

The qualitative data from the pre- and post- measure questionnaire as well as the focus group interviews will be analyzed using the Thematic Analysis (TA) framework laid out by Braun and Clarke (2006). The six stages of TA are as follows: familiarisation with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. The researcher will seek Participant Validation by speaking with each participant to improve the accuracy of his interpretations of the one-to-one interviews and focus group interview data. Since TA is subjective in nature, the researcher will seek the help of one of his colleagues from the Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology course who is an experienced thematic analyst to undertake an inter-rater reliability exercise.

2.5 Ethical Issues
Briefly state the main ethical issues raised by the methodology outlined above.

Before the study
All of the participants will be given an information sheet detailing the nature of the research and the initial data collection methods at least two weeks before the initial data collection. This allows the participants to carefully look at the nature of their participation and clarify any issues with the researcher.

Focus Groups
Some individuals may decline to participate in a focus group discussion despite initial discussions with the researcher. In this case, they will be asked to participate in a one-to-one semi-structured interview instead. The focus group interview schedule topics will still be used as a framework for these interviews.

Anonymity and confidentiality
The nature of the research design, methods of data collection and analysis, anonymity, confidentiality and the participants' right to withdraw will be explained on the information sheets given to each of the participants. They will all be given the opportunity to discuss the research in further detail with the researcher in order to better inform their decision to participate. These will be repeated during the start of each interview to remind the participants of the nature of the study and their right to withdraw.

Contact with children and vulnerable adults
Due to the nature of the research, the researcher may directly work with young people with ASC and learning difficulties. However, these incidences will be collaboratively planned with the school’s staff and necessary preparations will be undertaken. Further, no data will be collected from the students. The students’ mood and performance may be affected by my presence and/or may become distressed during the trials. The staff and I will discuss potential triggers and exit strategies and ensure that the risk of students becoming distressed is minimised. Should there be an instance when a student becomes distressed, the trial will be stopped immediately.

Right to withdraw
In the event that any participant chooses to withdraw from the study, any data collected from them will be discarded.

On-going consent
On-going consent will be sought from every participant throughout the duration of the study.

Dual-role issues
The school staff may assume that I have a dual role during the research (i.e. the school’s TEP and researcher). However, I will explain at the outset that my role throughout the duration of the research is that of a researcher only. Staff will be reminded of this role when necessary.

## 3. Participant Details

### 3.1 Characteristics of participants

Please specify the characteristics of the participants you wish to recruit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>variable</th>
<th>description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>number</td>
<td>Maximum of 3 members of expert reference group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maximum of 12 school staff members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total - 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sex</td>
<td>male and/or female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>age group(s)</td>
<td>over 18 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location(s)</td>
<td>Specialist school located in the North West of England</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2 Vulnerable groups

3.2.1. Will your project include participants from either of the following groups?
(Tick as appropriate)

☐ Children under 16 in school, youth club or other accredited organisation.

☐ Adults with learning difficulties in familiar, supportive environments.

☐ NONE OF THE ABOVE (go to item 4.)

3.2.2. Inclusion of vulnerable groups

*Please describe measures you will undertake to avoid coercion during the recruitment stage.

3.2.3. Research in UK with vulnerable groups

*Please confirm you have relevant clearance for working with vulnerable groups from DBS and/or other relevant sources.

DBS

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ NA

Other

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ NA

*If Other, please describe:

*NB: You will need a DBS application through the University. Any work related DBS clearance is not valid for your University research.

3.2.4. Please confirm that you will notify the Administrator for Ethics and Fieldwork (AEF) immediately if your DBS status changes.

☐ I will immediately notify the AEF if my DBS status changes.

☐ NA

4. Recruitment

4.1 Permission

Do you have permission to collect data from an organisational fieldwork site from...

4.1.1. The organisation where the research will take place

(e.g. School head etc.)? Yes ☑️ NA

4.1.2. Sub-settings within the organisation (e.g. class teacher etc.)? Yes ☑️ NA

☐ x

If Yes, append letter/email confirming access to this application
If not applicable, please explain why permission is not applicable.

The school's head teacher and the researcher have previously met (see appended email from the school's head teacher). The head teacher verbally expressed her permission for the researcher to collect data from the school. Formal confirmation of this will be sought after ethical approval.

4.2 Participant recruitment

4.2.1. How will your pool of potential participants be identified? (tick all that apply)

- Letters/emails and follow up phone calls to organizations
- Posters/Advertisements
- Website/Internet (including Facebook/other social media)
- Known or named client groups (students, etc.)
- Networks and recommendations
- Person in a position of authority in organisation
- Directory/database registers in public domain

Describe the nature of these routes to identify your pool of potential participants:

The LA's post-16 SEND strategy lead, along with some of the university's D.Ed Ch.Psych course tutors have suggested schools and professionals that may take part in the research.

4.2.2. Who will the potential participants be?

- Persons unknown to the researcher
- Client groups (students, etc) within an organization known by the researcher
- Persons accessed through networks and recommendations
- Persons nominated by a position of authority
- Other (describe here):

Indicate whether there is any existing relationship between yourself and the source/group of potential participants.

I have only met the individuals who have expressed an initial interest in taking part in my study during my initial scoping exercise.

4.2.3. How will you approach potential participants? (tick all that apply)

- Letter
- Email
- Website/Internet (including Facebook/other social media site)
- Presentation at meeting or similar
- Other (describe here):
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Indicate how information about your study will be delivered to potential participants and how they will (directly or indirectly) let you know they would like to take part in your research.

The head teacher who agrees to be involved with my study will be asked to distribute the information sheets and consent forms to the relevant staff in their school. I will then meet with the said practitioners to discuss the study and ask for their approval to be involved.

The professionals who may form the study’s ‘expert reference group’ will be contacted directly through email.

Append text of letters / emails / posters / advertisements / presentation etc

4.2.4 How will you ensure those interested in the research are fully informed about the study and what will be expected of them if they take part?

Information giving will be undertaken through:

- Letter
- * Email
- Website/internet (including Facebook/other social media site)
- Telephone
- Information sheet (covering headings in University template)
- Presentation at meeting or similar
- Other (describe here):

Append text of recruitment letters / emails / information sheet to this application

Information giving will be undertaken by:

- * the researcher
- Someone in a position of authority
- A neutral third party to known or named client groups
- Other (describe here):

Provide details on how you will fully inform potential participants about your study:

As mentioned, the participants will be given information sheets and informed consent forms detailing the specific methods for data gathering, analysis and reporting. They will also be given the opportunity to discuss the study to clarify any queries they may have prior to giving their consent.

4.2.5 Information accessibility

What arrangements have you made to ensure information is accessible to those unable to read standard English? [low literacy level, non-English speaker, persons with learning disabilities]

Information sheets are appropriately worded. In the event that participants may need the information to be presented in a different format, for example larger or smaller prints, in different coloured paper, or with visual prompts, these will be accommodated.

Please confirm
I have supplied information relevant to each participating group

× The information provided follows the guidance provided in the
University of Manchester Participant Information Sheet Template

4.2.6 Decision period

How long will the participant have to decide whether to take part in the study? If you are proposing a
decision period of less than 2 weeks, full justification for this approach should be given.

The participants will be given two weeks to decide.

4.2.7 Incentives

State any payment or any other incentive that is being made to any study participant. Specify and state the level of payment to be made and/or the source of the funds/gift/free service to be used and the justification for it.

N/A

4.2.8 Avoiding coercion

How will your recruitment methods avoid putting any overt or covert pressure on vulnerable individuals
to consent (children, junior colleagues, adults with learning disabilities)?

All participants will be assured that their participation is fully voluntary and that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any point without any consequences.

4.3 Consent

4.3.1 How will participants’ consent to take part be recorded?

× Implied consent - return/submission of completed questionnaire

× Written consent form matching University template

× Verbally (give details of how this will be recorded)

× Other method (give details here):

Append text of consent forms/consent taking procedure to this application.

Please confirm: 

× My consent taking procedures are relevant to each participating group

× The consent taking procedures follow the guidance provided in the
University of Manchester Consent Form Template

4.3.2 Special arrangements

Please outline any special consent taking arrangements relevant to your research study.

5. Participation in the research

5.1 Duration
How long will each participant be expected to take part in activities?

The development and piloting of the framework for practice will take place for 5 months.

Interviews with the members of the ‘expert reference group’ will last for no longer than 1 hour each.

The focus group interviews will last for no longer than 1 hour each.

The one-to-one interviews with the head teacher will take 2 hours in total.

The questionnaires will take no longer than 20 minutes to complete.

5.2 Benefits to participation

Are there any benefits to participation for participants (beyond incentive noted above)?

The study aims to improve the school’s practice of enabling young pupils with ASC to actively participate in the planning for their transition to adulthood. Therefore, through this research, the students will be better able to communicate their thoughts and contribute to the transition process.

5.3 Deficits to participation

Will any benefit or service otherwise received by participants be withheld (e.g. pupil misses lesson, or part thereof) as a consequence of taking part in this study?

The interviews and researcher visits will take place at the most convenient time for the participants. However, this may still cause the participants to miss important activities during school hours. Some meetings may take place during the end of the school day, e.g. from 4pm.

6. Risks and Safeguards

Please outline any adverse effects or risks for participants in respect of the methods you have indicated in Section 2B [Interview; Questionnaire; Interventions; Assessments; Observation; Diary keeping; Other activity]

6.1 Physical risks

6.1.1 Potential

What is the potential for adverse effects of a physical nature; risks or hazards; pain, discomfort, distress, inconvenience, or change in lifestyle / normal routine for participants?

As mentioned, meetings may take place during the end of the school day which may cause inconvenience to participants.

The students whom the participant work with, although not directly participating in the study, may become anxious due to the change in their routine when the staff leaves, e.g. for focus group discussions. In response to this, the researcher and the relevant school staff will plan with the researcher to ensure that the students are well prepared and briefed for the interview.

6.1.2 Safeguards:
What precautions or measures have been taken to minimise or mitigate the risks identified above?

Interviews (and other activities) will be organised to ensure that negative implications to both the staff and the students will be minimal.

Should the students become distressed due to the change of routines, despite careful advanced planning, the interviews (or other activities) will be stopped and rescheduled.

6.2 Psychological risks

6.2.1 Potential

Will any topic discussed (questionnaire, group discussion or individual interview) potentially be sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting, or is it possible that criminal or other disclosures requiring action could take place during the project?

Although the likelihood is minimal, participants may disclose information that are sensitive and/or offensive to other participants which may cause distress and/or anxiety.

Even though I am not directly working with students, their mood and/or performance may be affected by my presence and/or may become distressed during the trials.

6.2.2 Safeguards

What precautions or measures have been taken to minimise or mitigate the risks identified above?

Participants will be reminded at the start of the interview that they have the right to withdraw. Further, before each focus group interview the participants will be reminded to carefully consider the well-being of other participants throughout the interview.

Participants will be reminded that all the data they provide will be anonymised fully. Confidentiality will be assured but the participants will also be made aware of the possibility that confidentiality will be terminated in cases of child protection issues.

The staff and I will discuss potential triggers and exit strategies and ensure that the risk of students becoming distressed is minimised. Should there be an instance when a student becomes distressed; the trial will be stopped immediately.

6.3 Risks for you as researcher

It is important that the potential for adverse effects, risks or hazards, pain, discomfort, distress, or inconvenience, of a physical or psychological nature to you as the researcher have been assessed. This is a requirement by law. Risk to you are identified as part of the RREA/FRA process. Ensure this assessment has been completed by either:

a. A completed and approved Fieldwork Risk Assessment (FRA), or
b. A signed Low Risk Fieldwork Declaration in Section D of RREA form.

Briefly state here the conclusions of your assessment and append a copy of your approved FRA form (if required), in addition to your RREA, to this application.

This research satisfies all of the low risk fieldwork statements' on the RREA form (appendix). The research is identified as a "medium risk" as the research involves potential direct contact with vulnerable participants (pupils with ASC).

6.4 Early termination of the research

6.4.1 Criteria
6.4.2 Please confirm by ticking here that:

- [x] any adverse event requiring radical change of method/design or abandonment will be reported in the first instance to your research supervisor and then to the MIE RIC Chair

### 7. Data Protection and Confidentiality

#### 7.1 Data activities and storage of personal data

Will the study use any of the following activities at any stage?

- [x] Electronic transfer by email or computer networks
- [ ] Use of personal addresses, postcodes, fax, e-mail or telephone numbers
- [x] Publication of direct quotations from respondents
- [ ] Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals
- [x] Use of audio/visual recording devices
- [ ] Sharing data with other organisations
- [ ] Export of data outside EU

Will the study store personal data on any of the following?

- [x] Manual files
- [ ] Home or other personal computers
- [x] Laptop computers
- [ ] University computers
- [ ] Private company computers
- [ ] NHS computers

#### 7.2 Confidentiality of personal data

What measures have been put in place to ensure confidentiality of personal data? Give details of whether any encryption or other anonymisation procedures have been used and at what stage?

Audio recordings will be stored in a secured location (locked cupboard) and destroyed immediately after transcription. Data will be transcribed and will be fully anonymised during analysis and reporting. Electronic data will be stored in an encrypted/ password protected laptop and USB stick. Personal information of the participants will be encrypted as well and kept separate from the data.

All data will be destroyed when they are no longer needed for research.

#### 7.3 Research monitoring and auditing

Please confirm:

- The student researcher's supervisor(s) will monitor the research [x]
7.4 Data Protection
Please provide confirmation that you will employ measures that comply with the Data Protection Act and the University Data Protection Policy (UDPP)?

Data Protection Act: I confirm that all data collected will be:
- Fairly and lawfully processed
- Processed for limited purposes as outlined in this application and only used in the way(s) for which consent has been given
- Adequate for the purpose, relevant and not excessive
- Accurate
- Not kept longer than necessary
- Processed in accordance with the participant’s rights
- Secure – on an encrypted storage device
- Only transferred to other settings with appropriate protection.

University Data Protection Policy (UDPP): I confirm
- My data and its storage will comply with the UDPP
- Paper copies of data and encrypted storage devices will be stored in a locked draw or cupboard
- For UG research: On completion of my research, the data will be kept until the study has been completed and will then be shredded/destroyed
- For PGT/PGE research: On completion of my research, the data will be passed to my supervisor for archiving at the University for a period of 3 years after which it will be shredded/destroyed

7.5 Privacy during data analysis: Please confirm:
- Analysis will be undertaken by the student researcher
- Analysis will take place in a private study area

If other arrangements apply please describe:
N/A

7.6 Custody and control of the data: Please confirm:
- The student researcher’s supervisor will have custody of the data
- The student researcher will have control of the data

If other arrangements apply please describe:
N/A

7.7 Access to the data:
- The student researcher will have access to the data
- The student’s supervisor(s) will have access to anonymised data
If other/additional arrangements apply, please describe:
N/A

7.3 Use of data in future studies:
Will the data be stored for use in future studies?  Yes [x]  No [ ]
If Yes, confirm this is addressed in the information giving/consent taking process by ticking here.  [x]
8. Reporting Arrangements

8.1 Dissemination
How do you intend to report and disseminate the results of the study? (Tick all that apply)
- Peer reviewed scientific journals
- Book / Chapter contribution
- Published review (ESRC, Cochrane)
- Internal report
- Conference presentation
- Thesis / dissertation
- Other e.g. Creative works (describe here):

8.2 Participant and Community Feedback
How will the results of research be made available to research participants and communities from which they are drawn? (Tick all that apply)
- Written feedback to research participants
- Presentation to participants or relevant community groups
- Other e.g. Video / Website (describe here):

9. Research Sponsorship

9.1 External Funding
Are you in receipt of any external funding for your study? (Tick one)
- External Funding
- No external funding

If you have funding please provide details:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UK Contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9.2 Sponsoring Organisation
Who will be responsible for governance and insuring the study? (Tick one)
- The University of Manchester
- Other organisation

If not UoM, provide details of who will act as sponsor of the research and their insurance details
10. Conflict of Interest

Have any conflicts of interest been identified in relation to this project? (tick at least one option)

☐ Payment for doing this research?
   If so, how much and on what basis?

☐ Direct personal involvement in the research of a spouse/funder?
   If so, please provide details:

☐ Does your department the University receive payment (apart from costs)?
   If so, please provide details:

x NONE of the ABOVE APPLY

Thank you
This is the end of the form

Please use the checklist below to ensure that you append all necessary supporting documents:

CHECKLIST

Please tick to indicate whether the document is APPENDED OR NOT APPLICABLE for this application.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Documents:</th>
<th>Appended</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Draft copy of each data collection instrument named in Q2.2 (Questionnaire, Interview guide, etc)</td>
<td>1 Semi-structured interview schedule for expert reference group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Semi-structured focus group interview schedule for school staff (pre- and post-measure)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Semi-structured interview schedule for Head Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Questionnaires for staff (pre- and post-measure)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video and Still Image Recording Declaration (VASTRE)</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant recruitment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter(s) of permission to conduct research within each organisation</td>
<td>2 'invitation for participation' email – one for schools and 1 for 'expert reference group' members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment advertisement(s) specified in Q4.2.1 (poster/email/letter/presentation)</td>
<td>As above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Information giving – one for each participant type specified in Q3.1 (Information sheet/letter/email/script)</td>
<td>1 Information Sheet for potential members of the 'expert reference group' 1 Information Sheet for school staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consent taking – one for each participant type specified in Q3.1 (Consent form or alternative procedure)</td>
<td>1 Consent Form for potential members of the 'expert reference group' 1 Consent Form for school staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fieldwork risk assessment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fieldwork Risk Assessment Form (approved)</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RREA form Low Risk Fieldwork Declaration (Section C) completed</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### SECTION 3: MINOR AMENDMENT TO RESEARCH PROJECT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application for Approval of Minor Amendment(^{27}) to a Research Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Details of proposed amendment (please give as much detail as possible)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervisor Declaration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I agree that the amendment proposed does not change the character of the research or the participant groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I confirm that the research risk assessment for the study as MEDIUM remains.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervisor's signature*</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Please send applications for amendment to ethical approval for MEDIUM risk research to the Manchester Institute Administrator for Ethics and Fieldwork at ethics.education@manchester.ac.uk who will pass on the request to the RJC member who authorised the original application whenever possible.

\(^{27}\) Minor amendments are those that do not alter the character of the research or the participant groups.
Appendix 14: Amendments to ethics

Manchester Institute of Education
Ethical Approval Application Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RLA reference</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date received</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Date approved</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

This ethical approval application form has been revised to incorporate changes made to the new University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) Form. It has been designed to incorporate prompts for information needed to ascertain whether the proposed research matches MIE’s research template pre-approved by UREC and to facilitate completion of the form to a standard that will allow speedier review, and approvals, by RIC members. Please follow all directions contained in this document.

SECTION 1: Student Details/Identification of the person responsible for the research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Student</th>
<th>Rainart Fayette</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student ID (quoted on library swipe card)</td>
<td>8044761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email Address</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rainart.fayette@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk">rainart.fayette@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of Supervisor</td>
<td>Dr. Caroline Bond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor email</td>
<td><a href="mailto:caroline.bond@manchester.ac.uk">caroline.bond@manchester.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme (PhD, Prof Doc, MEd, PGCE, MSc, BA etc)</td>
<td>Ed. in Educational and Child Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year of Study</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full/Part-time</td>
<td>Full time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Title of Research Project: An exploratory case study on special schools’ practice of eliciting the views of pupils with ASC for transition to adulthood

Recruitment and Data Collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>On receipt of confirmation of ethical approval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>End Date</td>
<td>July 2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Location(s) where the project will be carried out:

Within the premises of two specialist schools in the North West of England

Student Signature: [Signature]

Supervisor Signature: [Signature]

** Supervisor signature confirms that the student has the relevant experience, knowledge and skills to carry out the study in an appropriate manner.
SECTION 2: PROJECT DETAILS
(Please write your answers in the boxes provided. Boxes will expand to fit answers as necessary)

1. Aims and Objectives of the Project

1.1 Research Question

This research aims to explore special schools’ practice of eliciting the views of pupils with ASC to contribute to the planning for their transition to adulthood. The study’s research questions are as follows:

- How do special schools elicit the views of young pupils in with Autism Spectrum Conditions in preparation for transition to adulthood?
- To what extent is pupil voice represented in transition meetings and subsequent transition plans?
- To what extent are these processes perceived to be effective?

1.2. Academic justification

Transition to adulthood can be a particularly stressful experience for young people with ASC due to the multiple changes that happen during this time and the numerous decisions that they and the people around them make that impact multiple aspects of their lives such as education, employment and living arrangements (Rudzewska, 2012; Schuleberg & Schoon, 2012). With an increasing emphasis on future outcomes of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including those with ASC placed upon local authorities and professionals by the UK’s government through the recent SEN Code of Practice (SENCoP; DfE, 2014) and England’s National Strategy for Adults with Autism (FNMG, 2014), the need for effective transition planning should be addressed.

The UK’s recent SENCoP (DfE, 2014) emphasised that transition planning should be person-centred, which highlights the importance of including young people with SEND, including those with ASC, throughout the transition planning process. However, despite the importance of students’ active participation in transition meetings, students with ASC are less likely to do so. Studies that included a nationally representative sample of individuals with various SEND aged 11-19 found that compared with students with other SEND, those with ASC were less likely to attend, participate and lead on such meetings. A qualitative study in the UK conducted by Bensford et al. (2013) also found that very few students participated in transition meetings. The results of their interviews indicated that students preferred their parents to attend the meetings and relay information to them.

Current available research around effective ways in enabling young people with ASC to actively participate in the planning for their transition to adulthood is relatively sparse.

2. Methodology

2.1 Project Design:
Please briefly outline the design and methodological approach of the project, including the theoretical framework that informs it.

**Project Design:**
The design of this study will be an embedded multiple case study design with two separate cases (Yin, 2014). In this study, each school’s post-16 transition process will be treated as separate cases. There will be three embedded units of analysis: a) the schools’ processes of eliciting the views of young people with ASC, b) the extent to which these views are represented in their transition meetings and subsequent plans, and c) the perceived effectiveness of these processes (see diagram below).

**Case study diagram:**

```
Case 1: School A’s post-16 transition process
  EIVA 1: School A’s processes of eliciting views
  EIVA 2: The extent to which views are represented
  EIVA 3: Perceived efficacy of the process

Case 2: School B’s post-16 transition process
  EIVA 1: School B’s processes of eliciting views
  EIVA 2: The extent to which views are represented
  EIVA 3: Perceived efficacy of the process
```

**Data Collection Methods:**

**Semi-structured interviews**
The members of staff from both schools who are involved in eliciting the views of pupils with ASC for transition planning will be interviewed either individually or within a focus group. The interviews will include questions about the staff members’ roles in working with transition-aged pupils with ASC, the tools and strategies they use to enable this group of pupils to be active participants in their transition planning, the representation of the pupils’ views in the transition plans and the efficacy of their schools’ processes.

**Observation of transition review meetings**
The data from the interviews will be triangulated from those collected through observations of transition review meetings in each school. The aim of these observations is to explore the extent to which the pupils’ views are represented.

**Research diary**
The researcher will keep a research diary which will record the researcher’s thoughts, interpretations and reflections of relevant events throughout the study, including practical and logistical issues. This will allow the researcher to record as much of the study’s activities as possible, keep a reflective stance throughout the duration of the study, and make necessary adjustments along the way (Nelin & Cassell, 2006; Bulman, 2002).

**Sampling:**
The selection criteria for the study’s participants are as follows:

- The special schools in which the research will take place must have an established process in which they collect and consider the voice of pupils with ASC to inform the planning for their transition to adulthood.
- The special schools must be located within northwest of England and must have pupils with ASC who are within the ages of 14-18, which is the period of transition planning as advised by the DfE.
- The staff members who are involved in the transition planning of pupils with ASC from the school that meets the previous criteria will be invited to participate.

The researcher conducted an initial scoping exercise to find out local schools’ practice around transition planning for pupils with ASC. The researcher conducted informal interviews with school staff and educational psychologists who have established links with the university’s educational psychology course tutor team. Following these informal interviews, initial interest have been expressed by two 11-19 specialist schools that meet the first and second inclusion criteria.
### Data Collection Methods:
Describe the research procedures/activities as they affect the study participant and any other parties involved. Which of the following will your research involve and what will you be asking your participants to do.

#### 2.2.1. Interviews
- Yes [x]  
- No [ ]

If yes, describe how these are to be conducted (append your interview guide):

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with school staff who are involved in the transition to adulthood process of pupils with ASC.

#### 2.2.2. Questionnaires
- Yes [ ]  
- No [x]

If yes, how will these be delivered to and collected from participants? (Append a draft questionnaires):

#### 2.2.3. Observations
- Yes [x]  
- No [ ]

If yes, describe the context for the observation and what participants will be engaged in. (Append copy of any observation framework or other data collection guide to be used):

The researcher will observe transition review meetings in both of the participating schools. The meetings will likely include members of the schools’ staff, the students undergoing transition, their parents/guardians, representatives from the local authority, health, social care and prospective colleges.

#### 2.2.4. Diary
- Yes [x]  
- No [ ]

If yes, describe the context for use of the diary and what participants will be asked to do. (Append copy of the diary instructions and format):

The research diary will be used on a regular basis to record the researcher’s thoughts, interpretations and reflections of relevant events throughout the study, including practical and logistical issues. It will contain descriptions of events, notes and reflections on methodologies and a plan for any necessary adjustments. Please see appended diary format.

#### 2.2.5. Intervention
- Yes [ ]  
- No [x]
if yes, describe the intervention and what participants will be asked to do. (Append a detailed description and any images necessary to support the description):

22.6. Assessment

Yes [ ] No [x]

If yes, give full details of the assessment(s) and what participants will be asked to do. (Append a copy of the assessment schedules to be used):

22.7. Other

Yes [ ] No [ ]

If yes, give full details of what participants will be asked to do. (Append supporting documentation as appropriate):

22.8. Does data collection use video or still image? Yes [ ] No [x]

If yes, complete the VASTRE documentation - Available from http://www.sed.manchester.ac.uk/staffstru/notesandtheses/interventionvideoandimagerepository/

22.9 Research Experience

Please state your experience in conducting these research interventions or assessments (where applicable) and methodologies outlined above - provide supporting evidence (e.g. course unit code).

I am currently in my first year of training as an Educational Psychologist. Prior to this, I have worked with pupils with ASC for 8 years in a variety of educational settings which gave me the opportunity to deliver interventions and hone my communication and interaction skills that may be required for my research.

I have conducted semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews, descriptive statistical analysis and thematic analysis during my Bachelor's and Master's degree which were completed in 2009 and 2013, respectively. In addition, I have also attended lectures about the said methodologies as part of my current training.

2.3 Sample

What type of sampling method do you propose to use?

2.3.1 Statistical

Yes [ ] No [x]
If Yes, describe the type, your justification for taking this approach and proposed sample size:

2.3.2. Other

Yes  x  No  

If Yes, describe the type, your justification for taking this approach and proposed sample size:

The participant recruitment strategy that will be adopted in this research is convenience purposive sampling that is time-efficient and has been identified to be sufficient in exploratory studies of topic areas that have not been researched extensively (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011; Robson, 2002). This technique may be criticized, as the sample drawn may be unrepresentative of the target population (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). However, due to geographical limitations brought about by the monetary constraints of the researcher, the population from which the participants were to be drawn from is limited.

2.4 Analysis method

What type of analyses do you propose to use to explore this data?

2.4.1. Quantitative analyses

Yes  x  No  

If Yes, please give details:

2.4.2 Qualitative analyses

Yes  x  No  

If Yes, please give details:

The qualitative data from the interviews will be analysed using the Thematic Analysis (TA) framework laid out by Braun and Clarke (2006). The six stages of TA are as follows: familiarisation with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report.

2.5 Ethical Issues
Briefly state the main ethical issues raised by the methodology outlined above.

Before the study

All of the participants will be given an information sheet detailing the nature of the research and the initial data collection methods at least two weeks before the initial data collection. This allows the participants to carefully look at the nature of their participation and clarify any issues with the researcher.

Focus Groups (if possible)

Some individuals may decline to participate in a focus group discussion despite initial discussions with the researcher. In this case, they will be asked to participate in a one-to-one semi-structured interview instead. The focus group interview schedule topics will still be used as a framework for these interviews.

Anonymity and confidentiality

The nature of the research design, methods of data collection and analysis, anonymity, confidentiality and the participants' right to withdraw will be explained on the information sheets given to each of the participants. They will all be given the opportunity to discuss the research in further detail with the researcher in order to better inform their decision to participate. These will be repeated during the start of each interview to remind the participants of the nature of the study and their right to withdraw.

Contact with children and vulnerable adults

The researcher will not directly work with young people with ASC and learning difficulties. However, the practicalities of his attendance in the review meeting will be collaboratively planned with the school's staff and necessary preparations will be undertaken. Further, no data will be collected from the students.

Right to withdraw

In the event that any participant chooses to withdraw from the study, any data collected from them will be discarded.

3. Participant Details

3.1 Characteristics of participants

Please specify the characteristics of the participants you wish to recruit:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>number</th>
<th>Maximum of 15 school staff members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sex</td>
<td>male and/ or female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>age group(s)</td>
<td>over 18 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location(s)</td>
<td>Two specialist schools located in the North West of England</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2 Vulnerable groups
3.2.1. Will your project include participants from either of the following groups? (Tick as appropriate)

☐ Children under 16 in school, youth club or other accredited organisation.

☐ Adults with learning difficulties in familiar, supportive environment

x) NONE OF THE ABOVE (go to item 4.)

3.2.2. Inclusion of vulnerable groups

Please describe measures you will undertake to avoid coercion during the recruitment stage.

3.2.3. Research in UK with vulnerable groups
Please confirm you have relevant clearance for working with vulnerable groups from DBS and/or other relevant sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DBS*</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*NB: You will need a DBS application through the University. Any work related DBS clearance is not valid for your University research.

3.2.4. Please confirm that you will notify the Administrator for Ethical Fieldwork (AEF) immediately if your DBS status changes.

I will immediately notify the AEF if my DBS status changes: x)

NA

4. Recruitment

4.1. Permission:
Do you have permission to collect data from an organisation’s fieldwork site from...

4.1.1. The organisation where the research will take place (e.g. School head etc.)? Yes: x) NA

4.1.2. Sub-settings within the organisation (e.g. class teacher etc.)? Yes: ☐ NA: x)

If Yes, append letter/email confirming access to this application.
If NA, please explain why permission is not applicable.

Members of both schools' senior leadership team and the researcher have previously met and discussed the study. The said members of the senior leadership team from both school verbally expressed her permission for the researcher to collect data from their schools.

4.2 Participant recruitment

4.2.1. How will your pool of potential participants be identified? (tick all that apply)
- Letters/emails and follow up phone calls to organisations
- Posters/Advertisements
- Website/Internet (including Facebook/other social media)
- Known or named client groups (students, etc.)
- Networks and recommendations
- * Person in a position of authority in organisation
- Directory/database/register in public domain

Describe the nature of these sources to identify your pool of potential participants.

The LAs’s post-16 SEND strategy lead, along with some of the university’s D.Ed Ch. Psych course tutors, have suggested schools and professionals that may take part in the research.

4.2.2. Who will the potential participants be?
- * Persons unknown to the researcher
- * Client groups (students, etc) within an organisation known by the researcher
- * Persons accessed through networks and recommendations
- * Persons nominated by a position of authority
- Other (describe here):

Indicate whether there is any existing relationship between yourself and the source/group of potential participants.

I have only met the individuals who have expressed an initial interest in taking part in my study during my initial scoping exercise.
Information giving will be undertaken by:

- the researcher
- someone in a position of authority
- a neutral third party to known or named client groups:
- Other (describe here):

4.2.3. How will you approach potential participants? (tick all that apply)

- Letter
- Email
- Website/internet (including Facebook/other social media site)
- Presentation at meeting or similar
- Other (describe here):

Indicate how information about your study will be delivered to potential participants and how they will (directly or indirectly) let you know they would like to take part in your research.

The head teacher who agrees to be involved with my study will be asked to distribute the information sheets and consent forms to the relevant staff in their school. I will then meet with the said practitioners to discuss the study and ask for their approval to be involved.

Append text of letters / emails / posters / advertisements / presentation etc

4.2.4. How will you ensure those interested in the research are fully informed about the study and what will be expected of them if they take part?

Information giving will be undertaken through:

- Letter
- Email
- Website/internet (including Facebook/other social media site)
- Telephone
- Information sheet (covering headings in University template)
- Presentation at meeting or similar
- Other (describe here):

Append text of recruitment letters / emails / information sheet to this application

Provide details on how you will fully inform potential participants about your study.

As mentioned, the participants will be given information sheets and informed consent forms detailing the specific methods for data gathering, analysis and reporting. They will also be given the opportunity to discuss the study to clarify any queries they may have prior to giving their consent.

4.2.5 Information accessibility
What arrangements have you made to ensure information is accessible to those unable to read standard English? (low literacy level, non-English speaker, persons with learning disabilities)

Information sheets are appropriately worded. In the event that participants may need the information to be presented in a different format, for example larger or smaller print, in different coloured paper, or with visual prompts, these will be accommodated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please confirm:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have supplied information relevant to each participating group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X The information provided follows the guidance provided in the University of Manchester Participant Information Sheet Template</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.6 Decision period

How long will the participant have to decide whether to take part in the study? If you are proposing a decision period of less than 2 weeks, full justification for this approach should be given.

The participants will be given two weeks to decide.

4.2.7 Incentives

State any payment or any other incentive that is being made to any study participant. Specify and state the level of payment to be made and/or the source of the funds/gift/free service to be used and the justification for it.

N/A

4.2.8 Avoiding coercion

How will your recruitment methods avoid putting any overt or covert pressure on vulnerable individuals to consent (children, junior colleagues, adults with learning disabilities)?

All participants will be assured that their participation is fully voluntary and that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any point without any consequences.

4.4 Consent

4.4.1 How will participants’ consent to take part be recorded?

- [X] Written consent form using University template

Append text of consent forms/consent taking procedure to this application.
4.3.2 Special arrangements

Please outline any special consent taking arrangements relevant to your research study.

5. Participation in the research

5.1 Duration

How long will each participant be expected to take part in activities?

The focus group (or one-to-one) interviews will last for no longer than 1 hour each.

The observations will last for the full duration of the transition review meetings.

5.2 Benefits to participation

Are there any benefits to participation for participants (beyond incentive noted above)?

The study aims to explore schools' practice of eliciting the views of young pupils with ASC for the planning for their transition to adulthood. Therefore, through this research, schools' and colleges' practice of eliciting the views of pupils with ASC for their transition to adulthood may improve.

5.3 Deficits to participation

Will any benefit or service otherwise received by participants be withheld (e.g. pupil misses lesson, or part thereof) as a consequence of taking part in this study?

The interviews and researcher visits will take place at the most convenient time for the participants. Some meetings may take place during the end of the school day, e.g. from 4pm.

6. Risks and Safeguards

Please outline any adverse effects or risks for participants in respect of the methods you have indicated in Section 1B (Interview; Questionnaire; Interventions; Assessment; Observation; Diary keeping; Other activity)
6.1 Physical risks

6.1.1 Potential

What is the potential for adverse effects of a physical nature, risks or hazards, pain, discomfort, distress, inconvenience, or change in lifestyle/norm routine for participants?

As mentioned, meetings may take place during the end of the school day which may cause inconvenience to participants.

The students whom the participant work with, although not directly participating in the study, may become anxious due to the change in their routine when the staff leaves, e.g., for focus group discussions. In response to this, the researcher and the relevant school staff will plan with the researcher to ensure that the students are well prepared and briefed for the interview.

6.1.2 Safeguards

What precautions or measures have been taken to minimise or mitigate the risks identified above?

Interviews and observations will be organized to ensure that negative implications to both the staff and the students will be minimal.

Should the students become distressed due to the change of routines, despite careful advanced planning, the interviews and observations will be stopped and re-scheduled.

6.2 Psychological risks

6.2.1 Potential

Will any topics discussed (questionnaire, group discussion, or individual interview) potentially be sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting, or is it possible that criminal or other disclosures requiring action could take place during the project?

Although the likelihood is minimal, participants may disclose information that are sensitive and/or offensive to other participants which may cause distress and/or anxiety.

Recalled experiences may induce anxiety or stress for the participants. In response, the researcher will make sure that a practitioner from the school (SENCo, teacher or TA) will be available during the initial visit and during and after the interview. In case the students need to be distracted or reassured. The students will be reminded that they have the right to terminate the interview at any point, refuse to answer any question, and ask for breaks during the interview.

6.2.2 Safeguards
What precautions or measures have been taken to minimise or mitigate the risks identified above?

Participants will be reminded at the start of the interview that they have the right to withdraw. Further, before each focus group interview, the participants will be reminded to carefully consider the well-being of other participants throughout the interview.

Participants will be reminded that all the data they provide will be anonymized fully. Confidentiality will be assured but the participants will also be made aware of the possibility that confidentiality will be terminated in cases of child protection issues.

6.3 Risks for you as researcher

It is important that the potential for adverse effects, risks or hazards, pain, discomfort, distress, or inconvenience, of a physical or psychological nature to you as the researcher have been assessed. This is a requirement by law. Risks to you are identified as part of the RREA. FRA process. Ensure this assessment has been completed by either:

   a. a completed and approved Fieldwork Risk Assessment (FRA), or
   b. a signed Low Risk Fieldwork Declaration in Section D of RREA form.

Briefly state here the conclusions of your assessment and append a copy of your approved FRA form (if required) in addition to your RREA, to this application:

This research satisfies all of the 'low risk fieldwork statements' on the RREA form (appended). The research is identified as a 'medium risk' as the research involves potential direct contact with vulnerable participants (pupils with ASC).

6.4 Early termination of the research

6.4.1 Criteria

What are the criteria for electively stopping the research prematurely?

The data collection will stop if participants and/or the school as a whole decide to withdraw.

6.4.2 Please confirm, by ticking here, that:

☐ any adverse event requiring radical change of method/desgin or abandonment will be reported in the first instance to your research supervisor and then to the MIE RIC Chair

7. Data Protection and confidentiality

7.1 Data activities: and storage of personal data

Will the study use any of the following activities at any stage?
202

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Electronic transfer by email or computer networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, e-mails or telephone numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Publication of direct quotations from respondents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Use of audio/visual recording devices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sharing data with other organisations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Export of data outside EU</td>
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Will the study store personal data on any of the following?

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Manual files</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Home or other personal computers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Laptop computers</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### 7.1 Confidentiality of personal data

What measures have been put in place to ensure confidentiality of personal data? Give details of whether any encryption or other anonymisation procedures have been used and at what stage?

Audio recordings will be stored in a secured location (locked cupboard) and destroyed immediately after transcription. Data will be transcribed and will be fully anonymised during analysis and reporting. Electronic data will be stored in an encrypted/password protected laptop and USB stick. Personal information of the participants will be encrypted as well and kept separate from the data.

All data will be destroyed when they are no longer needed for research.

### 7.2 Research monitoring and auditing

Please confirm:

The student researcher’s supervisor(s) will monitor the research

If other arrangements apply please specify:

### 7.4 Data Protection

Please provide confirmation that you will employ measures that comply with the Data Protection Act and the University Data Protection Policy (UDPPI)?

**Data Protection Act:** I confirm that all data collected will be:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Fairly and lawfully processed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Processed for limited purposes as outlined in this application and only used in the way(s) for which consent has been given</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Adequate for the purpose, relevant and not excessive

x Accurate

x Not kept longer than necessary

x Processed in accordance with the participant’s rights

x Secure – on an encrypted storage device

x Only transferred to other settings with appropriate protection.

University Data Protection Policy (UDPP): I confirm:

x My data and its storage will comply with the UDPP

x Paper copies of data and encrypted storage devices will be stored in a locked drawer or cupboard

For UG research: On completion of my research, the data will be kept until the study has been completed and will then be shredded/destroyed

For PGT/PGR research: On completion of my research, the data will be passed to my supervisor for archiving at the University for a period of 7 years after which it will be shredded/destroyed

7.5 Privacy during data analysis: Please confirm:

x Analysis will be undertaken by the student researcher

x Analysis will take place in a private study area

If other arrangements apply please describe:

N/A

7.6 Custody and control of the data: Please confirm:

x The student researcher’s supervisor will have custody of the data

x The student researcher will have control of the data

If other arrangements apply please describe:

N/A

7.7 Access to the data:

x The student researcher will have access to the data

x The student’s supervisor(s) will have access to anonymised data

If other/additional arrangements apply, please describe:

N/A

7.8 Use of data in future studies:

N/A
Will the data be stored for use in future studies?  

Yes [x]  
No [ ]

If Yes, confirm this is addressed in the information giving/consent taking process by ticking here. [x]
8. Reporting Arrangements

8.1 Dissemination
How do you intend to report and disseminate the results of the study? (Tick all that apply)

- Peer reviewed scientific journals
- Book / Chapter contribution
- Published review (ESRC, Cochrane)
- Internal report
- Conference presentation
- Thesis/dissertation
- Other e.g. Creative works (describe here):

8.2 Participant and community feedback
How will the results of research be made available to research participants and communities from which they are drawn? (Tick all that apply)

- Written feedback to research participants
- Presentation to participants or relevant community groups
- Other e.g. Video/Website (describe here):

9. Research Sponsorship

9.1 External funding
Are you in receipt of any external funding for your study? (tick one)

- External Funding
- No external funding

If you have funding please provide detail:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UK Contact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9.2 Sponsoring organisation
Who will be responsible for governance and insuring the study? (tick one)

- The University of Manchester
- Other organisation
If not, provide details of who will act as sponsor of the research and their insurance details.

10. Conflict of Interest
Have any conflicts of interest been identified in relation to this project? (tick at least one option)

☐ Payment for doing this research?
   If so, how much and on what basis?

☒ Direct personal involvement in the research of a spouse/husband?
   If so, please provide details:

☐ Does your department or the University receive payment (apart from costs)?
   If so, please provide details:

☒ NONE of the ABOVE APPLY

Thank you.
This is the end of the form.

Please use the checklist below to ensure that you append all necessary supporting documents.

CHECKLIST

Please tick to indicate whether the document is APPENDED OR NOT APPLICABLE for this application.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Documents</th>
<th>Appended</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data collection instruments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft copy of each data collection instrument named in Q2.1 (Questionnaire, Interview guide, etc)</td>
<td>1 Semi-structured interview schedule 1 Observation notes template</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video and Still Image Recording Declaration (VASTEE)</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant recruitment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter(s) of permission to conduct research within each organisation</td>
<td>1 letter to school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment advertisement(s) specified in Q4.2.1 (poster/email/letter/presentation)</td>
<td>As above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Information giving – one for each participant type specified in Q3.1 (Information sheet/letter/email/script)</td>
<td>1 Information Sheet for school staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consent taking – one for each participant type specified in Q3.1 (Consent form or alternative procedure)</td>
<td>1 Consent Form for school staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fieldwork risk assessment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fieldwork Risk Assessment Form (approved)</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RREA form Low Risk Fieldwork Declaration (Section C) completed</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION 3: MINOR AMENDMENT TO RESEARCH PROJECT

Application for Approval of Minor Amendment to a Research Study

Details of proposed amendment (please give as much detail as possible)

See amendments in 'red coloured font'.

Supervisor Declaration

I agree that the amendment proposed does not change the character of this research or the participant groups.

I confirm that the research risk assessment for the study as MEDIUM remains.

Supervisor's signature* [Signature]

Date: 4/12/15

Please send applications for amendment to ethical approval for MEDIUM risk research to the Manchester Institute Administrator for Ethics and Fieldwork at ethics.education@manchester.ac.uk who will pass on the request to the IRC member who authorised the original application wherever possible.

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1 Minor amendments are those that do not alter the character of the research or the participant groups.
Appendix 15: Presentation slides used by the author during the EPS’ CPD day
- Very limited literature on best practice
- Majority of the literature are ‘professional opinions’ and ‘grey literature’: not empirically based. Some research from the USA
- Useful to find out about good practice

Research questions:
- How do special schools elicit the views of young people with ASD in preparation for transition to adulthood?
- To what extent are these processes perceived to be effective?
Multiple case study design
- 2 specialist schools in Manchester

**Case 1**
School 1
- Semi-structured interview with Assistant Head
- Focus group interview with Y11-Y13 teaching staff
- Qualitative observation of transition planning meeting

**Case 2**
School 2
- Semi-structured interview with Assistant head
- Semi-structured interview with Y13 teacher

**Findings**

The Process

The School's ethos

Phase 1: Get to know the school
Phase 2: Support transition models and communication
Phase 3: Develop and communicate
Phase 4: Review and evaluate
Limitations and directions for further research

- Participants were selected by the schools’ head teachers
- A transition review was not observed in school 2
- Future studies:
  - Develop formal evaluation system