

“Implementing Special Educational Needs and Disability policy reform in further education settings: An exploratory case study of named person perceptions”.

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ABSTRACT

The addition of the 19-25 age range in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (2014) presents wide scale change in the post 16 education landscape. Organisational change is a well-established field of psychology and research suggests that the effective management of change is key to effect practice.

Within a critical realist paradigm, this research employs a case study design to explore the views of professionals implementing Special Educational Needs and Disability policy reform. Qualitative semi-structured interview data was analysed using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke (2006). This analysis suggests that key themes relevant to named person perceptions of SEND reform included, the perception of support received from external agencies, navigating new policy and a sense of confidence in SEND provision at FE colleges.

Implications for the Educational Psychology Service and central and local government are proposed, which take into account both supportive factors and potential constraints of implementing policy reform.

Dedication

For my mum.

For my sister, Erikah- simply put, my best friend.

For my brothers, Christopher, Devonn, Jermaine and Jackson.

For my Nan, Grandad and wider family and friends for all of their support, cheerleading and containment.

Thank you, I love you all x

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Post 16: This report refers collectively to ‘post 16’ as settings that provide educational provision for the 16-25 age range. This includes both sixth form and college provision.

Sixth form: This report refers to sixth form as settings that cater for the 16-19 age range and are attached to a school (unless specifically stated).

Further education College: This report refers to further education colleges as a setting that caters for all age ranges and is not attached to a school.

SENCo: The term SENCO refers to the designated person in a school for the coordination of SEND provision.

Named person: The term named person is used to refer to the individual in college with an oversight of SEN provision (SEND CoP, 2014, p 116)

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1: Rationale

“Policy only comes alive and acquires meaning in the hands of those who enact it.”

Alexander (1997, p.268)

A key motivation for this study was to seek a greater understanding of the views of those implementing government policies. Educational policy sets out guidance and responsibilities for schools and local authorities but arguably, it is how this policy is interpreted and mediated that truly influences personal experience for children and young people.

The role of post 16 settings in the current SEND reform is critical; further education (FE) has catered for the needs of a wide variety of learners prior to the explicit inclusion of the 19-25 age group within the Special Educational Need and Disability Code of Practice (SEND CoP, 2014), however, statutory duties as prescribed with the SEND CoP (2014) may change the way in which these settings manage or organise their provision. As such, it is my assertion that the views of those implementing said changes must be sought so that the reality of the policy and how it is being used can be understood by external professionals, specifically, educational psychologists (EPs) who may be new to working within these settings.

The decision to focus this investigation on the views of the ‘Named Person’, akin to Special Education Needs Coordinators (SENCo) in schools and Early Years settings, was based on the interaction between Educational Psychology Service (EPS) and educational settings. SENCos initiate or commission work to be carried out by the educational psychologist and are often the point of contact for EPs. It was with this in mind that I felt that to develop effective

packages of support for FE settings, it is important to understand the views of the person who would act as the point of contact, the Named Person.

A secondary motivation for focussing on the field of Post 16 education and how legislation may change practice is my own role as a Post 16 teacher. This personal experience has proven to be useful in working with FE settings, both in having relevant knowledge of the organisational systems, as well as the challenges that may be faced in developing effective provision for learners with SEND. I welcomed the SEND reforms, in that they provide guidance and expectations for Post 16 provision. From my own experience, a key difficulty in ensuring effective provision for SEND needs of Post 16 students is the level of support provided at Post 16 in comparison to that during secondary school. I taught many students who qualified for extra time provisions in examinations or were highlighted as needing a learning mentor to support their studies but only had only taught one student who qualified for teaching assistant support in class. This type of support may not be appropriate for the young adult and indeed might not even be welcomed by the student, however, much of the learning support received by students in my school was extracurricular, which meant, students had to use free periods to access support, whilst their friends socialised or relaxed, something I felt was unfair and also a loss of sometimes invaluable social time for the student. This is something I have thought about often, both during my teaching career and my time as a trainee EP (TEP).

Having taught in a sixth form attached to a school, I had taught many of my post 16 students whilst they were in secondary school and knew a number that had received one to one support in lessons as well as withdrawal support for numeracy and literacy, yet this level of support did not continue into their post 16 studies. As a teacher, I had engaged in many conversations with the school SENCo relating to secondary aged pupil needs and was informed of relevant

pedagogical strategies as well as relevant external involvement reports, for example, EP recommendations. I experienced much less of this type of engagement with the SENCo relating to post 16 students often having to be tenacious in my approach to gain information on how best to support a student. This is not to say that the SENCo was ineffective, more that I suggest there is a different view of support needed for secondary aged pupils in comparison with Post 16 students from secondary education. This view of needs may need to shift in light of the SEND reforms, thus creating a need for organisational change.

Another consideration I brought to my research from my position as a Post 16 teacher was the type of SEND students I taught may have had; I taught many pupils with Specific Learning Difficulties such as Dyslexia, Physical difficulties, Social Communication Difficulties, students who had recently moved to the UK and had little English Language and many students with mental health difficulties, in particular, anxiety, depression and eating disorders. Conversely, I rarely taught students who had experienced social and emotional difficulties, manifesting in behavioural difficulties and few students who had more general learning difficulties. The school I taught in was relatively inclusive and had students with a wide range of needs, yet specific groups did not seem to enrol in the sixth form. Many went on to colleges or into employment. This led me to think about the recent changes to compulsory school age, which means that young people must stay in education or training until they are 18. This might change the landscape of post 16, with more students with SEND remaining in the classroom. In terms of my research, I want to know how practitioners will implement the SEND reforms, what challenges they may face and how both central and local governments can support them in providing effective provision for learners after the secondary phase of education.

1.2: Historical context of educational policy reform

The Education Act 1870 brought about the first legislated policy in relation to a commitment to state provision. This government involvement has arguably led to the state role in education today; statutory guidance is provided for educational settings to ensure that they are able to follow and meet the provision as detailed in legislation. This statutory guidance is routinely adapted and amended to ensure that it is fit for purpose and takes account of societal change, this means that the UK education system and associated CoPs (1994;2001;2014) need to continually evolve and adapt to meet this statutory guidance. Given that the focus of my research is rooted within adapting to government policy, I felt it important to set out and consider key government policy relating to SEND.

The Warnock Report (1978) was the first official publication to argue for the continued education after the compulsory schooling of young people with learning difficulties. The content and central themes of the report are clearly identifiable with later guidance as issued by SEND CoP (1994; 2001; 2014) with notions such as the provision of ordinary if modified training courses offered to young people with SEND. The Warnock Report (1978) gave rise to the Education Act 1981, which attempted to address the key points of The Warnock Report (1978). This legislation highlighted the needs of children with additional needs and introduced statutory mechanisms to support these pupils. The Education Act 1981 introduced the requirement of (the then known as) Local Education Authorities (LEAs) to identify and assess pupils to determine appropriate provision for children with SEND. The Education Act 1981 also allowed for parents to appeal decisions made by the LEA, now known as the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST).

The CoP on the Identification and assessment of Special Educational Needs (DfE, 1994) was issued in line with the Education Act 1993, later consolidated as the Education Act 1996. The Education Act 1996 and the corresponding CoP (1996) were issued by the Secretary of State as means of providing guidance to LEAs and governing bodies of all state maintained schools on their statutory responsibilities towards children with special educational needs.

The CoP (1994) has central themes including the assessment and identification of special educational needs and promotes a staged approach to developing provision for children with differing levels of need.

Much like future revisions to SEND legislation, the CoP (1994) provided guidance on both school-based strategies and the statutory assessment process. The CoP (1994) was reportedly well received by education professionals and widely recognised as presenting good practice by practitioners, with some practitioners reporting it as reinforcement of what was already taking place in their schools. (Jowett et al, 1996).

The Special Educational Need and Disability Act (2001) led to the revised CoP (2001). The revised CoP (2001) retained the staged approach to identification, assessment and provision as a central theme, establishing the concepts of School Action and School Action Plus as well as introducing discrete descriptors of need in four distinct areas; Communication and Interaction, Cognition and Learning, Behavioural, Social and Emotional Difficulties and Physical/Sensory impairments. The CoP (2001) included a stronger commitment for children with SEN to access mainstream education, clearer guidance on offering advice, information, and the mediation of disputes, discreet chapters on early years, primary and secondary phases. The CoP (2001) also provided information on working in partnership with parents, increasing pupil participation and multi-agency working.

The most recent reform to the CoP (2014) covers the 0-25 age range is rooted in reform as set out by The Children and Families Act (2014). Key changes from the CoP (2001) (DfE, 2001) include;

- A clearer focus on the views of children and young people and parents in decision-making at strategic and individual levels.
- Stronger focus on higher aspirations and improving outcomes for children and young people.
- Guidance on joint planning and the commissioning of services to ensure close cooperation between education, health, and social care.
- Local authorities' duties relating to publishing a local offer of support for children and young people with SEND.
- New guidance for education and training settings on taking on a graduated approach to identifying and supporting pupils and students with SEN as a replacement for School Action and School Action Plus.
- A coordinated assessment approach with the replacement of statements and learning difficulty assessments with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)
- Focus on the transition to adulthood.
- Guidance of supporting children and young people with SEND who are in youth custody.
- Information provided on relevant duties under the Equality Act (2010) and the Mental Capacity Act (2005).

SEND Code of Practice (DfE, 2014, p.13-14)

The key focus of the Children and Families Act (2014) and the CoP (2014) appear to be a person-centred approach by services accessed by families and young people. This is reflected in the CoP (2014) drive to not only include, but work with families, children and young people. This person-centred approach is highly relevant to the addition of the 19-25 age range within the CoP (2014) and the focus on the transition to adulthood as the support young people and adults receive should be correlated highly with their own aspirations and self-conceptualisations of need. The CoP (2001) does address the need for increased pupil participation and working in partnership with children, young people and families, however, the CoP (2014) is arguably more concrete in the expectations of LAs, settings, and professionals in this regard. In addition, the inclusion of the 19-25 age range within the CoP (2014) may well be seen as large scale change of provision and process (e.g. LDA to EHCP).

1.3: Local Context

This investigation employs a case study approach within Local Authority (LA). The LA will be referred to by the pseudonym of Linview throughout this report. Linview is a large semi-rural county. The local authority website reports that there are 36 secondary schools; 24 of these schools offer sixth form provisions. There are four dedicated post 16 colleges dispersed across the county. Prior to the 2014-2015 academic year, the local authority had had no contact with the Post 16 colleges. Within the local authority, there has been movement in developing provision for young adults accessing post 16 courses. Discussions with a senior educational psychologist taking the lead on post 16 casework revealed that this work was at an early stage and that it was not yet clear how the EPS would develop links with post 16 settings. This uncertainty was related to funding of services remaining unclear and a lack of knowledge of the local Post 16 settings. This meant that the EPS may not have had an understanding of the settings or how EPs could best support these settings. As the local

authority and the EPS are in the early stages of developing packages of support for further education settings, my research could provide some useful insight and implications in relation to the type of provisions already in existence for pupils with SEND in these settings, where there may be opportunity to develop provision and how these settings view appropriate and beneficial support.

1.4: Conclusion

The SEND landscape has undergone a radical transformation in the past 18 months. This most recent reform to the education system in the England and Wales came as part of the Children and Families Act (2014). The SEND CoP (2014) has the potential to bring change to a wide variety of professions. Amongst other changes, the SEND CoP increased the age range of children and young people entitled to educational support from 19 to 25. The reform also saw the replacement of Statements of Special Educational Need with Education, Health and Care Plans. The combination of these two reforms marks a large-scale change for all professionals involved in enacting educational policy.

Given the reform for young people at the Post 16 stage of education, it follows that the SEND reforms will have an impact upon the practice of Post 16 settings. The SEND CoP (2014) outlines the statutory duties of Post 16 settings as;

- The duty to co-operate with the local authority on arrangements for children and young people with SEN.
- The duty to admit a young person if the institution is named in an Education Health and Care (EHC) plan.

- The duty to have regard to the CoP (2014)
- The duty to use their best endeavours to secure the special educational provision that the young person needs.

Comparing and contrasting the legislation for children and young people with SEND appears to suggest that are central themes remaining a commonality throughout each reform, in that, arguably, each one builds upon the central aims of the previous. This being said, each successive CoP (1994; 2001; 2014) places an increasing level of accountability for schools, educational settings, and the LA to develop appropriate provision for children and young people with SEND, with moves toward more effective identification and monitoring, improved early intervention and more cohesive multi-agency working. The focus of my research is to ascertain the views of those enacting these changes- named persons and to explore their experiences. It is my view that to ensure that the rationale for policy change is being met, those who implement changes practitioners must understand the changes and have the ability to deliver them.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter intends to explore the literature with regard organisational change in settings as a result of government policy reform. The literature review is comprised of six sections; an explanation of the search strategy, psychological theory regarding organisational change, organisation response to policy reform, organisation understanding of policy reforms, the impact of policy reform on practitioners and a conclusion leading to my research questions.

2.1: Search strategy

I intended to present a systematic literature review of the research in the field. Using the terms ‘educational reform AND implement* AND change. I searched electronic databases and relevant academic journals, specifically those focussing on government policy reform and organisational change. The databases used were EBSCO host, which included ERIC, Education Administration Abstracts, Educational Abstracts, Child Development and Adolescent Studies and the British Education Index. The difficulty with the research identified was much of it lacked relevance to my research or explored specific policy that would not have successfully extrapolated to my research, for example, numerous articles were based on whole setting policy in the changing use of technology and gaming in the classroom.

It became apparent that this type of traditional systematic literature review was an inappropriate method of presenting and evaluating the existing evidence base due to the relatively novel and specific focus. I selected a systematic snowballing literature review. Webster and Watson (2002) assert that this is an appropriate method of searching the literature when the field is relatively new or has limited existing research. I followed a procedure set out by Jalali & Wohlin (2012). This procedure involves applying forwards and backwards snowballing. This entails identifying a set of starting papers from the leading journals in the area, identifying the research as cited in starting papers and then locating these articles in the literature.

I first used the articles located in the initial database search and conducted ‘hand searches’ of Educational Psychology in Practice, Journal of Occupational and Organisational Psychology, Journal of Educational Policy and The Journal of Further and Higher Education. I then sought the cited research in these papers and located those in the research and followed this

procedure until I had gained an overview of the relevant concepts to explore in my research (see appendix 1.1 and 1.2 for literature map).

The inclusion and exclusion criteria for the review were based on the relevance of the literature to the field; I included investigations that could be related to SEND and further education reform. Research was excluded if the reforms discussed were heavily specific, for example, whole-school reading strategies. I did not exclude research based on date published as I felt that the inclusion of historical investigations, particularly research relating to the introduction of the CoP (1994) would provide useful information.

The resultant literature review is formed of two key sections; an examination of psychological theory relating to organisational change related to government policy reform and an overview of research into organisational change.

2.2: Psychological theory of organisational change

It is my view that understanding how individuals within organisations and organisations as a whole adjust to change may be key in implementing large-scale changes within educational settings. Implementing change in educational settings is a topic of considered debate within the realm of educational psychology. Arguably, this could be justified as part of the role of the educational psychologist; to support schools in adjusting practice in order to promote positive outcomes for children and young people. I felt this was an important concept to explore because I needed to establish how individuals adapt to change and if this would be an appropriate avenue to explore with my participants.

Hendry (1996) points out that organisational change literature is categorised as a field that has become atheoretical. Hendry (1996) contends that literature has a heavy focus on the political elements of change, meaning that the focus is on the politics of organisations and how these

effect change, rather than psychological theory, which was argued to be neglected (Hendry, 1996). Though this point was made twenty years ago, my search of the literature suggests that this can still be considered the case.

Baruch (2006) discusses the concept of organisational anxiety, the phenomenon whereby an organisation, or individuals within the organisation experience stress as a result organisational changes. Baruch (2006) asserted that the underpinning psychological theory that models of organisational change are based on could be used to examine the process of change in organisations and so I looked to the field of cognitive psychology to explore this further.

In his theory of Cognitive Dissonance, Festinger (1957) explores the psychological impact of change. This theory explains attitude change and is based on the premise that “the individual strives towards internal consistency within himself” (Festinger, 1957, p.1). That is to say, humans seek stability between their beliefs, behaviour and attitudes. Festinger Blandford (2013) reported on concepts related to organisational change as a result of the implementation of the Achievement for All (AfA) pilot (DfE, 2013). Blandford (2013) discusses the introduction of the CoP (1994) in England and how whilst the aim was to provide guidance for educators and other stakeholders in identifying those children and young people with SEND, there was actually much confusion as to how this was to be carried out in schools. Blandford (2013) commented that teachers reported a limited perception of creativity, ownership and innovative practice within schools and it was argued that this led to decreased effective practice in light of the policy change within the secondary schools. Blandford (2013) also reported that key considerations were variance in the interpretation and therefore, implementation of the policy, particularly dependent upon educational phase. This could highlight not only a difference in the way a policy is implemented across settings but also that commitment to change does not necessarily equate to changes being made; misinterpretation

of policy would mean that changes made were not as intended or depicted in policy. This may result in different experiences for practitioners and at the core, may mean that provision across further educations is inequitable for students.

Research such as this is relevant to my research and poses some key considerations; shared understanding of policy is integral; without this it may be interpreted differently. This may be appropriate differential interpretation, for example, the difference between primary and secondary provision may be justified based on age of students. On the other hand, this differential interpretation may be inappropriate, leading to varying levels of quality of provision. The local authority may be able to support practitioners in effectively implementing policy, as envisaged by policy makers so that inequity of provision is reduced.

This again links to the psychological approach to change, with particular reference to the idea of autonomy and understanding as expressed in the theory of cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957). Based on this and Blandford's (2013) research there could be a need for practitioners to have active participation in implementing systems to navigate reforms. My research participants will be those charged with implementing changes; important avenues to explore may relate to the extent to which these practitioners have opportunities for creativity and autonomy as opposed to making administrative changes, such as the delegation of resources, roles and responsibilities.

Burnes (1995) suggests that the management of change is crucial in the effectiveness of an organisation's performance but that organisations find it difficult to successfully plan and implement change. Burnes (1995) asserts that a factor in this difficulty is a lack of employee involvement in the planning and involvement in change projects. Burnes (1995) poses that if an organisation embarks on a change project that is markedly incongruous with the views of

the employee then it will meet resistance unless those concerned change their beliefs. This may be achieved if the individuals feel that their views are included within the change and if they feel they have a choice. This relates to the concept of locus of control (Rotter, 1954).

Locus of control is “the degree to which persons expect that a reinforcement or an outcome of their behaviour is contingent on their own behaviour or personal characteristics (Rotter, 1990, pp. 491). Increasing the sense of internal locus of control, or an individual sense of autonomy alongside the reduction of cognitive dissonance, through seeking and valuing views and contributions, may lead to effective organisational change because the motivation and commitment of the change enactors would be higher. The question that the research of Burnes (1995) raises for my research lies in whether there is a perception of change and if this is so, to establish if there is any resistance to it.

Lewin (1947) asserts that change in organisations is formed of three stages; unfreezing, changing and refreezing. This three step model of change could be considered an extension of the idea of cognitive dissonance, in that it explores how organisations move on from dissonance, change their behaviour and adopt new practices. During the unfreezing stage, the organisation is introduced to the change and crucially, why the change is important. The changing stage involves the organisation implementing the changes as they have ‘defrosted’ their old ways, enabling them to ‘move on’. Once the changes have been implemented, the organisations enter the refreezing stage, which involves internalising the new practices.

Hendry (1996) aimed to use Lewin’s model to effectively bring about change in a business organisation in a piece of action research. Hendry (1996) commented that a difficulty faced by the organisation was trying to achieve too much, too quickly, or they ‘defrosted’ everything at the same time. Hendry (1996) posed that role of the researchers was to support the organisation in focusing on one element of change at a time. My research is not aimed at

supporting post 16 settings in managing change, more understanding their views of it. This being the case, this idea of the researcher supporting the organisation in focusing is not particularly relevant however, it is a line of questioning to consider in my interviews. The role that Hendry (1996) describes could be the role of the Local Authority, or the role the EP in the future work undertaken with post 16 settings and so it will be kept in mind, in terms of trying to access staff views of potential sources of support.

I considered Lewin's (1947) three-step model of change with regard to my research; when policy changes an organisation must first recognise why the changes are happening and why they are important, in this case, to improve participation and life outcomes of young people with SEND. During the changing stage, the post 16 settings implement changes to SEND policy, for example, initiating the transfers of LDA's to EHCPs. The refreezing stage would see these practices become the norm for the institution and become internalised as part of the role. A difficulty I had in applying Lewin's (1947) model though was that there is no explanation of the process of change if organisations do not agree that the change is relevant nor important a consideration of recurring changes and how this may impact on the ability or receptiveness of an organisation to adapt to change.

My research is exploratory, meaning that views of the organisation are currently unknown. It is possible that due to the timing of my research that organisations may still be in the 'unfreezing' stage of organisational change, in which case it would be difficult to establish an understanding of how the settings have adapted to the educational reforms. Equally, settings may not view the educational reforms as large scale changes, meaning that organisational change may not have been required. This being said, Lewin's model provides some insight into how organisations can effectively manage change and will be considered when inferring the implications of my research.

There is a potential difficulty in the application of aged psychological theory to modern organisations, with the assertion that modern workplaces are different to their predecessors. DeKlerk (2012) states that such differences include time pressure and increased need to make immediate decisions. DeKlerk (2007) proposed that these differences require a shift in the focus of research from managing effective change to exploring change from different standpoints. DeKlerk (2007) suggested that organisational change can lead to a number of factors (e.g. continually change or high turnover of personnel) that create an ‘organisational trauma’ and that for employees to implement change, these traumas need to be resolved. DeKlerk (2012) went on to suggest that contemporary research and interventions for organisational change should take account of this need to contain the emotional reaction to change in order to effectively implement the proposed organisational change. DeKlerk’s assertion of examining the emotive factors in organisational changes links to the movement of models of change universally, encompassing concepts such as loss and transition (e.g. Adams et al, 1976). The application of the Change Curve (Kübler-Ross, 1969) in the understanding of organisational change and development can be linked to this idea of change as a universal concept and to DeKlerk’s (2012) view that the taking account of, and managing the emotional account of change is important in the process of organisational change. Undertaking this sort of assessment prior to change making may decrease stress and cognitive dissonance, which further relates to the notions asserted by Festinger (1957) and Lewin (1947). Kübler-Ross (1969) explained the concept of grief in terms of psychological processing. Whilst not designed to understand organisational change, this model has been the topic of discussion in the field of organisational change (Cameron & Green, 2015) and it is argued that this is a useful tool when managing individual or organisational change as knowing where the

individual or organisation is on the curve would help when deciding on how and when to share information, the level of support required and when best to implement final changes.

The application of the Change Curve (Kübler-Ross, 1969) has been criticised due to its specific focus of grief and concern that to extrapolate from grief to organisational change is not possible. I do agree that there may be the difference in the type of change but also recognise that the process required to adapt to change may be generalised. Harvey (1990) proposed that all change resulted in a loss, stating, “It is crucial to remember that for every change proposed, or achieved, someone loses something” (Harvey, 1990, pp. 6). The application of the Change Curve (Kübler-Ross, 1969) and similar works (e.g. Menninger, 1975) alongside the criticism of using grief-based models to explain organisational change has led to the similar change curves, more specifically rooted within organisational development (Elrod & Tippett, 2002). Schneider & Goldwasser (1998) investigated the impact of organisation change on team performance and suggested that early adaptation to change results in employee despair as a result of the perception of change being complex and require more effort than the status quo (Schneider & Goldwasser, 1998). In terms of my research, it is unclear as to whether named persons will report on change as a result of SEND policy reform; however, psychological models of change suggest that if there is a perception of change then it is important to understand what has changed, how it has changed and the emotional impact of these changes.

I see the psychological theory presented as a useful lens to investigate the impact of change. It refreshes key psychological concepts and encourages the exploration and application of real world psychology. These psychological theories will remain a ‘thinking point’ both throughout my review of literature in the post 16 field and in the consideration of my findings and conclusions. Whilst, it has been a useful tool in guiding my thought process and

highlighting potentially important concepts to explore in this investigation, I have remained cautious that these psychological models of change are a consideration, rather than the basis of my research. This is because each of these models suffer the common complaints of psychological theory; they are deterministic, reductionist and perhaps importantly, are not rooted in the field of education. This means that they arguably underplay the importance of choice and wider factors that may be at play. These models suggest that responding and adapting to change is a process that can be worked through and ignores elements to this adaptation process that may be relevant, for example, the support change agents have from wider settings and the amount of policy changes that educational settings may have previously adapted to.

The work of Lewin (1947), has influenced the field of organisational psychology and his ideas are evident in much of the more modern theoretical accounts of organisational change (Elrod & Tippett, 2002), however, based on the limitations outlined above, I decided to explore a more recent, model of organisational change that may address these difficulties with the concept of organisational change. The Research and Development in Organisations (RADIO) model (Timmins et al, 2003) is an action research model of organisational change. The term 'action research' was first coined by Lewin (1946) and refers to a reflective process of organisational change involving a research partnership between the key stakeholders (enactors of change) and researchers. Though my research is not set within the action research paradigm, I saw the exploration of the model as highly relevant; firstly the field of action research is based on Lewin's early work (1946) and possibly provides solutions to the management of organisational change as outlined by Lewin (1947) and secondly, I wanted to explore effective methods of change management. Given the considerations of the classic psychological research, namely, the ideas of dissonance and the notion of action and its link to

change. Action research has been used to support organisational change, with early work drawing parallels with Lewin's three step model of change (French & Bell, 1973). My research does not aim to bring about change, it intends to explore the reaction to it, however, in exploring this it is important to consider ways of minimising dissonance and increasing commitment to change, which is a concept addressed within the RADIO model (Timmins et al, 2003).

The RADIO model (Timmins et al, 2003) presents a collaborative research process between the research sponsor and the research facilitator. The rationale behind this approach is that this collaboration acts as a vehicle for change in that the facilitator of the change is involved at all levels, this increases motivation to enact the change and as a result of this commitment, implementation of the change is said to be more successful. Using the RADIO model (Timmins et al, 2003) as a basis for examining SEND reform in the post 16 sector, it could be argued that there would be great efficacy in the research sponsor (policy maker) and the research facilitator (post 16 staff) working in partnership, for example, through the close collaboration between practitioners and policymakers.

The RADIO model of change addresses concepts highlighted by Festinger (1957) and Lewin (1947) in that the researchers state the importance of stakeholders, shared understanding and collaboration in the process of increasing motivation and commitment. The Department for Education (DfE, 2013) held a consultation regarding the SEND reforms, as a means of allowing a wide variety of professionals, including those working in Further Education, to have involvement in this process, specifically, views on effective transition for young people receiving support through Learning Disability Agreements (LDA's) to the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and the appropriate timescales for the implementation of local offers (DfE, 2013). This consultation could be considered as a stage of the RADIO model in that it

sought collaboration and views of key stakeholders. 31 responses were received from 'Further Education Principals/Teachers, forming 4% of the total number of responses (DfE, 2014, P.11) because practitioners will have had the opportunity to share their views and opinions.

Arguably, the RADIO model has a greater level of ecological validity, in comparison with the previously discussed theories of change (e.g. Lewin, 1947; Festinger, 1957; Kübler-Ross, 1969) because it was designed as a means of understanding change in educational settings and addresses extraneous factors that may affect the step-by-step process of adapting to change.

The ideas and concepts presented in psychological theory can be précised as asserting that for change to take place, individuals have a need to understand and agree with the change as well as feel valued and supported through the process. I decided that based on these ideas and the preliminary reading I had completed that the concept of organisational change should be explored in three parts; response to change, understanding change and the impact of change on the individuals enacting it.

2.3: Policy reform: Organisations and the response to change

The education system in the UK can arguably be described as ever evolving. There are frequent reforms to practice and therefore, it may be assumed that practitioners experience change in their role and the practices they must adopt. Understanding practitioner and organisational response to change is therefore important in my research.

The Education Reform Act (1988) is considered a turning point in educational policy; prior to this the education system was seen as tripartite partnership between schools and central and local governments (Woods & Simkins, 2014). With the Education Reform Act (1988) came a

more active role of central government in the steering and direction of schools through changing policies and initiatives (Woods & Simkins, 2014). This dynamic between the central government and the local context of individual settings has led to a number of changes within the education system and the introduction of national strategies and initiatives. As suggested, the nature of frequent introduction of national strategies and initiatives has been a common theme throughout UK educational policy history but it may be useful to investigate whether or not this is an increasing trend. One of the key questions was the discourse around education professionals and their effectiveness. It is perhaps of importance to consider, what may be viewed as a negative discourse concerning education and the response to policy change, i.e. if these strategies and initiatives are viewed as a 'correction' of bad practice rather than a confirmation or guidance of good practice. This is again linked to the idea of organisational change and the models of psychological response to change. Using Festinger (1957) and Lewin (1947) it could be argued that policy changes viewed as means to change inadequate practice may cause dissonance or the inability to understand why change is needed if practitioners and settings did not view their previous provision as poor.

Giles & Hargreaves (2006) suggest that educational systems have a perceived inability to change. That is to say, they do not feel they have the capacity to change. The author comments that this perception is characterised by educational reforms such as centralised curriculums, league tables and governmental power to close underperforming schools. Giles & Hargreaves (2006) comment that a particular difficulty for educational settings responding to change is an increase in centralised standards with a synchronous increase in decentralised models of governance in order to meet state objectives. In terms of the effective implementation of educational policy this may create challenges; Deem et al (1995) posed that decentralised approaches to implementing educational policy masks ambiguity within the

policy, “In a sense, policies have no ends and no beginnings...they are always politics in motion” (P.20).

This, in the practical application, could be a frustration for both policy makers and those implementing the policy within educational settings. For teaching staff, ambiguous policies may well lead to a lack of confidence in the ‘right way’ to implement changes. For policy-makers, the actual policy may manifest as concepts different to those intended. The recent SEND CoP (DfE, 2014) had been described as ambiguous by multiple sources (e.g. ATL, 2013; IPSEA, 2013) during the consultation period.

Conversely, prescriptive policies may not be well received. The notion of the local context is important; a relevant strategy in one local authority may not be seen as relevant in another, meaning that they require different approaches. Well interpreted policy may look different across settings, whilst retaining the common theme and intentions. The difficulty may lie in the competence and confidence of those interpreting policy. This may be a relevant line of inquiry in my research; it is important that the SEND CoP (DfE, 2014) is interpreted as policy makers intended and it is important that this policy fits the local context.

Giles & Hargreaves (2006) debate prescriptive versus descriptive policy. This notion informs my research as the effective implementation of the SEND CoP (2014) requires understanding of what is being implemented. Gaining an understanding the SEND reforms can be achieved in a number of different ways, for example, training and support from the local authority, or the use of the SEND CoP (DfE, 2014) as a working document. The aim of my research is not to audit how effectively the setting are implementing central policy but to seek experiences of doing so. Arguably, practitioners that feel competent and confidence in delivering provision as set out in the SEND reforms are likely to implement changes more effectively and so the

research by Giles & Hargreaves (2006) suggests that I need to ascertain whether practitioners do feel competent and confident in effectively implementing SEND reforms and how these practitioners have come to develop this understanding.

Blandford (2013) reported on concepts related to organisational change as a result of the implementation of the Achievement for All (AfA) pilot (DfE, 2013). Blandford (2013) discusses the introduction of the CoP (1994) in England and how whilst the aim was to provide guidance for educators and other stakeholders in identifying those children and young people with SEND, there was actually much confusion as to how this was to be carried out in schools. Blandford (2013) commented that teachers reported a limited perception of creativity, ownership and innovative practice within schools and it was argued that this led to decreased effective practice in light of the policy change within the secondary schools.

Blandford (2013) also reported that key considerations were variance in the interpretation and therefore, implementation of the policy, particularly dependent upon educational phase. This could highlight not only a difference in the way a policy is implemented across settings but also that commitment to change does not necessarily equate to changes being made; misinterpretation of policy would mean that changes made were not as intended or depicted in policy. This may result in different experiences for practitioners and at the core, may mean that provision across further education is inequitable for students.

Research such as this is relevant to my research and poses some key considerations; shared understanding of policy is integral; without this it may be interpreted differently. This may be appropriate differential interpretation, for example, the difference between primary and secondary provision may be justified based on age of students. On the other hand, this differential interpretation may be inappropriate, leading to varying levels of quality of

provision. The local authority may be able to support practitioners in effectively implementing policy, as envisaged by policy makers so that inequity of provision is reduced.

This again links to the psychological approach to change, with particular reference to the idea of autonomy and understanding as expressed in the theory of cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957). Based on this and Blandford's (2013) research there could be a need for practitioners to have active participation in implementing systems to navigate reforms. My research participants will be those charged with implementing changes; important avenues to explore may relate to the extent to which these practitioners have opportunities for creativity and autonomy as opposed to making administrative changes, such as the delegation of resources, roles and responsibilities.

The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) funded two projects; one to assess the implementation of the CoP (1994) and a second to assess the impact upon pupils with special educational needs. As part of this research, Jowett et al (1996) investigated the ways in which LEA staff responded to the CoP (1994) and the strategies used to aid its implementation.

Jowett et al (1996) investigated the implementation of the CoP (1994). The CoP (1994) set out a graduated approach to the assessment of pupil's needs and provision. The CoP (1994), whilst presenting drastic reform, was widely recognised as presenting good practice by practitioners, with some practitioners reporting it as reinforcement of what was already taking place in their schools (Jowett et al, 1996).

Jowett et al (1996) interviewed local authority and teaching staff and reported that perceived difficulties in implementing the CoP (1994) were related to increased workload, uncertainty related to procedures and insufficient resources (Jowett et al, 1996, p. 25). Jowett et al (1996)

reported that LEAs supported schools through a wide distribution of information including information on record keeping, guidance on forming special educational need (SEN) policies and statutory assessment procedures as well as offering INSET training for schools on relevant changes. The researchers commented that many of the local authorities reported reforms to the CoP (1994) as building on good practice already established in schools. The researchers reported that the support provided by the LEAs was well received by schools.

The research conducted by Jowett et al (1996) is subject to the issue of temporal validity. The investigation was carried out twenty years ago and arguably there are many facets of today's educational and political landscape that are different to that of the time. This could be considered a difficulty in its application to the current research, for example, differences in the relationship between central and local government and between local government and settings may influence the way in which educational policy is received.

The education system in place in 2014 sits within a political context that is arguably different to that of 1994. Namely, these differences involve local authority control and the increase in the number of educational settings outside of local authority control. The researchers concluded that local authority support was a key facilitating factor in the implementation of new processes as stated within the CoP (1994). Today, this local authority support may not be present due to the increase in traded services, the expectation of the buying of services from the local authority and the increased level of separation schools may have from local authority governance. Drawing inferences from Jowett's research then may need to take careful note of these changes due to the political and cultural differences at that time, compared to the present day. This is a point that I think is important in my research though I do not think that it affects the relevance of Jowett et al's (1996) to my findings; my research aims to present the process implementing the CoP (DfE, 2014) and the views of those putting these reforms into

practice, much like that of Jowett et al (1996). The key differences are those of historical, political and social change that would be expected over time and so a key question would relate to the role of the local authority in this process and whether there is a difference in the perception of the role of central and local government in educational settings.

In addition, at the time of Jowett et al's (1996) research post 16 settings were not included in the legislation, meaning that there is no reference to SEND policy reform in settings managing changes in this sector. Factors perceived as facilitating the effective implementation of change in post 16 settings may be wholly different to those within primary and secondary schools, however, this might be a useful suggestion for the EPS and the local authority in terms of understanding how best to support colleges. If this is the case, then the application of a psychological theory of adapting to change may be useful, for example, understanding how and when to provide support to FE settings (Kübler-Ross, 1969). My investigation aims to explore the experience of practitioners and understanding where these practitioners and organisations are in the process of change, which may provide insight for external agencies (e.g. the EPS or local authority) in understanding what type of support is required and appropriate timing of this support.

Whilst extrapolations from Jowett's research may be affected by educational reform there are factors that may increase the application of these findings. Firstly, the CoP (1994) as discussed by Jowett et al (1996) was a large-scale reform to practices within SEND, much like the CoP (2014). As such, practitioner response to change and the perception of factors which both facilitate and hinder effective implementation at that time may be as relevant today as they were then. Secondly, the 1994 budget imposed public spending cuts in a bid to reduce national spending (The Guardian, 1999). This is comparable with the current economic context and focus of reducing the deficit and therefore it is arguable that, whilst a number of

years apart, the implementation of the CoP (1994) has a similar context to the implementation of the CoP (2014) in terms of perception of valuable resources to support change.

Thompson & Wolstencroft (2015) investigated the role of Further Education managers working at an operational level and the challenges that they faced when implementing change. 'Further Education managers' was defined as Curriculum and Area leads within the setting. The researchers utilised a qualitative approach, gaining participant views through semi-structured individual interviews. The research found that participants reported a lack of support from senior managers, a perception of intransigence, staffing difficulties and organisational structures or processes as barriers to 'making a difference' to the experience of learners. The researchers quote one participant as summing up the challenge of implementing new structures and organisational changes as, "... [there is a] lack of clarity', 'lack of clout' and 'lack of knowledge' (p. 407).

Thompson and Wolstencroft (2015) did not focus specifically on implementing SEND policy and only refers to further education managers. As such, applying the findings to my research may pose difficulty. Curriculum managers may experience implementing curriculum based policy differently to those working within the SEND remit. It should be considered, though, that middle management within an educational setting shares characteristics across different areas of leadership and so the challenges should not be discounted as irrelevant.

The methodology selected by Thompson & Wolstencroft (2015) can be considered an axiological standpoint, in that it is reflective of the researcher's values; they saw it as integral to gain the perspectives of those implementing change. The researchers employed semi-structured, individual interviews to allow for rapport and trust to be built between researcher and participant, which is integral in gaining a truthful account of the participants' views and

reducing the danger of participants viewing the research as an audit. This difficulty is relevant to my research; there are multiple ways I could have gained information relating to the implementation of SEND reforms, for example, interviews with college principals. The difficulty with this type of approach though is that it would not reveal the experiences of those responsible for changes to day to day practices, or an authentic understanding of the challenges that may be faced. I will also use semi-structured interviews in a bid to gain rapport and trust with my participants to minimise this risk and have the similar risk to Thompson and Wolstencroft (2015) in participants showing social desirability as they may question the true purpose of my research.

2.4: Policy reform: Organisations' understanding the change

Spours et al (2007) conducted a longitudinal investigation into the link between policy and practice. The investigation was reported upon through a series of journal articles, each with a different focus on the impact of policy and practice. The researchers examined the implementation of policy introduced by the now defunct, Learning and Skills Council, which aimed to reduce the number of school leavers who did not go on to access further education and training (LSC, 2006).

Throughout the series of studies, researchers explored the views of multiple levels of participants involved in enacting policy change in the post 16 sector, including post 16 teaching staff, leadership team and policy makers as well as the learners the policy would effect.

A key theme from Spours et al (2007) series of research studies was that of educational policy being implemented in a mediated form; that is to say, practitioners interpreted policy to fit the local context, a similar finding to that of Blandford (2013). Spours et al (2007) argued that this interpretation led to misinterpretations of the policymakers' intent. This is a concept that

requires careful consideration due to the implications of the assertion. If the policy is misinterpreted then young people in settings may not receive the provision that they are entitled to. This has two implications; equity of provision for young people and a potential legality issue for the local authority. Both of these potential implications could cause difficulty for all involved and so it may benefit local government to provide support to those interpreting policy as intended. In terms of the current SEND reform, consultation responses highlighted that parts of the proposed CoP (2014) were not reader friendly and caused confusion. This was particularly evident in the responses from the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL), who commented multiple times on the vagueness or lack of clarity of details of the proposed CoP (2014) (ATL, 2013). This may link with Spours et al's (2007) findings that central policy is mediated into a local relevance and could suggest that one of the factors that relate to this is the suggested inability to understand the details of such policy. A difficulty with ensuring that a document is easily understood and is detailed in the responsibility of a local authority and/or an educational setting is that the policy itself could then be considered too prescriptive and irrelevant to the local context. This may then lead to a dissonance between what policy creators impose as expected practice and how practitioners envisage its implementation within their own settings. I consider this a delicate balance and it will be interesting and potentially useful for external agencies understand views of the participants on this topic.

In a follow-up investigation, Edward et al (2007) attempted to determine how far practitioners reported an adjustment of their practice to accommodate the changing policy. The researchers asserted that teaching staff views were pivotal as they act as the last link in the policy change and that if the experience of learners is to truly improve it is the implementers of the policy that should be the focus of behavioural change.

Over a 43 month longitudinal study, Edward et al (2007) explored new policy initiatives in light of Learning Skills Council college-rebuilding programme. The researchers reported turbulence in further education as a result of widespread structural change and reflected on what this meant for teaching staff within these settings. To explore this, the researchers interviewed teaching staff to examine the impact of policy on professional practice and to establish how far staff in post 16 settings had to adjust their practice to accommodate government strategy.

Edward et al (2007) reported that there was a common theme of ‘powerlessness’ and that there was often reported a lack of communication as to why changes were being made. In addition, participants commented on a climate of fear in relation to poorly implemented policies due to a lack of understanding.

“...the ultimate sources of policy changes were unclear, mattered little to them because policy making was seen as something that happened at a great distance from them, to which they had no input. They lived the consequences of policy decisions but could control neither the content nor the pace of these changes” (Edward et al, 2007) p.161).

The view that policy reform takes a top-down approach has significant implications for the effective implementation of government policy. Whilst my research does not intend to investigate the outcomes for learners explicitly, it should be considered that effective implementation of reform is, at the heart of the matter, concerned with increasing the quality of provision for post 16 learners with SEND. To achieve this, those who are implementing policy perhaps need to feel that they have an input and are not just ‘living the consequences’ as Edward et al (2007) report. In essence, it is vital that those enacting those changes ‘buy-in’ to the changes if they are to be implemented as the CoP (2014) intends.

Relating to Edward et al's (2007) discussion of the perception of a top-down approach to implementation is the invitation for professionals to respond to the proposed changes to the CoP (2014). As discussed previously, a consultation regarding the SEND reforms (DfE, 2013) was held as a means of gaining stakeholder views. There was a specific focus on establishing views on effective transition for young people receiving support through a Learning Disability Agreements (LDA's) to the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and the appropriate timescales for the implementation of local offers (Department for Education, 2013). The 4% responses rate (DfE, 2014, P. 11) of further education professionals is interesting, given the large-scale reform in the post 16 sector. I am unsure whether this percentage of response accurately corresponds to the number of professionals working in this sector and the impact the CoP (2014) may have on the role of FE settings. It should be considered though that response was received from unions, including those with further education members, for example, the ATL. This may mean that the 4% of responses from Further Education Professionals is not an accurate depiction of the number of responses received from the further education sector. This raises the question as to whether Edward et al's (2007) finding is replicable in that there was an opportunity to share views and thoughts on the process, perhaps, meaning that SEND reforms were not conceived as a distance from those implementing it. If the participants in my researcher do not feel that they had the opportunity to share their views on the SEND reforms then it may be important to investigate whether practitioners feel this type of consultation is an appropriate forum for their contribution to national policy or if practitioners were aware of, or acted on their right to share their views. This being said, the notion of changes being out of the control of practitioners (Edward et al, 2007), alongside the data collected in the consultation process has informed my research in

that it will aim to gauge the view of participants on their input into and feedback given on the reforms.

The series of studies by Spours et al (2007) and Edward et al (2007) suggest that a clear line of investigation is the effective interpretation of national policy in the local context. It is important to establish how policy, specifically, SEND reforms are being mediated within the local colleges. The research outlined above suggests that professionals perceive themselves as 'being done to' rather than being valued agents of change. The researchers concluded that change in any sector requires staff with the time, capacity, energy and motivation to effectively change processes and that an absence of these factors could hinder the implementation of reform.

Arguably, the concepts of capacity, energy and motivation related strongly to feelings of competence, autonomy and perception of being valued. This research did not aim to seek the personal constructs of participants and so does not elaborate on the psychological response to change. This is a concept that will be explored within my investigation as the perception of autonomy and notion of feeling valued may have a link with the effective implementation of SEND reform through practice.

2.5: Policy reform: The impact on individuals

As discussed, change may be threatening to an individual's self-concept. Psychological theory within the Cognitive and Social Psychological paradigms, for example, Festinger's theory of Cognitive Dissonance (1957) or Lewin's three step model of change (1947) suggest that change is a process and that it can have a negative or positive impact on the well-being of those subjected to change depending on how it is managed (Festinger, 1957; Lewin, 1947).

Ball (2003) discusses the impact of what he terms 'policy epidemic' and the difficulties for individuals and organisations as whole face as a reflection on earlier research (Ball, 2000).

Ball (2003) discussed the notion of performativity as a way in which the government regulate systems and services through the requirement of targets, key performance indications and evaluations. To 'perform' organisations and practitioners produce fabrications to meet the performance requirements. For Ball (2003) the notion of performativity creates either success for an individual to succeed or the opportunity for inner conflict, inauthenticity and resistance. Ball (2003) presents a seemingly cynical account of policy change, which arguably draws parallels with a Neo-Marxist view of society, in terms of policy acting as a lever of state control for post-liberal governance. I would agree that continual policy change could have an adverse impact on individuals' ability to perform, in the sense of 'moving the goal posts' however, I think that Ball (2003) may present quite an extreme view of this.

Gibbons (1998) investigated organisational change as a factor that increased occupational stress for further education lecturers during the implementation of 'The Incorporation of Colleges' as a result of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992. Incorporation was a process of college reorganisation involving settings moving outside of local authority control. This process is often cited as a significant marker in the history of further education in terms of funding and organisation (Avis, 2005). Gibbons (1998) used an independent measures design; two groups were used; the first group consisting of 100 further education lecturers whose educational settings had been through the process of incorporation. The second group was made up of 100 further education lecturers in settings that had yet to implement incorporation. Gibbons (1998) used a questionnaire alongside the Health and Lifestyle Survey (HLS, Cox et al, 1987) and the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI, Maslach, 1986) to compare levels of experienced stress between lecturers who had experienced organisational change

with lecturers who had not. Analysis of the measures (HLS and MBI) revealed some interesting findings. Key themes in the questionnaire responses related to changes to pay and conditions, mistrust of management and fears relating to work-life balance. Lecturers who had already experienced organisational change were at significantly higher risk of developing a transient stress disorder than lecturers who had not. The lecturers who had not yet experienced organisational change reported higher levels of experienced stress and behaviours that indicated burnout.

Limitations of this research should be considered prior to making any inferences or extrapolating to the current research. This research was conducted in 1998. The education system has changed dramatically in the past 20 years, in addition to the differing political context. This means that there is risk of poor temporal validity when attempting to extrapolate these findings to more recent educational change and the effect this may have on staff. This being said, such large scale, national policy change does not happen on a frequent basis and so the historical response, including the positive and negative factors associated with implementing such change is important.

The issue of self-report techniques mean that participant responses are, by the nature of the measures, subjective. Individuals experience stress differently and so it is difficult to account for individual differences. In addition, the levels of stress reported may have been inflated or deflated by participants due to demand characteristics. The limitations of self-report techniques mean that it is important to understand the limitations of the data, however, it could be argued that people's experiences are their reality and as such, affect their day to day lives, this means that their subjective experience of stress experienced is their reality and experience, even if objectively, markers of stress are different. Given this, it is appropriate to consider Gibbons (1998) research in relation to my research; implementing recent reforms in

further education settings may lead to similar experienced levels of stress for staff and so key conclusions from this research will be considered when drawing up research questions related to practitioner experience of change.

2.6: Summary of the literature review

The literature in the field of government reform in post 16 settings and staff perception of this reform, is, understandably, limited, particularly in the area of SEND. The presented review of research aims to draw together the existing knowledge of the area and provide a starting point for my exploratory research, which will hopefully add to the body of work in this area.

Whilst settings are subject to frequent strategies and reforms, national reform to SEND policies, on the scale of the CoP (2014) is relatively sporadic and so it is felt appropriate to examine the research of this time in addition to more recent offerings. Conclusions from Jowett's research should be cautiously applied but nonetheless provide some insight into the impact of SEND reform for practitioners. Important considerations to be drawn from the work of Jowett et al (1996) include that settings value local authority input, training and support. My research will aim to explore perceptions of post 16 named persons on the support offered by the local authority.

I consider Jowett et al (1996) a key piece of literature in light of my project. This investigation of views of implementing the (DfE, 1994) is the most similar piece of research to my own project and I aim to explore those as outlined in my research aim.

Limitations of the current literature are mainly focussed on temporal validity as much of the research highlighted was conducted a number of years ago. It must be considered that the political landscape of education has changed. The most relevant change to my research is the nature of local governance and traded models of delivery. Many of the services offered by the

local authority are traded, including training and support around the new legislation. The nature of educational settings becoming ‘customers’ of the local authority may have caused a more critical appraisal of services offered, resulting in settings choosing not to purchase this type of support.

2.7: Research questions

Key concepts taken from the field of literature fall broadly into three categories; using national policy locally, difficulties in managing whole setting change and the impact of policy change of practitioner concepts of their professional selves. Based on the consideration of these key themes, my research questions for this piece of research are as follows;

1. What factors have influenced named person perceptions of SEND reforms in Linview?
2. Has individual and or organisational practice in Linview settings changed in light of SEND reforms?
3. Have organisations and named persons in Linview experienced challenges as a result of reform to SEND legislation?

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1: Remit of the investigation

As discussed, the focus of my research is policy driven and will centre upon the recent changes to the SEND CoP (2014) with particular reference to the post 16 education sector. The project falls broadly within Organisational Psychology and has the aim of providing a more detailed understanding of how named persons in post 16 settings have experienced the SEND reforms, the extent to which these reforms may have changed practice and highlight if there are any challenges of implementing this reform.

The focus of this investigation is to present the perceptions of SEND reforms of those with an operational lead in managing the needs of young people with SEND in mainstream post 16 settings, independent of a school.

The rationale for this focus is threefold and is underpinned by my interest in working with practitioners who traditionally may not have worked closely with the EPS.

Firstly, named persons (those with operational responsibility for SEND) are the individuals who hold responsibility for managing the provision for young people with SEND. These practitioners will liaise with secondary schools and the local authority relating to a young person's needs. In addition, named persons will act as the main contact point for educational psychologists, much like the SENCo in schools. They are the individuals who will commission work and request support and so it will be important to not only build relationships but also to establish the type of support they perceive as valuable.

Secondly, the choice of selecting participants from post 16 provisions unattached to a secondary school was due to the desire to capture the views of a sector that has newly

prescribed statutory duties. SENCo's of sixth forms attached to schools may have distinctively different experiences, training and qualifications and so it was not felt that the inclusion of all post 16 settings would have produced a homogenous selection, which may have provided conflicting data and therefore erratic implications from the research.

Finally, the choice to exclude specialist provisions from the investigation is related to the rationale for selecting settings independent of schools. The research intends to capture the experience of practitioners working within an entirely different system; it was felt that named persons or SENCo's working within specialist provisions, may again have followed different training routes and qualifications as well as having working knowledge of the previous SEND CoP (2001).

3.2: Epistemological stance

Creswell (2003) stated that researchers make claims as to what knowledge is (ontology), how we know it (epistemology) and the values that are encompassed (axiology).

The difference in researcher's views of these concepts is reflected in the approach their research takes. This project aims to explore the experience of implementing policy change. As such, my ontological position is that personal experience of participants can be considered a form of knowledge. The reason I have taken this position is that I believe policy can exist independently of action, in that it is a document that has been written. It cannot, 'come alive' without action and how it is brought to life depends on those enacting policy. This meant that the views of those doing this were important to me.

The epistemology and axiology of my research follow from this; to gain knowledge of individual experience requires the collection of richly detailed data that gives the participants

the opportunity to express and explain their views, with the aim of understanding the participant. With this in mind, the epistemological position taken was that of critical realism.

Critical realism purports a reality external to our representations of it and that these personal representations of the world are influenced by historical and social factors (Bhaskar, 1979).

Philosophically, this approach can be seen as similar to ideas proposed by Kant (as cited in Caygill, 1995) who contended that there are a priori or innate truths but that the way in which these truths are interpreted depends on individual experiences. Russell (1912) gave the analogy of blue tinted spectacles to explain: If every person was born with a pair of blue spectacles that they were unable to remove, everything the person witnessed would have a blue tinge. For Kant (as cited in Caygill, 1995), humans are born with a pair of order tinted spectacles- the mind attempts to impose order on a chaotic world. The order our minds impose depends on individual experiences. The critical realist may seek to understand the order that has been imposed upon the phenomenon.

Bhaskar (1979) stated that when researching any phenomena, there are events that are observable. Behind these observable events are structures and mechanisms that are not observable but have the causal power to produce effects, for example, influencing our actions, or observable behaviours. Following from this, an accurate understanding of the social world can only be achieved through the understanding of these unobservable mechanisms and structures, for example, whether participants viewed change as necessary.

Mingers and Wilcocks (2013) pose that critical realism aims to establish reality as consisting of three domains; the empirical, or observable experiences; the actual, actual events that have been generated by mechanisms; and the real, which refers to the mechanisms that generate the

actual event. Easton (2010) suggests that the role of the research is to identify these structures and mechanisms in a bid to understand how the external reality is being interpreted.

3.3: Choice of methodology

The investigation employed a case study methodology. The case study, defined by Yin (2009) as; “*An empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context*” and which “*cope with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points*” and therefore “relies on multiple sources of evidence” (Yin, 2009 pg. 18).

Yin (2009) states that case study research is most useful when the goal of research is to determine, “how and why” questions (p. 1), relating to phenomenon outside of the researcher’s control. This definition of the case study was the most appropriate method to investigate my research questions in that they are rooted in the ‘how’ and the ‘why’ of participant views and experiences.

By design, case studies are used to gather rich and detailed information. Using participant selections that are relatively small compared to larger, nomothetic or experimental type designs means that the researcher is able to investigate in depth, something which would be difficult to do in a meaningful way on a larger scale (Lehtonen & Pahkinen, 2004).

Robson (2011) refers to case study methodology as a research strategy that employs multiple sources of evidence to examine a phenomenon within its real life context. Thomas (2011) states that the case study is a “*kind of research that concentrates on one thing, looking at it in detail, not seeking to generalise from it*” (Thomas, 2011, p.3). The SEND reforms calls for local authorities to produce a ‘Local Offer’ which describes the provision available within the local area and its settings. By definition, a local offer in one county may be different to that of a different county. As such, the present research aims to inform the views of Linview local

authority. Whilst, generalisations to external areas may be possible, it is not a central aim of my research.

3.4: Preliminary phase

The preliminary questionnaire was carried out for a number of reasons; primarily it was used as a scoping exercise to inform the sampling and interview schedule of the main phase of my research. Given the timing of the research was at the early stages of the SEND CoP (2014) being put into place, it was not clear whether any notable changes would yet have been experienced. As this is the basis of the investigation, it was integral to ascertain the progress of making the legislative change. Secondly, Thomas (2011) discusses the need to ensure that “the emphasis should be on it being a sample of something” (p61). I take this to mean that the selection should be of the target population or the group whose views you are trying to represent. To ensure that I selected the most appropriate selection of participants, I needed to gather information relating to specialist provisions, sixth forms and further education colleges. The rationale for this was based on the reasons identified within the selection criteria, and the notion of specific selection criteria to ensure a targeted participant selection to ensure that this research is useful in relation to the purpose of this investigation.

The selection procedure of the questionnaire created some difficulty in the practical implementation of it. It is my view that the case study methodology was appropriate in this field of research due to the local context influencing views and practices. The difficulty was that, given the small number of further education colleges in the local authority, carrying out the initial questionnaire in Linview would have diminished the data collection in the formal investigation. As such, I decided to recruit post 16 provisions, in a neighbouring local authority, which shares close county borders and was similar to the target county in terms of local authority strategies and student demographic. To counter the risk of the pilot

information being irrelevant in the immediate local context, I framed the questionnaire around relatively stable concepts including;

1. Knowledge and experience of working within the CoP (DfE, 2001)
2. Knowledge and experience of working with educational psychologists

Participants were gained through a contact at the neighbouring county's local authority. Questionnaires were sent to the post 16 SEND network in the local authority, which included SENCo's and named persons across the post 16 sector, including mainstream, specialist, and sixth form and further education provision. The results of these questionnaires were analysed using descriptive statistics.

The findings of the preliminary questionnaire suggest that there were differences between the groups (see appendix 5).

Table 1: Key data gathered from preliminary phase questionnaire

<u>Question</u>	<u>Finding</u>
Is there a difference between settings on awareness of SEND CoP (2014) reform?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sixth form settings reported that they were more aware of changes to the CoP (2014) than their counterparts in both specialist provisions and colleges.
Is there a difference between settings in perception of the impact of SEND CoP (2014) reform?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist provisions were more likely to report a role change as a result of the SEND reform than their colleagues in sixth form and college settings. • Sixth form settings reported less organisational change than specialist provisions and further education colleges. • Further Education Colleges were more likely to

	<p>report no experience in working to SEND CoP (2014) compared with their colleagues in sixth forms and specialist provisions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sixth form colleagues reported that the perceived challenges of implementing new SEND policy were largely related to a lack of resources. Specialist provision colleagues reported a mixture of resources and systemic issues and colleges largely reported systemic issues. • Across responses from sixth form and specialist provision staff, benefits of the new reforms were reported as increasing inclusion. Colleges reported the increase of good practice as the key benefits.
<p>Is there a difference between setting in contact with external agencies (i.e. EPS)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sixth form colleagues reported that they worked with an educational psychologist more often than specialist provision settings and further education colleges, in which there were no reports of working with EPs

The findings from the questionnaire revealed that it was appropriate to limit the participant selection to either SENCOs *or* ‘named persons’ due to the differences in the answers given. In addition, informal feedback from the participants suggested that using clinical terminology such as SEND legislation or the full name of the SEND CoP (2014) (2014) was somewhat intimidating. As my interview stages allow for rapport to be built between myself and the participant as well as allowing the opportunity to explain terms if need, it is unclear whether this is reflective of the disadvantageous of using a questionnaire or whether it will continue to be a barrier. It is difficult to entirely remove such language though, as ethically participants have the right to understand and have clear knowledge of what I am researching. I will

consider this information though, using limited jargon and gauging my language on that used by participants.

3.5: Case selection

Case studies can involve either single or multiple cases. Mileblandfords and Huberman (1994) define a case as: “*a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context. The case is, “in effect, your unit of analysis”*” (p.25).

Using this definition posed a challenge; there is a clear rationale for both the local area and individual participants to be seen as the unit of analysis. This relates to the local nature of the research; it could be argued that the colleges involved in the study are working within the same local authority, with the same expectations and policies placed upon them by the local authority. Given this, the case could be seen as the further education settings in Linview. This being said the review of the literature suggested that national policy is mediated within the local context and settings (Blandford, 2013;Spours, 2007); this could mean those settings may have different ways of responding to such reform, both prescribed by central and local government. In addition, the focus of the research was to seek the perceptions of individual named persons; these perceptions are individual and by working within the critical realist paradigm, construed dependent on a range of factors that could have an influence on the ways in which individual interpret the reform.

As a result of the consideration of these factors, the case study was formed of multiple cases; four individual named persons. Yin (2009) described the use of multiple case study design as a means of drawing robust and analytical conclusions, in that, if common conclusions are found in varied settings, then the reliability of the research is increased, leading to greater ability to generalise the findings compared with the single case study design.

Proponents of the case study methodology have defined the different types of case study and the research purposes that correspond (e.g. Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). Thomas (2011) combined these definitions and provided distinction between subject, purpose, approach and process as a means of case study design.

Using Thomas' (2011) categorization, the following table outlines the case study design used in my investigation.

Table 2: Case study design

Subject	Purpose	Approach	Process
<p>Key case: Post 16 named persons who are implementing changes to the SEND CoP (2014).</p>	<p>Instrumental: The case study is a tool to inform possible ways of supporting them in this process. Exploratory: Exploring participant views of implementing large scale changes. Explanatory: Gaining an understanding of factors that support and hinder effective implementation of policy.</p>	<p>Drawing a picture: The aim of the research is to illustrate a phenomenon- namely to provide an insight into enacting government legislation.</p>	<p>Multiple: four cases Parallel: information gathered at the same time. Snapshot: The case study looks at perceptions at one point in time; this is particularly relevant given that the implementation of novel legislation is the focus of these perceptions.</p>

3.6: Settings and participants

The remit of this research was to gather the views of named persons in mainstream, further education colleges.

The participant selection process was based on the following criteria and rationale;

Table 3: Participant criteria

Criteria	Rationale
Further education colleges that could be classified as mainstream (provision of education for students with and without additional needs)	The rationale for omitting specialist provisions from the research was that preliminary pilot investigations identified that named persons working within specialist provisions reported closer pre-existing relationships with educational psychologists, increased knowledge of the role of an educational psychologist and a strong pre-existing knowledge of statutory duties within the previous CoP (DfE 2001).
Further education colleges unattached to a secondary school	The rationale for selecting further education colleges, rather than sixth forms was that the named person was the SENCo for the setting as a whole. SENCos and named persons have different qualification requirements and so it was felt that this would lead to a non-homogenous selection.
Named person for the college's provision of SEND support.	The participants recruited were all responsible for managing SEND provision. The rationale for this was that interviewing senior managers of colleges, for example, the principal, may not reveal the experience challenges and facilitating factors that staff responsible for managing may face.

To identify settings that matched the selection criteria, an educational setting search was carried out on the Local Authority website. This search identified a list of four further

education colleges within the county that were appropriate. These four settings were invited to take part. Initially, a telephone call was made to identify the appropriate person to contact. At this point, an email was sent, with information relating to the research and requesting participant involvement. Each of the four settings agreed to take part in the research project

Table 4: Setting characteristics

Setting	Number of students on roll	Percentage of students with LDA/EHCP	Number of requests for an EHCP (as of June 2015)
Setting A	7000	2%	1
Setting B	15500	16%	0
Setting C	26000	Approximately 14%	1
Setting D	5000	8%	0

3.7: Ethical considerations and resolutions

Ethical approval for the investigation was sought from the Ethics Research Committee at the University of Birmingham. Conditional approval was given and conditions were met. As part of the ethical review process, I was required to identify all ethical issues relevant to the study as described BPS guidelines (BPS, 2009) and draw up measures to address them.

The key ethical considerations relevant to this study related to informed consent, right to withdraw, confidentiality and anonymity.

Table 5: Ethical considerations

Ethical issue	Mitigation
Informed consent	Ensuring thorough explanation of the research investigation, including, the purpose, how data would be used and why the research was taking place. Gaining informed consent was central throughout the participant

	<p>recruitment process as well as during the investigation. Initially, I telephoned each of the participants and explained the purpose of my study. At this point, potential participants were informed that it was a voluntary project and that they did not have to take part. I then sent an email to participants (see appendix 3), once they had expressed an interest to take part. This email reaffirmed the aim and purpose of my research and requested a date and a time to hold the interview. Two weeks prior to the interview, participants were emailed with information on what to expect and a copy of the interview guide. At this time, they were asked if they still wished to participate. On the day of the interview, participants were asked to read the brief and sign the consent form.</p>
<p>Right to withdraw</p>	<p>Clear assertion that participation was voluntary during the recruitment of participants. Correspondence one week prior to the interview included the option to participate once again. At both the commencement and conclusion of the interview, participants read the brief and debrief, which informed them of their right to withdraw at any point, up until a specified date when the data analysis would take place. This was repeated verbally.</p>
<p>Confidentiality and anonymity</p>	<p>Addressed with the participants at the start of the interview, using jargon free language. I informed participants that their contribution to the study would be transcribed and recorded verbatim so that data analysis could take place but that it would also be anonymised so they, nor the setting could be identified. The participants were also informed that as of August 2015, data would be completely anonymous and that at this point, it would not be possible for them to remove their data as I would not be able to identify their contribution. Participants signed the consent form after this process to signal that they were happy with their participation.</p>

3.8: Data collection procedure

The data collection procedure was formed of two stages; a preliminary questionnaire (see appendix 4) and the formal investigation.

3.8.2: Semi structured interview

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the named person in each setting. One of these settings requested that the college principal be present during the interview.

The defining characteristic of the semi-structured interview is their flexible and fluid nature (Mason, 2004). The interview structure is formed around an interview guide or aide memoir that contains topics or themes to be covered throughout the interview, rather than a structured sequence of questions to be asked of all interviewees, as in the structured interview.

The rationale for using the semi-structured interview technique lies within the epistemological stance of my research. Following from the critical realist paradigm, interviewees may construe legislative change and factors in their practice that have been affected by this change differently. It would not be appropriate to form a structured sequence of questions as I am seeking participant experiences. If I had employed a structured approach to interviewing, participant responses may have been influenced by the rigidity of the interview, instead of drawing on what was relevant to them. I considered the use of an unstructured interview but decided against this for a number of reasons. Firstly, the literature reports that the implementing of change can be stressful for those enacting it (Gibbons et al, 1998), linked to this, during both the pilot investigation and the initial recruitment of participants, I perceived a feeling of nervousness, for example participants responding to my request for involvement with phrases such as *“I’m happy to help, but you might want to speak to my boss as he will know more”*. The combination of this led me to believe that an unstructured interview may

not have uncovered the experiences I sought due to lack of participant confidence in what they felt was relevant.

3.8.3: Developing the interview guide

Given these considerations, I developed an interview guide which prompted participants on themes. The use of the semi-structured interview allowed me to gain the insights of participants across settings on the same themes, however, the fluidity of the interview gave rise to different aspects of these themes as experienced by the individual participant. I develop the interview guide through a combination of the consideration of the literature, my research questions and the information I had gathered in the preliminary phase.

Table 6: Interview guide rationale

<u>Interview theme/question</u>	<u>Rationale/Data Sources</u>
Change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job role • Provision offered 	Literature <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lewin (1947)- unfreezing, changing, refreezing • Festinger (1957)- perception of change/dissonance • Giles & Hargreaves (2006)- inability to change Preliminary questionnaires- named persons reported varied responses in recognition of change.
Support (offered by local authority) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consulted/Listened to • Support in interpreting 	Literature <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edward et al (2007)- change happens to us • Spours et al (2007)- mediation • Jowett et al (1996)- LA provided support • Preliminary questionnaires (named persons less likely to have contact with EPs).
Challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workload • Change 	Literature <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gibbons et al (1998) • Ball (2003)333 • DeKlerk (2012) Preliminary questionnaire responses (reported concerns regarding workload).

3.8.4: Interview procedure

The interviews were completed in the college settings in June 2015. The timing of the interviews was purposefully organised around the end of national exams and prior to transition processes beginning in July 2015 to maximise the potential availability of participants.

The four interviews lasted between twenty and sixty minutes and were recorded using an iPad application.

Interviews were carried out with the college's named person, however, upon arrival at Setting C, I was informed that the Principal wished to be present in addition to the named person as they were uncomfortable with this type of information sharing without the Principal's presence.

The interviews were carried out in an office, with the door closed to ensure confidentiality was maintained and to avoid disruption and interruptions.

The interview guide was used as a structure for the interview and included a list of themes and possible questions (see appendix 6)

3.9: Data analysis procedure

The interviews were transcribed using Braun & Clarke's (2006) method of thematic analysis of participant responses. The audio recordings were then transcribed in order for the coding of transcriptions to be carried out.

3.9.1: Thematic analysis of participant responses in the semi-structured interview

I followed Braun & Clarke's (2006) suggested procedure for thematic analysis (see table 7). I chose this method because I wanted to ensure that my analysis had a structure; thematic analysis is a fluid and flexible approach and there is no set way to analyse the data but I

wanted to ensure that my analysis was as systematic as possible and felt Braun & Clarke's (2006) procedure would ensure that I analysed all data in the same way.

Table 7: Process of conducting a thematic analysis

<p>Step 1: Familiarising myself with the data</p>	<p>I transcribed the data, using a clean verbatim technique. This involves removing filler words such as 'ums' and 'erms' and only included significant pauses.</p> <p>Once I transcribed the data, I read the transcripts a number of times until I was confident I could summarise the general points made by each participant. At this point, I organised the transcript into a table, in preparation for coding.</p>
<p>Step 2: Generating initial codes</p>	<p>I coded the data line by line and attempted to take a data driven, inductive approach. I decided to use inductive analysis as my case study is exploratory and I did not want to decide what was and was not relevant. As stated, in the epistemological stance, I have a personal interest in the area and I was in the process of compiling a literature review and so I cannot claim that my analysis was purely inductive because my prior knowledge may have some elements of deductive coding, at least in terms of naming the codes.</p>
<p>Step 3: Searching for themes</p>	<p>Search for themes was undertaken using thematic maps. I read the 418 codes a number of times and highlighted repetitions, similarities, differences and relationships between codes. This produced the following initial themes;</p>
<p>Step 4: Reviewing themes</p>	<p>I reviewed the themes through colour coding the maps according to areas that could be linked together. This process produced three key themes</p>
<p>Step 5: Defining and naming the themes</p>	<p>Defining and naming the themes was a process I undertook during my interpretation of what the key messages to report were. This process happened organically and the definitions of the themes,</p>

	alongside the final names for each theme occurred as I wrote about them.
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3.9: Criteria for reliability and validity

Yin (2009) noted that case study designs are often criticised, largely due to concerns over validity. Yin (2009) calls upon case study researchers to consider three key measures of validity when conducting research.

Table 8: Criteria for reliability and validity

Construct validity:	The extent to which conclusions generated in the study give full and accurate description of reality.
Internal validity	The extent to which the procedure employed minimises bias and confounding variables.
External validity	The extent to which the resulting research generated is embedded within the existing research.

Thomas (2011) states that the concepts of reliability and validity “*are not your principal concern when doing a case study*” (p.62). Thomas (2011) goes to explain that this is because these concepts are appropriate to positivist methodologies but that to seek this as a measure of rigour in the case study is to “*wrench out of its home in normative research with its samples, variables and statistics and bent and twisted into something quite different for the purposes of interpretative research*” (p. 63).

Following from this, Cohen (2007) also suggested that qualitative researchers should be cautious that they are not working to the agenda of positivist researchers and quantitative methods employed in this field. In this vein, it is important to consider that qualitative and quantitative research may have different goals. The goal of my research is to gain insight into

the views of people; as already stated, it is my philosophical position that the views individuals hold influence their behaviour, in this instance, the way policy is implemented. Trying to ensure that my findings are generalisable to other similar groups is not my central goal and so this investigation may not fit positivist ideals of reliability and validity.

Seale & Silverman (1997) explored the concept of rigour in terms of reliability and validity from the perspectives of both positivist and interpretivist researchers. They suggest that positivist researchers would describe rigour as having high reliability, whereas interpretivist researchers would describe rigour as being authentic.

It is this authenticity that I hope to present in my research.

3.10: Measures taken to address threats to reliability and validity

Considering the notion of validity, reliability and the concepts of addressing this through rigour and authenticity, I took the follow measures to ensure my research was of a high quality.

Table 9: Mitigation of threats to reliability and validity

Construct validity	The construct validity was addressed through the use of a semi-structured interview. This allowed for participants to present their own reality, which should be considered accurate as it suffers little bias in the form of a structured sequence of questions, which may have led to the omission of important elements of the topic for the participant.
<u>Internal validity</u>	To improve the internal validity of research, I ensured that participants had access to the statutory duties as stated within the SEND CoP (2014) prior to the interview to ensure that participants had knowledge of what was to be discussed. I did this because as already stated, my intent was not to audit or test the participants knowledge of the SEND CoP (2014) (2014) but to

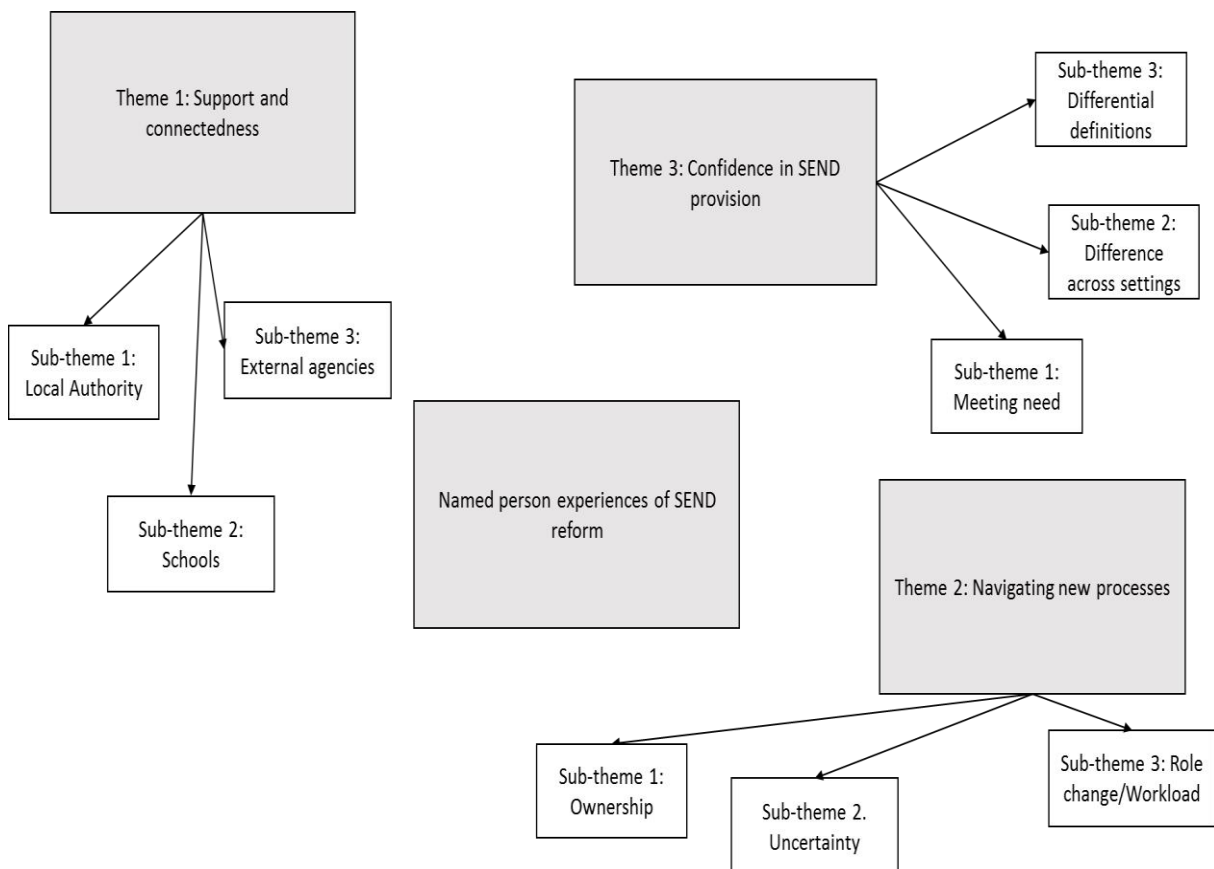
	<p>elicit their experiences of implementing it; presenting the information prior to the interview gave participants the opportunity to reflect on how they were doing this, thus, increasing the validity and authenticity of my research.</p>
<p><u>External validity</u></p>	<p>The external validity of the case study was an area of concern given that my case study is exploratory in nature. The review of the literature within the research field was a measure taken to ensure that the research subject, research questions and methodology were in line with the research already in existence. To ensure that data gathered and conclusions drawn as a result of this data are authentic I took a number of steps. The most important of these steps was the relationship and rapport built within the semi-structured interview itself. As discussed within the ethics section of this research, a key concern was that participants may view the study as a form of audit, aiming to find out if the setting was doing as they should. Building rapport in an interview is essential to gaining the trust and authentic views of participants and should be seen as a central advantage over alternative methods such as questionnaires. This rapport building was done through the honest explanation of why I was conducting the research as well as giving participants the opportunity to discuss any potential concerns the participants had including how the data would be used and reported on in an attempt to decrease social desirability bias.</p>

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

Braun and Clarke (2006) state that the aim of the presentation of findings from a thematic analysis is to “provide a concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive and interesting account of the story the data tell” (pp.23).

In line with this, the aim of my presentation of findings is to present the story of the interviews (see appendix 6 and 7 for an example of coding and a sample transcript, respectively), alongside and interpretation of what they may mean and how they link to the literature in the field. The relationship between my findings and the research questions will be presented within the discussion section.

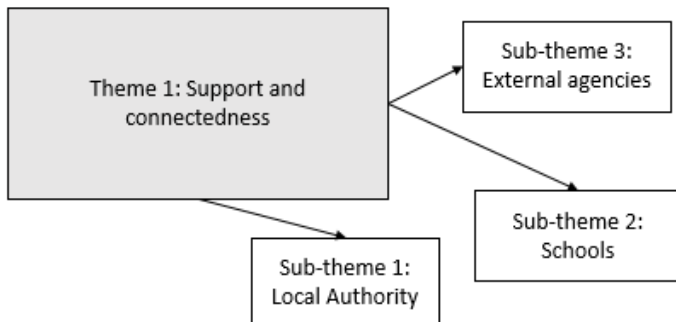
Figure 1: Thematic map of themes



4.1: Interpretation of the themes

4.1.1: Theme 1: Support and connectedness

Figure 2: Support and connectedness



A key theme throughout interviews with participants was the need for support and connectedness. There were frequent references to a lack of support, either from the local authority or external agencies and organisations, including schools. There were two references to a post 16 group that had been set up by settings in the county to support each other, further suggesting that the need to feel supported and connected was important.

One participant reported that the setting had been supported and was generally positive about the SEND reforms; participants who did not feel supported did discuss positive changes but generally did not welcome the SEND CoP (2014) and the potential changes it could bring to their job role.

To explore the theme of the support and connectedness, I divided the theme into three further subthemes; support from the local authority, support from schools and support from external agencies.

Subtheme 1: Support from the Local authority

Dissatisfaction in support was reported by three of the participants. The perception of lack of support was generally referenced to in the form of a lack of training, lack of LA presence and a perception of the LA not having enough knowledge of the provision the college had in place.

“The local authority. No support and if you want to know, like in my job I did need to know about some things, you just have to go and find it yourself. There’s no training.

Setting B

This sentiment was echoed by three of the participants, each commenting on a lack of support and consultation with the local authority. When asked about the support they would have liked to receive, participants most frequently referenced discussion or training on the reforms, how that would affect their setting, what good provision might look like and for the LA to recognise the good practice that was in place.

“Just get the local authority to come in and see what we do, look at our pressures but look at how well we do...what we do”.

Setting B

One participant shared experiences from a training session the setting had commissioned from an independent educational psychologist and they had also been involved in preliminary meetings with the senior educational psychologist in the EPS. This participant expressed positive views of the support the setting had received.

Subtheme 2: Support from schools

Participants discussed the need for schools to be supportive of colleges, with reference to providing up to date, accurate information relating to student needs,

“They should be made to delete irrelevant information. Did I tell you? I had one that said he can’t eat his food without an adult to cut his food...he needed help cutting his chips. What sort of...the level of need must be high. And we panicked and we employed someone to help with it and then found out it had been written when he was 4.”

Setting B

This, seemingly extreme, example could potentially be a widespread problem for settings, across the age ranges and was one that I had not fully considered in terms of impact regarding the financial and SEND provision implications. The information shared between settings should be an accurate reflection of the student and is something that the LA do need to reflect upon. An increase in connectedness to schools, through the more carefully planned transitions and earlier college involvement in reviewing needs with schools, SENCOs, parents and young people could reduce the difficulty that colleges may experience when calculating and sourcing the provision a young person needs.

A further element that appeared to affect the participant views of schools was a common perception that schools had either received more support from the local authority than they had, or that schools had an advantage in managing the SEND reforms because they had prior knowledge of previous legislation, for example, statements and annual reviews.

One participant said,

“...schools already know that don’t they because they had to write up statements or request them so they already know, it feels a bit unfair”.

Setting D

It is possible that the perceived support schools received from the LA and the idea that schools had prior knowledge influenced participant views that schools have less difficulty in managing changes, or that the change would not be as significant for them and that this influenced feelings of lack of support or connectedness.

Subtheme 3: Support from External agencies

The dissatisfaction of support from the LA or schools did not extend to the participant views of external agencies, for example EPs. This being said, only one participant commented on how they had been supported by an external agency and so this subtheme less about feeling unsupported and more about a lack of knowledge in terms of how they could be supported;

“I haven’t worked with an EP before so I don’t really know what you do...we can do that ourselves...it’s not something that I think we would need to do.”

Setting C

Upon a short discussion of the types of work EPs might be able to carry out in colleges, three of the participants expressed enthusiasm for this type of relationship to be built. In some cases this was related to support with advice regarding individual pupils or providing training around specific SEND, most notably, on mental health difficulties. In some cases, EP involvement was discussed as a means of supporting the setting with their feelings of uncertainty around the SEND reforms.

Linked to the idea of unknown or unclear roles of external agencies, one setting expressed views characterised by a notion that the value of these individuals is unknown and that this would be a barrier to commissioning support;

“[we don’t know] the knowledge of what you could add to make it something to explore”

Setting C

This may explain why colleges have not commissioned support from external agencies and is an important factor; a lack of commissioning, or referral to these agencies extends and further limits the amount of support that is offered to further education colleges by external agencies.

Given my position as a TEP, I picked up on and discussed the role of the EP more so than alternative external agencies, however, I felt confident that participants viewed external professionals as a homogenous group, often giving examples such as “EPs and Speech and Language Therapists” in the same sentence. As such, whilst there is an emphasis on EPs, I would be reasonably confident extrapolating these views to wider external professions.

There did seem to be a general unhappiness with the support that had been received and there was a perception of a disparity between the levels of support colleges had received, in comparison with other settings, including schools. The key difference between the participants who were unhappy with the level of support they had received and the participant who was not may be the idea of being supported, rather than whether this support is commissioned or given freely.

Summary of the theme

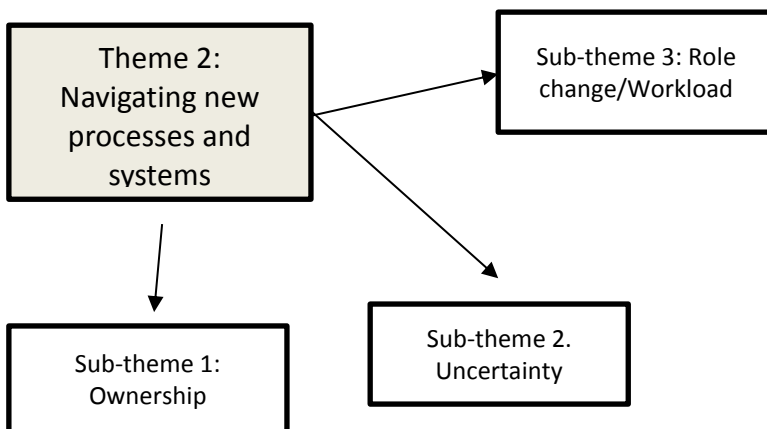
The theme of support and connectedness links to the literature. Key comparisons are that between feeling supported by the local authority (Jowett et al, 1996), and a notion of a separation between policymakers and policy implementers (Edward et al, 2008). These two concepts could come together to create a situation where policy is interpreted differently to how it was intended (Spours et al, 2007) due to a lack of understanding of either the policy itself or how it relates to the local context.

Psychological theories of change suggest that to implement change effectively, it is important to understand what the change is (Lewin, 1947) and to understand why it is important (Festinger 1957). In addition, if there is a lack of external involvement in this process, it is difficult to understand how the settings are adjusting to the process, leading to a difficulty in providing appropriate and targeted support (Kübler-Ross 1969).

In light of the literature and the views expressed by participants the theme of support and connectedness is an important one to consider in terms of facilitating colleges to implement the SEND reforms effectively and confidently.

4.1.2: Theme 2: Navigating new processes and systems

Figure 3: Navigating new processes and systems



A key theme throughout the interviews was an expression of concern about the new processes and systems. These concerns fell into natural categories and are discussed through three subthemes: uncertainty, increased workload/change to role and a lack of ownership over the new processes.

The subtheme of changes to role and workload appear to cause participants concern, anxiety and worry. I had considered reporting on this as singular theme, however, much of the concern, anxiety and increased work appeared to be related directly to understanding new processes, in essence, it was not a separate entity, but one linked with the adjustment to SEND reforms. As such, I felt it was important to ensure that they were directly linked in my report in order to draw out important conclusions and implications.

Subtheme 1: Ownership of SEND policy

Having a sense of ownership of the SEND CoP (2014) related to an expressed lack of confidence in the new processes; there was a reported sense of a disconnect between the setting and the SEND policy and that this lack of ownership was directly related to the new SEND CoP (2014) as it had not been felt under the previous FE systems, for example, the conversion of an LDA to an EHCP, with one participant noting that the LDA process was ‘ours’;

“I’m not sure about the EHCP stuff though. It feels like it’s not connected anymore...when we had the B139A¹ it was ours and we could pull relevant information in it so it was connected and useful. With these- with the EHCP we don’t really get a say, we’re kind of like, well it doesn’t really matter what we think. So then we end up not being able to meet needs.”

Setting B

There was a conflict between the participants, with one reporting that there had been opportunity to gain ownership over the new reforms and this appeared linked to a more positive view of the implementation process;

“It was really helpful, she went through what it might look like and then we had groups and we all took a statement from the “should” and “must” clauses and we did this exercise, a brown paper exercise, to generate ideas on how to achieve the “musts” and the “shoulds”. It really was useful to see what everyone thought really and then also to get ideas on how to make it work for us”.

Setting A

Settings that had not had the opportunity to engage with the SEND CoP (2014) in this way discussed ownership in an ‘us versus them’ type discourse. There was a feeling that a system they were comfortable with had been removed and that the new system did not take into

¹ B139A refers to the LDA

account their views, either fully, or at all. The participant who reported a sense of ownership had also described a transition to the new SEND CoP (2014) that was perhaps, further along than the participants who felt a lack of ownership. This means that this issue could alternatively be considered an issue in the timing of my research rather than an impact of SEND reform.

Subtheme 2: Changes to role and increased workload

Participants voiced conflicting views on the changes to their previous work in the role of named person in that there was no change to what they were doing, but that there was a change in workload, possibly indicating that the change in processes has affected how, not what named persons do. By this it is meant that the provision is reportedly the same as prior to the SEND reforms but the processes in which named persons apply for support has changed and this has increased the workload.

“Not really, we’re still doing the same things for our students, maybe for me it’s changed but not for the students, our provision is still the same”.

Setting C

The general consensus was that the support they provided had not changed but the means of assessing, providing and accessing this support had. The changes to assessing, providing and accessing this support was widely link to an increase in workload and this was discussed in all interviews.

In general, participants reported an increase in workload, citing attendance at an increased number of meetings, or completing an increased amount of paperwork as the key causes for this change.

“Oh God, it could be anything. At the moment, I feel like I'm doing everything.”

Setting D

The perception of an increased workload, and similar views to that of the above participant is representative of all but one of the participants, who discussed the initial work around SEND reforms as an increase in workload but that actually, once systems were in place, it actually reduced workload because SEND had gained a higher status within the setting, leading to an increase in funding and an increase in staffing.

“We have bought in quite a bit of support for that from (trainer name), if we didn't know exactly what we needed to do then I think it could have gone south. And we have had good funding for staff, so it's not too much work. Having the, having the new support assistants has given me more time to make secondary visits to upcoming students so that has been a real benefit”

Setting A

As already discussed, setting C requested that the principal of the college sat in on the interview. The principal had a different perspective on the concept of workload than the named person;

“It comes down to time really and one of my key focuses is SEND so I make sure that the team has the time to do everything they need to don't I?”

The named person replied,

“Yes, the college is very supportive of pupils with learning difficulties. I do wonder...it will be tricky... how we manage all the reviews though...if we do all of the statement plans. It would be more than LDAs at the moment and we are quite stretched...”

Setting C

This could suggest that there is a disparity between leadership views of workload and what is experienced by named persons. There may be a perception that the school leadership are

minimising the impact of the SEND reforms on the workload of their inclusion staff but that this is not the actual experience of the staff member.

Associated with the possible disparity between leadership teams and named persons and the notion of support provided, one participant discussed how changes to the role had increased her workload to a point that she was now completing two roles and linked this to inadequate setting systems not accounting for a need to support staff navigating new systems.

“The capacity is low- what do I say to my team because they don’t even know that I might not be there. Who does it then? Who goes to the meetings because if it isn’t me then who will be trained when its 2 weeks until the end of term? There won’t be a handover and the shit will hit the fan. I’m serious it will. It just won’t work because our systems”.

Setting B

Subtheme 3: Uncertainty

Throughout the dialogue with participants, there was a notion of uncertainty with regard to new policies and new processes. The concept of uncertainty appeared to have two main strands to it; uncertainty relating to the new policy and uncertainty in the participant’s confidence in understanding it. One participant talked about not knowing what the SEND CoP (2014) would look like, commenting;

“I would have liked to speak with others...other coordinators just to see what they are doing...I don’t know why they didn’t do that, maybe there is a reason...I don’t know”.

Setting C

The challenge of starting to implement the new reforms appeared heavily rooted in this uncertainty. One participant said,

“I remember being a bit stressed about it but it was more the unknown, once we got our heads around what needed to happen and how that would affect us it was pretty smooth sailing.

Setting A

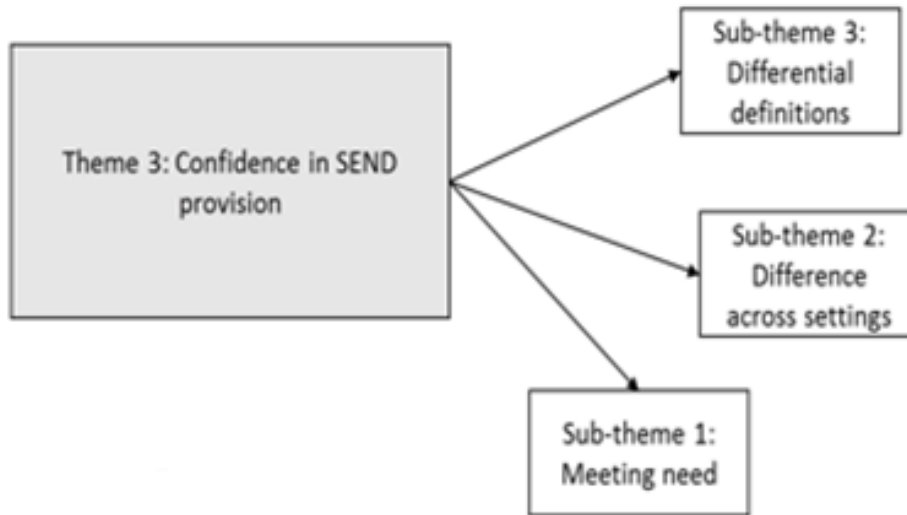
Summary of theme

In general, participants shared that they did not feel confident in navigating these systems, that it had increased their workload and that they had little support or role in establishing how the new policy would translate into practice. The participant who felt confident in navigating the new SEND reforms did not report the potentially negative impact of the SEND reforms that counterparts did, suggesting, that feelings of ownership, support and confidence may be mechanisms that affect how SEND reform policies are experienced by further education inclusion managers.

From my perspective the theme of navigation of new policy central is to understanding the impact of SEND reform on named persons in further education settings. I think the most poignant discourse is link between this and the perception of support that had been received. The lack of confidence in participants' own knowledge of the SEND CoP (2014) was evident even when discussing the quality provision that the setting provided and how the SEND reform had changed their job role, indicating that they had at least some knowledge of the reforms. I think that this shows the strong link between all themes and how they impact upon one another as it is possible that if participants felt they had some reinforcement of their good practice and more personal support in navigating changes then they would have an increased self-efficacy in doing so. It is important to add that my knowledge of what formal support was offered is limited to informal discussions with EPS representatives with a post 16 responsibility and the information provided by participants, as such, I am not clear about what was offered, though from the views of participants, it was not substantial enough.

4.1.3: Theme 3: Confidence in setting's SEND provision

Figure 4: Confidence in SEND provision



SEND provision was widely discussed in terms of different types of SEND and the settings' ability to manage the needs of all learners. All participants reported a sense of confidence and pride in the support they provided for students with SEND. I considered this in conjunction with the previous theme of 'navigating new processes' and found it interesting that there was a lack of confidence in adjusting to new processes but great confidence in meeting student needs..

Subtheme 1: Meeting the needs of students with SEND

There was a strong sense of meeting the needs of students with SEND, as per the SEND CoP (2014).

"...there are challenges but at the end of the day it comes down to what you do for students...and we provide the best chances for them. Ones who wouldn't traditionally do very well do well here. We have so many learners with needs that it's just become commonplace

and so we're very good at establishing their needs and putting in support, appropriate support, to help them achieve."

Setting C

Participants did not verbalise considerations that practice and policy are linked, creating the potential for participants to report that they had little confidence in their knowledge of policy, whilst actually, meeting the needs of their students in line with SEND reform. One participant noted the difference;

"I think they think we don't know much or do much but that's not true. What I didn't know was how to request a statement..."

Setting D

Participant views on meeting individual needs was both a source of contention and a source of celebration. One setting discussed the SEND CoP (2014) as allowing for more opportunities for learners with SEND and that it enabled the setting to put greater emphasis on working from where the student was, on a need-by-need, pupil-by pupil-basis. When discussing positive changes, one participant noted that;

"Some of it is really great, it's fantastic that it will be easier for students to carry on learning...there isn't always enough time for them to move on to the higher course, or they can't because they don't pass it"

Setting D

Other participants described meeting individual needs as something that could be difficult. At times, there appeared to be an element of frustration, both on behalf of the student and that the college was expected to meet the need.

Whilst discussing an individual student, with a severe form of epilepsy, one participant spoke about not being able to meet his needs. The participant reported that this student's needs

inhibited him from accessing elements of the course he was studying, which required him to independently care take animals, a requirement of the course;

“...it’s still frustrating though because he won’t really be able to complete that course, he won’t meet the required skills and then he won’t have a qualification, which is unfair isn’t it.”

Linked to this, was the idea of accountability of settings and this was reported as being, at times, unfair as the college could not necessarily ensure that all students passed courses or allow them to study courses because of entry requirements exam boards stipulate;

“It looks that they haven’t helped them progress when actually its exam boards, it is a requirement that they have English and Maths but some just won’t get it”.

Setting C

One participant discussed concept of meeting needs and accountability was linked to staff morale;

“...my staff feel like they haven’t done a good enough job- probably a reason why colleges have high turnover”

Setting C

The SEND CoP (2014) asserts the need for pupils to make measurable academic progress, and are “...accountable through Ofsted and performance tables such as destination and progress measures” (SEND CoP, 2014, pp. 58). Participants identified strategies put in place to support and included comprehensive assessment, varied courses and individual support as ways in which they did this. It is unclear as to when this pressure began as there has long been a focus of high aspirations and student success (e.g. Warnock Report, 1978). The difficulty participants reported in terms of accountability for student progress might be a wider scale issue than those raised by the introduction of the recent reforms and the challenges that have been reported to come with it and it the data collected in my research does not deal with this in enough depth to draw conclusions about the cause.

Subtheme 2: Differences across settings

There was a strong sense of differences across settings, including other colleges, sixth forms and schools. This links to the previously discussed theme of support and connectedness as settings felt that schools had increased support or more knowledge of the process. Interestingly, this perception of difference pertained within the post 16 sector.

There was reference to how the setting the participant worked for had increased challenges, or managed needs more confidently than their counterparts. On the difference between colleges and sixth forms, one participant stated;

“...our college is quite large and it wouldn't have the same...it has more pressures than the sixth form because they don't have as many students and they know them better.

Setting C

The difference across settings was also mentioned with regard to how the SEND reforms would be implemented within settings differently, with a participant noting;

“You can't expect us to be the same as a small college- we have 26000 students on roll. They might not have as many students with SEND- I think they wouldn't.”

Setting C

This subtheme links to the idea of mediation of national policy to fit the local context as highlighted in the literature. Though there is some hint at replication of Spours et al (2007) findings of mediation of national policy to fit the local context, the general tone of the interviews suggested that three of the four participants were at very early stages of implementation and that they were uncertain of the actual SEND CoP (2014). As such, I felt that it was too large a statement to discuss this with any claim to a conclusion as at such a stage of implementation, it could just be the concepts of uncertainty or fear of the unknown rather than an actual mediation of national policy.

Subtheme 3: Differential definitions

Some of the participant views on what may or may not be included under the umbrella term SEND may need to be considered by professionals working with them. Examples of this include, young parents, independent young adults, newly arrived learners, or those with little English language and whether behaviour difficulties are considered an SEND without a diagnosis.

“Yes and no, if behaviour is just poor then really we need to think about whether college is the right place for them”

Setting A

I think this is an important concept to consider. Firstly, shared working requires shared understanding, the implication of not having a shared understanding is that inappropriate referrals may be made. In addition, for the EP, there is a potential to explore interesting avenues of work that may not be encountered in school aged work. To ensure that external professionals work effectively with further education professionals it is important that there is a shared understanding of the terms used, the type of support colleges may require and a reflection upon the remits of the different professionals involved. If this shared understanding is not achieved then there is not only a risk

Summary of theme

The general view of participants was that SEND provision was successful at meeting needs, with difficulties arising in the form of ‘unrealistic expectations’ placed upon both the college and/or the student. Festinger’s (1957) idea of dissonance is important consider in light of this; if dissonance is the need for internal consistency then, in order for participants to voice that they do not have confidence in their knowledge of the SEND reforms, there is a potential psychological need to also view their existing provision as effective as this would reduce

dissonance. This being said, the aim of my research was not to make judgements on the settings implementation and as such I made no observations of the provision in action and so, whilst the idea of dissonance is relevant to consider here, it would be unfair to suggest that participants who voiced confidence in provision but concern over policy change are experiencing a dissonance that enables them to view their provision differently, or more positively.

4.2: Conclusion

The interview data suggests that the SEND CoP (2014) has raised challenges for named persons in FE colleges. These challenges appear to be administrative and systems based, which in turn have had a reported influence on the workload of named persons.

In terms of mechanisms that affect the way in which the SEND CoP (2014) has been received, and implemented, it is possible that the perception of support as well as actual interaction and familiarity with the SEND CoP (2014) play a role in the named persons perceptions of the SEND reforms.

It is also apparent that named persons feel that provision itself has not changed, in that settings are reported to be providing the same level of support as they did prior to the SEND reforms. This being said, there is a discourse of increased opportunities for students with SEND in light of the SEND reforms.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This chapter intends to explore my research findings in light of the research questions, suggest possible conclusions, implications as well as considering the limitations of my research and the contribution it may have in the field of post 16 education and SEND reforms.

I initially considered each research question in light of the critical realist epistemology.

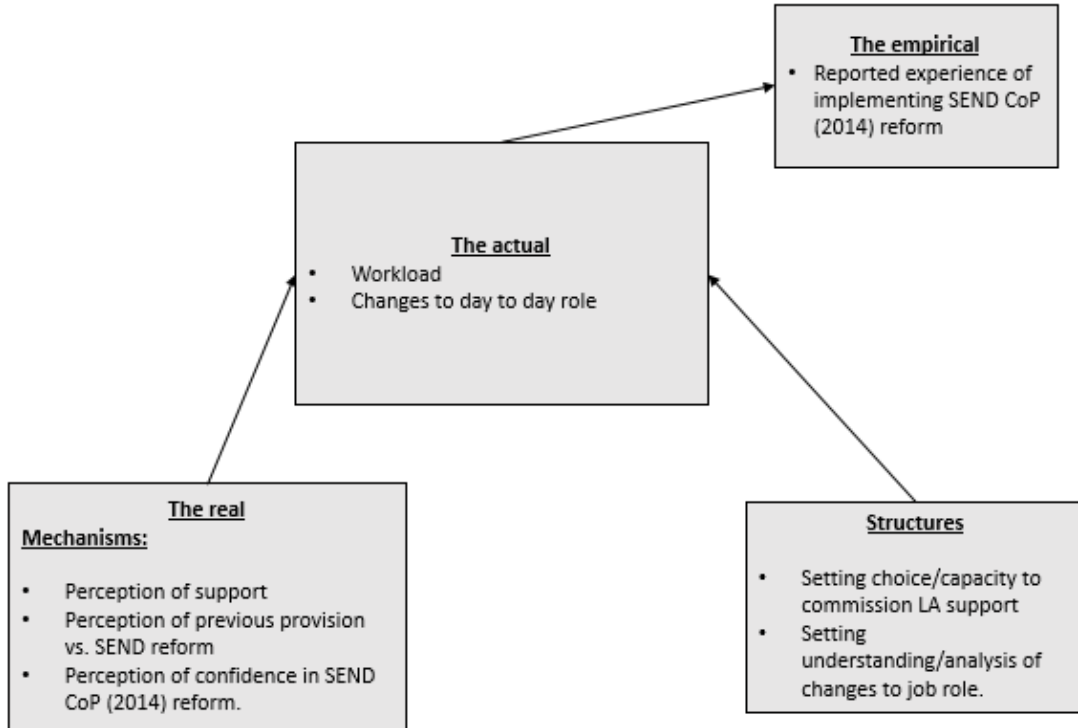
Mingers and Wilcocks (2013) discussion of the empirical, the actual and the real, as discussed in Section 3, suggests that participant experience of named reform may be influenced by the factors or mechanisms that they experience. Sayer (2000) explored the notion of causation as the interaction between the experience and the structures and mechanisms that influence the way the empirical experience is interpreted; I used this approach to consider the research questions.

5.1: Research question 2

What factors have influenced named person perceptions of SEND reforms in Linview?

The research findings suggest that named persons' experiences of SEND reforms are varied and influenced by a variety of factors. This was expected due to the conclusions drawn from the psychological theory and literature explored in section 2.

Figure 5: Critical realist depiction of Named person experience



Factors that appeared to result in a positive experience of SEND reform are suggested to include the perception of support received and the level of interaction named persons had had with the SEND CoP (2014). One participant reported a sense of confidence in managing SEND reform and discussed having a good understanding of the SEND CoP (2014) document as a factor that increased this confidence. This participant also reported engaging with external agencies and reported that the setting had been supported by both the LA and the EPS. Participants who reported a generally negative experience of SEND reforms felt that they had not had enough time to read the SEND CoP (2014) and had not received enough support from the LA. The participants reported a sense of being ‘forgotten’ and a perception

that their colleagues in schools and sixth forms had received a greater level of support than FE colleges.

I found it interesting that my participants often referred to their provision as remaining the same, in that, the college was managing student needs as per the SEND CoP (2014) prior to the legislation. Participants did report change to job role and workload, though these changes were mainly experienced as administrative rather than practical changes to their day to day roles. This then conflicted as participants reported a sense of increased opportunity for students, suggesting that there had been some change in the provision, again, though this was perceived as administrative, in that there was increased funding for students to remain at college for an increased length of time. I think the conflict between the experience of change and the view that provision had not required adjusting to meet the statutory obligations links to research conducted by Jowett (1996). Jowett et al (1996) reported that the SEND CoP (1994) was well received by teachers because it reaffirmed existing good practice. This does not seem to be the view of the participants in my research; though there was a reported sense of confidence in existing provision and that this matched the statutory duties they had now been prescribed, this appears to have led to a view of unnecessary change. The difference between my findings and Jowett's may be due to a change in the political landscape of education and the changing nature of educational services. The key difference may be the advent of the traded service model and the notion that settings are responsible for the commission of external agencies for SEND support. This means that often training, consultation and general support is the choice of the setting, rather than a package of support that is local governed, as pre-trading. This could be an avenue for future research it would be interesting to explore differences between settings operating in both traded and time allocation models of LA delivery.

In terms of psychological response to change, the findings can be considered in light of Lewin (1947) and DeKlerk (2012). Lewin's three step model of change suggests that for organisational change to occur, individuals must first recognise what changes are occurring and their purpose. It could be argued that participants did not feel confident in their knowledge of the SEND CoP (2014) and this meant that they were unable to 'unfreeze' and therefore were not yet in a position to change.

DeKlerk (2012) suggested assessing organisational change through alternative perspectives than those provided within the early research. For DeKlerk (2012) organisation change can induce 'emotional trauma'. For DeKlerk (2012) change means a loss of something, for example, a loss of the status quo. My findings do suggest that there is an emotional reaction to the SEND reforms in that there was a sense of negativity toward the local authority because of the perception of a lack of support.

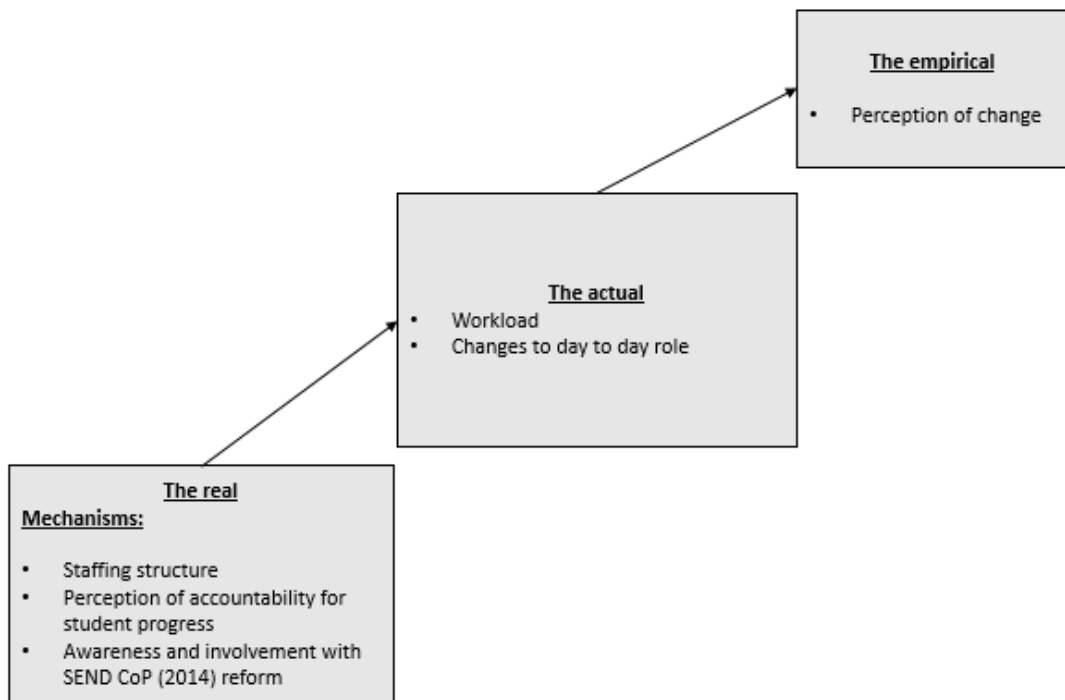
5.2: Research question 2

Has individual and/or organisational practice in Linview settings changed in light of SEND reforms?

The experience of change to individual or organisational practice in light of the SEND reforms could be linked to the actual. The differences between participant reports of change were contingent on whether participants viewed the SEND CoP (2014) as requiring organisational change. This links to the first research question and the reports of individual change to job role in an administrative sense (e.g. attendance required at an increased number of meetings) but a lack of change to the provision the college offered previously. My findings suggest views were conflicted, both within individual participant responses and between

participants. This is perhaps a reflection of different mechanisms and structures as experienced by participants.

Figure 6: Critical realist depiction of Named person reports of change



(Adapted from Sayer, 2000, p. 15)

In general, reports of individual change were more frequent than reports of organisational change by named persons in Linview. This may relate to the psychological response to change as presented in the perception of change as a loss (Harvey, 1990). Participants may have been experiencing direct changes to their workload and a lack of understanding of why change is occurring, leading to an emotional reaction to the SEND reform.

Where organisational change was discussed there were both negative (too much demand on settings to meet needs) and positive (setting already had the provision in place and so there was little need to change the organisation) viewpoints shared where training had taken place, there was report of increased interaction with the SEND CoP (2014) and all setting departments having increased awareness and involvement with SEND provision within the setting.

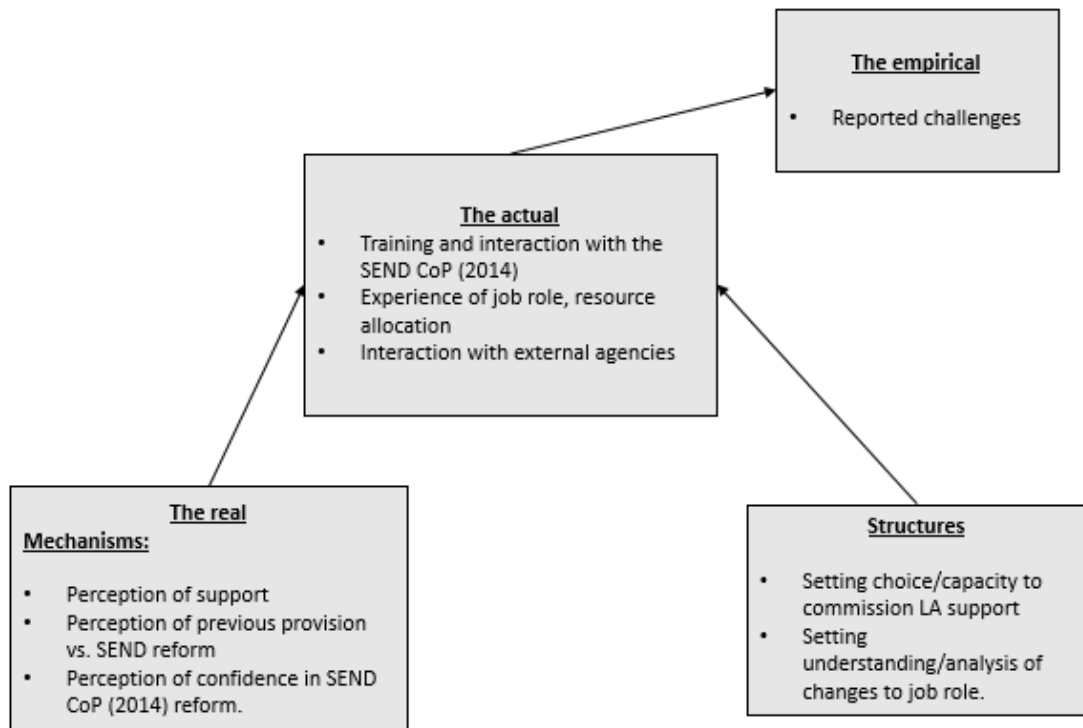
The minimal reports of the need for organisational change but frequent reports of individual change may be explained through cognitive dissonance. Festinger (1957) suggested that individuals strive for internal consistency. For internal consistency, attitudes and behaviours need to be aligned. If participants have an emotional reaction to individual change (e.g. annoyance at increased workload) but an internal belief that they support young people with additional needs, then there may be a level of dissonance because it would be difficult to believe both. This may mean that contesting the level of change required on an organisational level reduces this dissonance as the participant can view SEND reform as an unnecessary change.

5.3: Research question 3

Have organisations and named persons in Linview experienced challenges as a result of reform to SEND legislation?

All participants shared experiences of challenges, particularly in navigating the new process of EHCP and associated responsibilities. Challenges appeared to be more frequently discussed as personal challenges, though there were references made to organisational challenges within this (e.g. funding structures meant less financial support for staff roles, which increased workload).

Figure 7: Critical realist depiction of Named person experiences of challenge



(Adapted from Sayer, 2000, p. 15)

The findings appear to suggest that lack of confidence in navigating new processes was linked to the perception of increased workload; experienced challenges appear to be oriented within the practitioner role and confidence in the role rather than meeting young people’s SEND needs. Generally, participants reported support for young people as a positive outcome of the SEND CoP (2014) though this was not discussed in as much depth as challenges for organisations and practitioners.

Participants reported that the challenge of navigating new processes was increased through their experience of receiving little support and training from external agencies. The findings suggest that these challenges could be lessened through the mechanism of confidence in

managing change and that this may come in the form of specific training. Participants also reported that prescriptive instructions from the LA would not be welcomed, suggesting that support provided would need to be carefully considered. This links to the ideas presented by Kübler-Ross (1969). The change curve suggests that there is a psychological process of adapting to change and that organisational change can be managed through the understanding of this process. The notion of a lack of support could also be connected to research suggesting that policy reforms are often perceived as happening to practitioners (Edward et al, 2007). If participants do not feel connected to policy change then it is possible that the perception of a lack of support remains even if with support in making any necessary changes.

5.4: Key messages from the findings

The interpretation of my findings and the consideration of the research questions highlight three key messages;

- Further education colleges would value a supportive approach to the implementation of the SEND CoP (2014)
- The changes for settings appears to relate to the navigation of new processes as opposed to need to amend existing provision.
- Leadership teams of individual settings may find it beneficial to assess the impact of SEND reform on their staff and encourage methods of gaining their views and ideas relating to changing organisational practice.

5.5: Alternative explanation of findings

Yin (2009) states that for a case study to fulfil its explanatory purpose, it is valuable to consider alternative explanations (p.163). Yin (2009) goes on to discuss the value of considering these alternative explanations when conducting descriptive or exploratory work

as it could otherwise be interpreted as “suspicious” to the critical reader (p. 163). By this, it may be meant that to ignore different perspectives of the findings is to potentially feed the researchers own pre-existing biases, or seek to confirm these biases.

My assertions, based on my findings suggest that there is an element of feeling unsupported, unconfident and uncertain with regard to SEND CoP policy reform (2014). There are two important factors that could explain my findings in an alternative way.

Firstly, the SEND CoP (2014) is novel legislation; at the time of my investigation, the process was only six months in. The perception of challenges that named persons reported could have been due to the novel nature of the policy, as opposed to challenges associated with enacting policy in general. I considered whether this is important in the overall presentation of my findings and decided that, this alternative view, whilst perhaps subtle, is a valid alternative to the conclusions I have drawn because the findings may well reflect a point in time, rather than a general difficulty with policy implementation.

The second viewpoint considers the importance of political and media led discourse currently concerning the education system. Education has been at the forefront of government discussion and recent years there have been a number of disputes between the government and education unions. This means that the landscape of and relationship between these two sectors could be less than friendly. This is an important alternative perspective as my findings could present broad discontent within the education sector, leading to negative views of central and local policy agents rather than the challenges of implementing SEND reforms in a more isolated sense. As explored within the paradigm of critical realism, it is difficult, if not impossible to observe such phenomenon without the influence of structures. Political landscape could be one of those structures and explain the findings in an alternative way.

Returning to Jowett et al (1996) education professionals reported that the SEND CoP (1994) was a confirmation of good practice; it could be possible that, with the political discontent, that the SEND CoP (2014) is not seen this way and therefore, it is less well received.

5.6: Findings in light of existing literature

Psychological theory

I think that there are elements of my research that can be explained through the psychology theory previously discussed. Key points to consider include the importance of a sense of involvement and agency in organisational change, as these reduce cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957), and enable individuals to understand why change is occurring (Lewin, 1947). Whilst my research aimed to 'bear in mind' the roots of organisational change theory, it was not the core of my research and as such, it was not explored in enough depth to make firm conclusions, however, I do suggest that there is a potential for participant experience to be influenced by psychological response to change. By this, I mean that there is a possibility of dissonance or lack of confidence which may create resistance to organisational change.

Organisational Change and Post 16 literature

In my view, the key pieces of research in light of my findings are Jowett et al (1996), Spours et al (2007) and Edward et al (2008).

Research conducted by Edward et al (2008) and Spours et al (2007) suggest that organisational change to incorporate government policy it is important is subject to key considerations including local mediation of policy context and a sense of connection between the policy and the policy enactor. These two factors highlight the relevance of the opening quote by Alexander (1997). In terms of my research, I would assert that comparisons can be drawn and Edward et al (2008) in that there was a participant reported sense of separation and

lack of consultation. I think this links to the work of Spours et al (2007) and though I do not feel my findings explored the concept of local mediation in enough depth to draw firm conclusion about whether this was the case, theoretically, it could be argued that a sense of separation or distance to the policy may create a situation whereby practitioners seek to make it relevant to them, therefore mediating the central policy to fit the local context. I also think it important that the concept of the 'local offer', as stated in the SEND CoP (2014) suggests a local nature to the policy implementation. This would be an interesting area to explore as the policy implementation process has matured.

Jowett et al (1996) conducted a similar piece of research to mine, albeit on a larger scale. The findings of Jowett et al's (1996) research are in stark contrast to mine in terms of reported sense of support from the local authority. This being said comparisons can be drawn with regards to practitioner reports of concern about increasing workload and uncertainty. I suggest that the similarities between my findings and those of Jowett et al (1996) could be related to the psychological response to change and that, uncertainty and threat to one's job role are part of this process. The differences between mine and Jowett et al's (1996) findings could be explained through differential political landscapes and the changing nature of the educational services. The key difference may be the advent of the traded service model and the notion that settings are responsible for the commission of external agencies for SEND support. This means that often training, consultation and general support is the choice of the setting, rather than a package of support that is local governed, as pre-trading. Again, this could be an avenue for future research it would be interesting to explore differences between settings operating in both traded and time allocation models of LA delivery.

5.7: Implications

5.7.1: Implications for central government

As explored in the introduction and within the literature review, government changes to educational policy are considered frequent and are not always well received. In my view, the sentiment of the SEND CoP (2014) is positive and, if implemented as intended, could improve the educational experience of young adults in the post 16 sector.

The opening quote of my thesis relates to the view that it is those who enact policy are the people that make it 'come alive'. With this in mind, an important consideration highlighted in both the existing research alongside my findings is that it is integral that these individuals are supportive of the policy or take ownership of it. The literature suggests that this is not always the case and that there is a distance between policymakers and practitioners (Edwards et al, 2007). It is also possible that the mediation of national policy to fit local contexts, or taking ownership, could reduce cognitive dissonance towards the organisational change (Festinger, 1978) however this could lead to a misinterpretation of the intended message of the policy (Spours et al, 2007). My participants discussed the positive impact that the SEND CoP reform (2014) could have for their students but it was the general view of participants that the policy was an unknown, not within their remit (it was the responsibility of the leadership team) or that it was disconnected to the provision at their setting.

In terms of the role central government could have at this level, I reconsidered the consultation process. 4% of the total responses were received from the post 16 sector, as already noted, this does not include unions such as the ATL, who voiced opinions on behalf of their members. My participants did not feel that they had been consulted on the matter and

I wonder whether increased promotion of the mechanisms through which practitioners are consulted with could alleviate this. Timmins et al (2003) used the RADIO model to describe a process whereby key stakeholders could be involved in the process of change and that this would lead to a more successful integration of the suggested organisational change. This in relation to my research could mean ensuring that the design of new policy involves practitioners, who may have useful insight into how systems need to be changed to ensure that SEND policy results in an increase in positive outcomes for learners.

5.7.2: Implications for local government

A key implication of my research is the need for Linview to establish positive relationships with colleges in the area. This has been identified as an aim of Linview since the SEND CoP (2014) was introduced. From the data, it would seem that the participants would have valued input from the LA regarding the SEND reforms and some implied that they felt unhappy that this had not happened. The participants were all able to comment on how the LA and associated specialist services, such as the EPS could support them or how they might become more involved in the FE sector.

A second implication, related to the building of relationships is that LA representatives and associated services need to develop their understanding of how FE colleges work and develop a shared understanding of terminology, protocols and the systems that colleges use. This would be beneficial to both the local authority and the FE colleges as it would mean a closer collaboration in delivering the provision detailed in the local offer. In my opinion, this is very similar to the trainee or recently qualified EP gaining an understanding of an age range they had previous little experience of. I experienced this and had to spend time in a number of early year's settings to be able to make positive and useful recommendations for practitioners

to put into place. The colleges involved in my research all commented on the confidence they had in their provision and two of the four settings indicated that they would like LA representatives to come and visit their settings so that they could gain an understanding of their good practice, as well as help them identify where they could improve.

The participants in my research did not generally report on the support the local authority had provided as adequate. Participants discussed feelings of being forgotten, or that they did not matter as much as schools. Working as a TEP within the local authority, I feel confident in saying that the reforms to the SEND CoP (2014) were a priority and there was keen movement towards implementing the new legislation as effectively as possible, initially focussing on the transition year groups (End of Key stage 1, 2, 3 and 4). This may have meant that colleges felt little ownership or exposure to the plans, at least not as much as schools, who were completing more transitions. Named persons in college settings were invited guests at transition meetings, but by the nature of transferring statements to EHCPs for these year groups only, they did not lead any meetings. The feelings of lack of support may reduce as these settings take the lead on an application for statutory assessment and transferring statements to EHCPs.

The local authority could consider supporting further education, and perhaps post 16 settings in general by offering training or providing LA representatives to attend the post 16 network meetings that the colleges had set up. Participants also donated suggestions such as LA representatives visiting the settings to gain a picture of the provision that they offered. The difficulty is that the local authority operates within a traded service landscape. This means that budgets are devolved to settings and they 'buy back' services. It may not fit within the remit and funding structures of local authority services to provide services free of charge and may potentially cause difficulty as schools would not be offered this type of service.

5.7.3: Implications for EPs

The relationship between EPs and further education colleges, is at the time of writing, relatively novel. There may be a lack of knowledge for both EPs and colleges in terms of what the other does and I would suggest that this would be the most appropriate starting point. Having had post 16 experience, I would assert that colleges are not dissimilar to schools and other educational settings but that there is work to be done around gaining a shared understanding of what SEND might be in FE colleges. This could involve EPs broadening work to support young people with complex lives (e.g. young pregnancy, economically independent etc.) or college practitioners broadening their views on behaviour as a SEND. The opportunities for both EPs and colleges are vast and if a positive relationship can be built then this could be an exciting landscape to work within.

5.8: Limitations

The decision to use a case study design was made because I wanted to capture what was happening at the time of the research, within the local authority I was working in. The advantages of this method of research are that it provides rich, detailed insight into a real life situation. The limitations of this are that arguably, I cannot confidently infer generalisations to colleges in other counties, whilst this was not my central aim, it is important to consider this as an issue. This is a limitation because a larger, cross-regional study of the same nature could have provided valuable information for both local authorities, educational psychology services, and colleges as well as a contribution to the literature. I did consider alternative methods, including the selection of colleges across the region, however, the non-prescriptive nature of the CoP meant that it was quite possible that views would be different in the same county, as reflected in my results. As a result of this, a case study was selected to present a

picture of the views of named persons in one local authority, leaving readers to consider the implications in their own authorities. This may be a source of further research and I would consider conducting a larger-scale follow-up investigation, not only to address this difficulty but also to examine whether views have changed as time has passed and participants have become more experienced with the new systems.

Another difficulty presented was the use of the 'snapshot' case study. A snapshot case study depicts a phenomenon within a specific period of time. As explored within the findings and discussion, there is a possibility that there is an issue with temporal validity, in that, some participants were at an early stage of implementing the SEND CoP (2014) and the local authority was not transferring statements to EHCPs for college-aged pupils at the time. This means that practitioners may have had little need or opportunity to interact with the process. The practical constraints on my research meant that it was not feasible to complete follow-up data collection, as this would have meant returning once the transition of the EHCPs took place for college students, timetabled at September 2017.

Whilst I would have liked to have tracked change over time and would possibly look to this as a source of future research, I do think it is important to reflect on my findings of practitioner experiences at the initial point of novel policy introduction. My research suggests the importance of support and confidence in the policy and the impact it could have on individuals and the provision settings provide. A longitudinal study may show that over time, practitioners adjust and acclimatise to SEND reforms or policy change in general. This would not mitigate early experiences of concern, stress and uncertainty and so it is important to consider prevention of these experiences and so it provides useful information as to the implementation of policy.

Another limitation of my research is that one of the cases involved two participants; a SEND coordinator and the principal of the college. This was not planned and I was unaware that this would be the case until I arrived on the day. The principal told me that the setting was uncomfortable with the inclusion coordinator taking part alone. In terms of my research, this posed a problem as it is possible that the views gathered from the inclusion coordinator were censored or would have been different had the principal been absent from the interview. This being said I made the choice to continue with the interview because this would have decreased the small number of cases I was able to present. In addition, I felt that the desire to have the principal present may provide an insight into the dynamic of leadership at that setting, thus providing important information, for example, the type of management styles in place. It is possible that there was a lack of confidence or trust in the named person, which would potentially be a mechanism that affected the named person's experience. My experience in this interview was that the principal was dominant in the conversation and at times presented conflicting views to the named person, however, there were instances when the named person disagreed with the principal, suggesting that the participant was not too intimidated by the presence of the principal to express converse views.

It is difficult to draw conclusions as to whether the interview would have been different if the principal had not been present and so it is a limitation of the research, in so far as, the views of the named person may not have been effectively captured. In future, I would have explained the purpose of the investigation in more depth, taking care to fully explain the non-auditing nature of the research to potential participants, I did this in a telephone discussion and reaffirmed it with a participant information sheet but it may have been more effective to arrange a face-to-face initial meeting to put participants at ease.

Using a critical realist approach meant that my view of ‘truth’ or knowledge required an understanding of participant experiences. I see that there is an external reality but that the way in which this reality was experienced is based on interpretations. These interpretations facilitate action and this action determines the quality of provision. It was for this reason that I chose to follow a qualitative approach to data collection, using analysis of interview data to inform my conclusions. A limitation of using this type of methodology is that it is argued that an interpretation of reality is not reality itself. In his discussion of ‘objective knowledge’ Popper (1979) asserted that the only way to undertake rigorous, reliable research was to employ the hypothetico-deductive method; the process involves using test-retest methods to scrutinise hypotheses, with the aim of falsifying it. For staunch followers of this method, and those whom regard themselves as positivist researchers, Popper’s (1979) method is the way to access objective knowledge of the world and therefore, my choice to view subjective experience as a valid form of knowledge would be questioned. I would argue though, that humans are not passive and their views and interpretations of the world would affect the validity of positivist methodology if this had been selected.

The critical realist paradigm does not aim to falsify hypotheses; some of the unexplainable could be interpreted as the elements of the social world that we do not have access to (Bhaskar, 1978; Archer et al, 1998). Thematic analysis, for example, do not aim to falsify the hypothesis. In some ways, it is possible that I was looking to confirm my original thoughts around the research questions because I used inductive and deductive methods of coding. This is a limitation from a positivist perspective as it means that my research, findings and conclusions are susceptible to my own biases and therefore not reliable. In my view, and that of the critical realist, the social world is not something that can be independent of external reality; it is made of human beings, who are not passive and have personal motivations and

beliefs. I considered my research methodology in depth prior to selecting the chosen route and I would not change the approach I took. The methods I selected accept both individual experience and external realities and instead look at the interaction between the two.

Related to my critical realist approach, is the idea that my biases and preconceptions would have been a potential limitation to my research, regardless of the methodology chosen.

Nietzsche (1887) wrote about the 'amor fati'. For Nietzsche, this is the notion that human beings are obsessed with things, we are not neutral and our beliefs are characterised by what we care about. I have post 16 experience, meaning that I have knowledge, understanding and importantly, personal experience, of the issues that my participants faced. This lack of objectivity may have caused bias even had I employed objective measures, therefore risking the sacrifice rich detail positivist view of reliability or validity. This links to the notion of hermeneutics and the idea that meaning can only be understood, not counted or measured (Sayer, 2000). I came to the conclusion that it was more rigorous to 'own up' to and explore my own experience in order to highlight any biases, rather than use methods that, perhaps, unsuccessfully minimise them. In terms of gathering participant views, this notion of the amor fati is also important. Participants' views on reform, may be characterised by what they care about and, therefore, be construed and experienced in different ways, using data collection techniques that allowed for this to be expressed was important.

5.9: Contribution to the literature

As a result of the SEND CoP (2014), there has been an increase in research within the post 16 setting. This research is largely focussed on students with SEND, a reflection of the new age range included within the SEND CoP (2014).

As explored within the literature review, research focusing on practitioners and/or SEND reform in a policy context in colleges has a limited evidence base.

Using similar, albeit at times, dated, research on policy reform or looking at SEND reforms in wider settings, for example, secondary schools, allowed me to generate research questions that aimed to assess whether the existing literature applied to my investigation. I think that parallels can be drawn between my research and the literature field in that similar questions have been asked but to the target group of FE named persons.

My research adds to the field because it provides an exploration of how issues raised for wider settings, for example, mediation of central policy, workload, uncertainty and distance from policymaking, are experienced by college staff in Linview, exploring both the experiences of named persons as well as illustrating the SEND provision in the further education sector.

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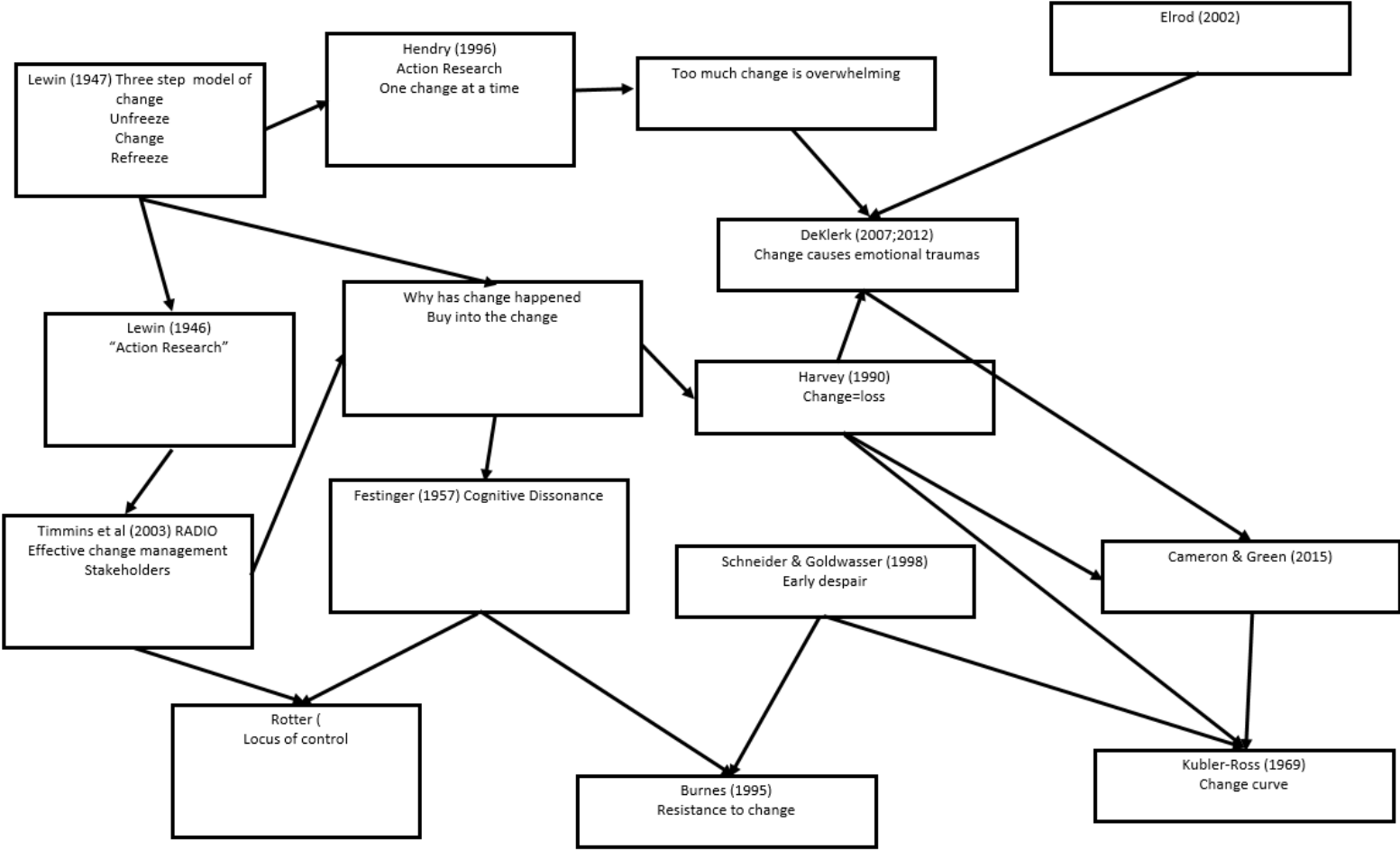
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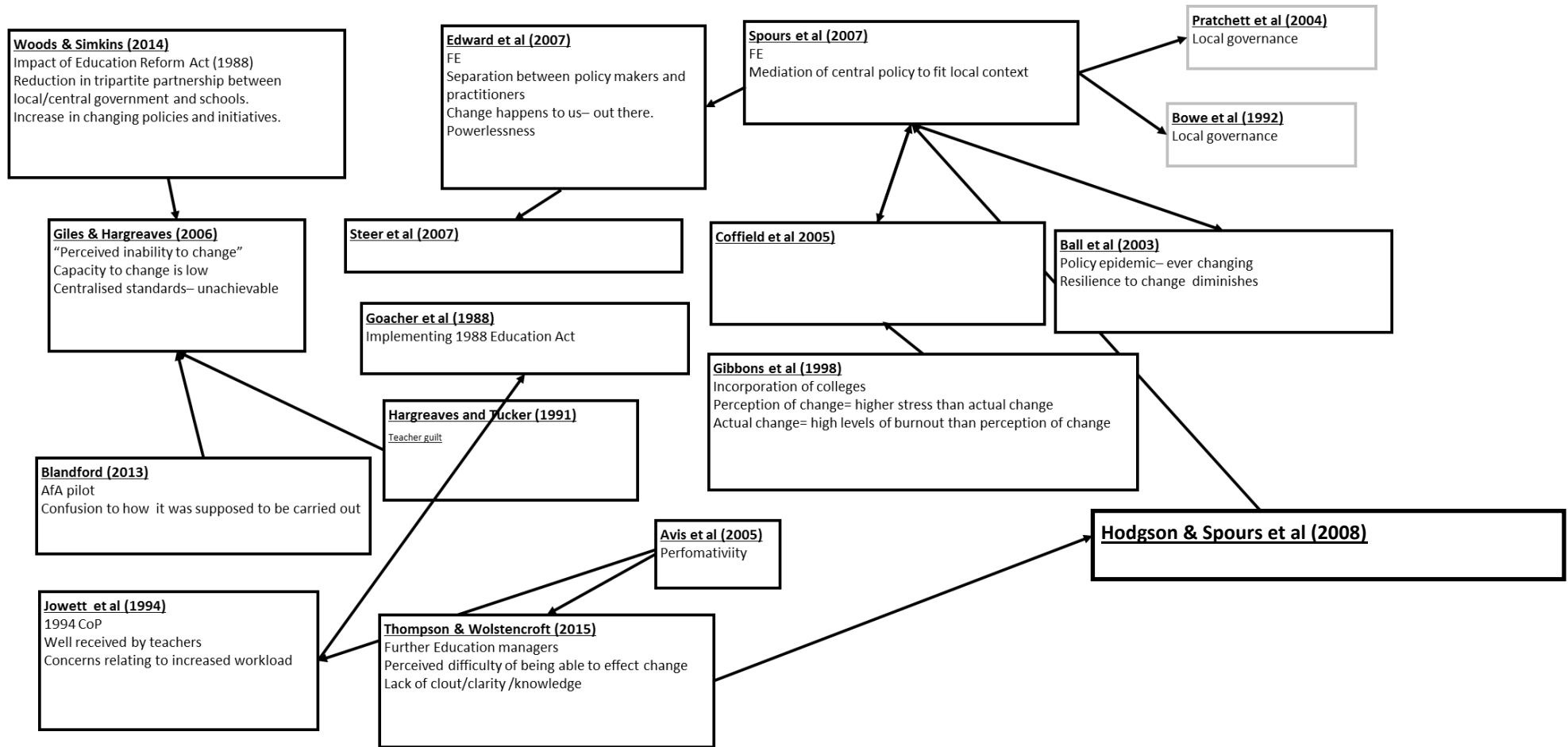
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APPENDIX 1

Appendix 1.1: Psychological Theory of Change



Appendix 1.2: Literature Map




APPENDIX 2
Recruitment Letter

Dear

I am writing to ask you to participate in a research study concerning post 16 changes to the Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice. This study is being carried out as part of my educational psychology doctoral research thesis at the University of Birmingham.

The purpose of this study is to invite those with SEND responsibilities in post 16 settings to share their experiences and views on the recent changes made to the Code of Practice. This will then be used to gain a local picture of the good practice within the local authority post 16 provision as well as any challenges that may be experienced. Some of the topics that I hope to explore include the challenges of implementing a new government policy as well as highlighting the positive work colleges do.

In the next two weeks I will ring to see if you are interested in taking part, whilst your participation would be appreciated, there is no obligation to say yes.

If you would like to know more, please contact me by emailing 

Sincerely,

Adrienne Reid

Trainee educational psychologist

Participant Information sheet

Study Title: *“An exploratory case study of post 16 staff perceptions of legislative changes in post 16 settings”*.

Thank you for indicating that you would like to participate in my research project. I wanted to send you some information prior to our meeting so that you had time to think of any questions you may like to ask about my study.

What is the purpose of the study?

The aims of the study is to provide a locally relevant picture of the experience of colleagues with SEND responsibilities with regard to the recent changes in legislation. This might include areas that your setting excels in, any concerns that were raised when carrying out any changes, any areas that your setting was already doing and any general experiences of how legislative changes has impacted on your setting.

Your experiences will then be used to generate common themes across the county and highlight the ways in which settings feel they could or should be supported, either by the local authority or by the educational psychology service.

Do I have to take part?

Your participation is voluntary. If you do not wish to participate you do not have to do anything in response to this request.

What will I do if I take part?

If you are happy to participate in the research after reading this information sheet please reply via email and I will contact you to discuss your participation and make arrangements to meet with you to carry out a semi structured interview, which should take no longer than 1 hour. At the time of the interview you will be asked to sign a consent form to reaffirm you are happy to take part.

What are the possible disadvantages and risk of taking part?

Whilst you may be asked questions relating the implementation of legislated changes this is by no means an auditing. The sole purpose of the study is to understand the challenges of change and not to check that practices are being carried out.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

The benefits to taking part in this research are varied; firstly you will get to share your experiences and will have the opportunity to share your settings best practice. Secondly, understanding challenges of instigating large scale change in an educational setting is important to ensure that adequate support in doing so is provided. Thirdly, forging good working relationships between post 16 settings and the educational psychologist will contribute to promoting the best outcomes for young people.

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

All information you provide to will be kept confidential, once data has been analysed it will become anonymous. It will be stored on an encrypted memory stick in a locked filing cabinet at the University of Birmingham for 10 years, after which it will be destroyed. . All data collection, storage and processing will comply with the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the EU Directive 95/46 on Data Protection.

Can I withdraw from the study?

Yes. You may withdraw at any time before and during the interview. You may also withdraw your data from the study after the interview has taken place up until 15th August 2015. After this date, all data will be analysed and will be anonymous, meaning I would not be able to discern your data from others in order to remove it. If you do wish to withdraw, please email this instruction.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

All information provided by you will be stored anonymously on a computer with analysis of the information obtained undertaken by the research team based at University of Birmingham. The results from this analysis will be written into a doctoral thesis. Feedback of the project will be provide in September 2015.

Who is organising the research?

The research is being carried out by Adrienne Reid, an Applied Child and Educational Psychology Doctoral student at the University of Birmingham (School of Education). All work will be supervised and overseen by the principal supervisor Dr Jane Leadbetter. If you have any questions, you can contact me, or my supervisor at the following addresses;

Adrienne Reid (trainee educational psychologist): [REDACTED]

Dr Jane Leadbetter (principal supervisor): [REDACTED]

APPENDIX 3

Thank for agreeing to take part in this short survey. The purpose of this survey is to inform a research project on implementing government policy in post 16 education. This survey aims to establish whether post 16 settings can be seen as one group, or if they need to be categorised by their differences (sixth form/college).

1. Which one of the following best describes your setting?

School

Sixth form

College

Other (please specify

[Click here to enter text.](#)

2. Which one of the following best describes your role?

SENCo

Teacher

Inclusion coordinator

Other (please specify

[Click here to enter text.](#)

3. Please select the most appropriate option for each of the following options:

a. My role has changed to meet the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice
Choose an item.

a. I am aware that the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice has recently changed.
Choose an item.

b. My setting has changed to meet the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice
Choose an item.

4. Please describe any experience you have Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Legislation

Click here to enter text.

5. Can you describe any potential challenges of introducing new SEND policy in your setting?

Click here to enter text.

6. Can you describe any potential benefits of introducing new SEND policy in your setting?

Click here to enter text.

7. Please select the statement that most reflects the number of times you have worked with an educational psychologist.

Choose an item.

Thank you for your time. If you are happy for your answers to be used in my research project then please return this survey. The survey can be returned either by return of email or, if preferred it can be posted.

Postal address:

Email address:

If you have any questions or concerns, or wish to withdraw your data at a later date, please contact me at the email address above. Alternatively, you may contact the research project supervisor, Dr J Leadbetter

Supervisor email address:

APPENDIX 4

My role has changed due to changes to the Code of Practice

I am aware of changes to the Code of Practice

Setting	A lot	Somewhat	A little	Not at all	Mode
Sixth form	6	1	1	0	A lot
Specialist provision	0	1	1	0	Somewhat/A little
College	1	1	1	2	Not at all

Setting	A lot	Somewhat	A little	Not at all	Mode
Sixth form	1	1	2	3	Not at all
Specialist provision	0	1	1	0	Somewhat/A little
College	1	1	1	2	Not at all

My setting has changed due to changes to the Code of Practice

Setting	A lot	Somewhat	A little	Not at all	Mode
Sixth form	0	2	2	4	Not at all
Specialist provision	0	0	2	0	A little
College	0	0	3	2	A little

I work with an EP

Setting	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Mode
Sixth form	4	2	1	0	1	Always
Specialist provision	0	0	1	0	1	Sometimes/never
College	0	1	1	0	3	Never

I have experience of SEND legislation

Setting	Yes	A little	None	Mode
Sixth form	7	1	0	Yes
Specialist provision	2	3	0	A little
College	0	0	2	None

Perceived challenges of new SEND CoP

Setting	Resource based	Systems based	None	No answer	Mode
Sixth form	5	3	0	0	Resources
Specialist provision	1	1	0	0	Resources/Systems
College	0	3	1	1	Systems

Perceived benefits of new SEND CoP

Setting	Increase inclusion	Increase good practice	None	No answer	Mode
Sixth form	5	0	3	0	Inclusion
Specialist provision	2	0	0	0	Inclusion
College	1	3	0	1	Good practice

APPENDIX 5

Interview schedule

Key themes

Change in role

Pleased with changes?

Support received

Challenges faced

Good practice

Knowledge of change?

EP role?

Possible questions

1. Do you feel that any changes have been made to your setting in light of the changes to the code of practice?
2. Do you see any potential benefits of making legislative change with regard to good practice?
3. Do you see any potential risks of making legislative change with regard to good practice?
4. Can you think of any specific challenges you face when trying to match provision to SEND legislation?
5. The code of practice discusses access to specialist services, how do you feel the EPS can best support the needs of your setting?
6. Are there any other comments you would like to make

NB: This is a semi structured interview- discussion may take tangential routes if the participant discusses a factor that they feel is relevant.

APPENDIX 6

Setting C

	Not really, we're still doing the same things for our students, maybe for me it's changed but not for the students, our provision is still the same.	Still doing the same things (provision) Role change	Processes/Systems	Navigating new processes and systems
AR	How has it changed for you?			
P2:	I probably shouldn't say (laughs) no but really I think I have more to do. More things, mainly paperwork or having to learn the new plan, I've not had to do any new plans yet but I am worried about it. I don't mind doing it but I don't think...the job is basically the same. I am worried about reviews, we didn't really have to do that with LDAs, we just applied for continued funding but I'm not sure we have...I think it will be difficult to do everything that it says.	More to do. Paperwork Learning the new plan Worried about plans, not had any yet. Don't mind doing it Job is the same Concern about reviews Perception of difficulty in doing	Workload Processes/Systems SEND CoP (2014) reform Job role Workload SEND CoP (2014) reform	Navigating new processes and systems Navigating new processes and systems

		everything 'it says'		
P1	I think with annual reviews the new paper says we have to cooperate, which of course we will but it doesn't say do them all. Do they have to do them? I think they do and we might help with it, like organising...there are challenges but at the end of the day it comes down to what you do for students...and we provide the best chances for them. Ones who wouldn't traditionally do very well do well here. We have so many learners with needs that it's just become commonplace and so were very good at establishing their needs and putting in support appropriate support to help them achieve.	<p>Cooperation-not doing everything Organisation will be a challenge</p> <p>Students achieve- best chances Confidence/pride in provision</p> <p>Appropriate support to help achievement</p>	<p>Processes/Systems</p> <p>Workload</p>	Navigating new processes and systems

APPENDIX 7

I: So now we've talked about what my research is about and why I was hoping we could talk a bit about SEND at college.

I: Can you tell me what your role is in the SEND department?

P: I'm the learning support coordinator and I manage all of the students with additional needs and a team of learning support assistants who support there the students. I don't really deal with the policy things you talked about though, that changes and I help manage it? Is that what you want?

I: Yeah, I'm just looking at how policy might change roles on the ground...like how it might be for the people's whose job it is to manage all those changes day to day, not so much the actual policy making.

P: I'm happy to help, I just didn't want you to think that I am the person that deals with all that...

I: What would a typical day look like for you? What might be involved?

P: Oh god, it could be anything. At the moment, I feel like I'm doing everything. The six sites, there are 2 of us who do the same job across the colleges but the other LSC is off sick so I'm doing all of the sites at the moment! I suppose it involves...I do...I arrange...arrange the support levels, like if they're 1 2 or 3 and then that tells us what level of support they should get. So I do the assessments at the start of the year, or the summer ideally but sometimes it's the start of the year...and then if they are level 3 then I would meet with the secondary school and find out how they are supported at school, they wouldn't get the same support. I mean they can't get the same support because the structures are different but level 3 would be the highest and so they would have a mentor.

I: Can you tell me that more about support levels and how they are decided?

Your level one's they would be getting support but really it would be just checking in with them, they wouldn't have anyone dedicated to them necessarily unless it became obvious that they weren't coping. They would probably be accessing classrooms with an assistant in there but they wouldn't be there just for them, supporting the teacher more with everyone. And they get assessed if they tell us on the application form that they need support. Well they all have to indicate, we don't really support unless we know about the need but sometimes schools tell us other times they don't or the support is not at the correct level so it's not a system that works that well...to rely on schools. Level 3 are the highest and they would get support in class, but there aren't that many and they would do the passport courses really...passport into work and life.

I: What do they cover on those courses?

P: Its basically life skills, independent cooking, we've tried to do more internships in the community because that's what we need to show, that they're getting employment. It's so

good for them as well though, some do really well on the courses and the internships, and we've got one student working as a chef at the moment...

I: Do many get jobs at those placements, after the internship?

P: Some do, if I'm honest not many but we employ some students here. We've got two of our ex-students as support assistants, it's really lovely you know, to see them all grown up and we know them so we know how to support them in a job because we know the needs. But generally, we want them to be able to live as independently as possible, so we do things like money training, or bus routes, general safety, you know that sort of thing. That bit of the special needs, it's pretty good here.

I: That bit being the higher level of needs?

P: Yeah, but all levels of needs really, the actual things we provide are really great but...but the...I think the problem is, that there is just not enough time or training for any of the staff and so I'm having to do most things like how to go to all of the annual reviews for students from year nine and is expected to manage on my own I couldn't send one of my support assistants because that's not fair, it's not their job and also they might not know the procedures at college really. So it's stressful for me because if I sent someone else they have to know how to be able to go to them or what questions to ask wouldn't be very helpful to me or the student and so basically I have to do to them all but that's not going to be possible either because we have about 8000 students across the sites, all of the learning needs in there is about 1000, not all with statements but sometimes they would have dyslexia or they have depression or self-harm so I go to the ones I can, as many as possible. That's the problem, they expect us to do all these things and I don't really think about the consequences the knock on of that is that I'm not in college very much and so I don't see the students as often as I'd like or get to know them as well as I should and then it feels like I don't do job that well because I don't have the time.

I: That sounds quite stressful

P: Hahaha...yes I love it though, working with students or seeing them achieve.

I: Yeah that is the nice bit isn't it! Is that something that reduces the stress?

P: It makes it worthwhile, but it is, I think at the moment because I'm doing all of them, I don't know, it feels a bit loony around here, I'm sure it will all get there but it has been stressful.

I: I know we talked about your role and that you didn't think you knew much about the changes, I'm just wondering if you got a chance to plan with the principal about what might change and how you would do it at (college)

P: I don't think so, we talked about it a bit at the leadership meetings but really it was more 'this is what needs to happen'. The heads they'd already discussed it- I think I was copied into an email about what it might look like here.

I: Do you think it looks different in other colleges?

P: I think it would have to wouldn't it, not everyone is going to offer the same courses or the same staff so it would be different depending on what they did. I think most colleges have foundations now so that might be similar but sixth forms that would be different wouldn't it, it might be, they might have less needs or they might have smaller catchment areas so you can't do things exactly the same way can you.

I: Do you think there may be a risk, if policies are not all the same that not all colleges will be providing the same standard?

P: I haven't really thought about the policy that much but I...I'm not sure that's something that would be a major concern because all colleges are different anyway aren't they. The tutors are different, subjects might be taught differently, the policy might look different but that would just be because different people would see it differently and you could say that about most things in college couldn't you.

I: That is a good point. Has there been any changes in the last 12 months or so? I'm just thinking with SEND changes being brought in, whether you've experienced any change?

P: Absolutely! Some of it is really great, it's fantastic that it will be easier for students to carry on learning but because we are a college we've always had older students, but the ones with special needs, they will be able to do it without paying for it won't they? That will be really great...

I: Yeah so the plans, theoretically they ensure funding up until students are 25 that depends though on whether they access higher education or its felt that the education part of the plan is no longer necessary so in those cases it would cease.

P: That is a massive step forward I think, nothing sadder than students getting to 19 and then they don't have any more funding.

I: Is that something that will change the way support is set up? Sorry that wasn't a very clear question, I mean, will that change the courses they might do initially?

P: I think so, yes it would because we could start with entry level 1 or wherever they come in at and then move up. We have the foundation programme you see, its entry level and entry level 1 and it's for students who don't have the qualifications or if they've got learning difficulties or have been excluded so don't have them even if they are bright- one of the biggest problems with students with special needs is that they don't often come with English and Maths GCSE or five in general, that means they can do loads of courses but with this change we could spend their first year, or even two years doing foundation work on English and Maths GCSE or the ASDAN equivalent and then they could access higher levels and progress...yeah. So the foundation learning, it helps them get that and then they move on but there isn't always enough time for them to move on to the higher course, or they can't because they don't pass it. Before some would do level 1 and then another level 1 and then another but it didn't really help them get jobs or get on to level 2, don't get me

wrong, we still helped them progress with the internships and those types of programmes but this means they could get a qualification at a higher level and then look at jobs in that course, the childcare one or the agriculture. One of our students, name) he is really autistic but he's great at computers so he could end up doing level 3 and then getting a paid apprenticeship. That would be really fantastic wouldn't it?

I: I think that would be a real success and I think the hope for the reforms, if that's the sort of thing that changed. I know what you mean about endless qualifications at the same level, it's really about them progressing isn't it?

P: Yeah, our colleges, they take that, that's one of the things we really focus on. We have evenings for it, going into employment or higher education. It's one of KPIs at the moment because we have to show destination for all of our students, because they can't be NEET can they?

I: Can you tell me any of the destinations of the last cohort?

P: Thought you weren't testing me (laughing)...gosh, well know that we had some of passport students go on to a job in the local library and then there are the two that work here. I'm not sure about the others though, I'd have to check. Sorry.

I: That's ok, my fault for putting you on the spot! Are there any other positive changes you've experienced recently?

P: Well the 25 age group and then maybe the links with secondary schools has improved. We've always known the secondary's because they are almost feeders but obviously not always because (county) has a lot of sixth forms so they can come further to us if they want to go to college. But the links have improved because this year there was more detail on special needs wasn't there. The secondary school invited us to the reviews more because they have to now, don't they? They did before, we were invited to them up to year 9 but really it seemed it was only the ones that were either going to start college early or if they had quite a high level of need. So that means we will know more about those who have statements but aren't level 3 whereas before they could be an unknown unless they were pathway learners so that's better. Apart from that, I don't know really, I'm probably the worst person to ask about positives though (laughing)

I: I can imagine it's been tough doing all the sites. So what about negatives then? Have you experienced anything that hasn't been great relating to the change in the CoP?

P: Apart from that we 'must' do things! Well...that might be a negative, I was sent this letter from the council saying from the 1st of September, that was last year not this year, from then I had to do this, this and that but no one even checked we had everything we needed! I don't think that's acceptable really, to just say this is what you have to do, without even asking what we already do, they're a bit out of touch aren't they! I think they think we don't know much or do much but that's not true. What I didn't know was how to request a statement, what's it called now?

I: Education, Health and Care plan?

P: Yes, I didn't know who to ask for one, I haven't requested one yet but I would know how to do it, will that we in your project, they won't know I said that will they?

I: No everything is anonymous though you can choose to withdraw some or all of your responses, if you want to?

P: No as long as it can't be traced back to me- its important though isn't it- who do I asked to come and see a student? I think it's a bit rich to say you must do this and you must do that for things we already do but then they don't even tell us how to do the things we must do

I: When you say they, who do you mean?

P: The government or even (local authority). No guidance on the things that actually matter at all. Its ab bit of a joke, I go to the working group and everyone there feels the same I think. No-one had any contact with anyone apart from the letter we got.

I: What type of support would you have liked?

P: I probably shouldn't moan at you sorry

I: No its fine, honestly.

P: Support would have been good, maybe a meeting or something to go through anything we need to change or say good job on that. The thing I'm most worried about is all the laws around statements or Education plans, like is said, it would be good if we were told this is the process instead of just trying to work it out...

I: What was the process with LDAs?

P: Well we did it and then we sent it off, we didn't have to do that with other people all the time, only if they already had someone working with them. I think it looks quite different to LDAs or we did do it the same but we knew the paperwork so it would have been good, schools already know that don't they because they had to write up statements or request them so they already know, it feels a bit unfair though if they said 'oh you're not doing this well', were trying to work our way out in the dark almost.

I: So are you saying it would have been helpful if someone for the local authority had come in and met with you and talked through?

P: Yeah I think that should have been the minimum really. They should have offered training as well, that's the thing because know with this, we're, we might take students with more needs, that is fine, thats not a problem, I'm not saying it is but how are we supposed to do all of those needs without training? We have a lot of different needs now but, I think what I'm thinking of is this one boy who has just arrived, he has this severe type of epilepsy and when he fits he becomes really dangerous, he grabs out and this can

happen at any time. The only course we had to offer him, because he wanted to do agricultural was the farming course but then he can't actually be left alone because it's dangerous so I'm just supposed to find a way around it but he can't do it really because, well you need to do shifts on the farm course but he can't if he doesn't have support. He has a statement but it doesn't cover the cost of full time support- thing is he was turned down at the special school because even they couldn't meet his need so how are we supposed to- do you know why that happens- his needs are too severe for the special school but not for us?

I: I don't know of the case so I couldn't say, maybe they were thinking of other students though, like maybe they thought able bodied students can move out of the way, whereas if you have wheelchair users it might be more risk?

P: Maybe, actually I didn't think of that but that would make sense, it's still frustrating though because he won't really be able to complete that course, he won't meet the required skills and then he won't have a qualification, which is unfair isn't it. That's my biggest problem I think, I'm not sure what we can do to make that...to help him get the qualification.

I: That might be something to look at in the transfer process- you could ask for a reassessment of his needs and the panel could evaluate whether he needs full time support?

P: See- told you I didn't know the process! We need you to come and help, do you help in colleges?

I: I think that is the hope of the EPS, to work more closely with colleges- so that's something you'd be interested in?

P: Absolutely- I would love to have someone like you who knows the systems to come and support us in college. Is it paid for by the local authority or do we pay for it?

I: At the moment, the structures for funding are not 100% but I think it would work the same way as with schools- they commission us out of their SEND budgets.

P: That would be something I would ask about. Do you do things that aren't about plans?

I: Yeah EPs work in a variety of ways, are there certain ways you would like support?

P: The training thing would be good, on the different disabilities, I know about dyslexia but the epilepsy one, and to be able to support the teachers with ways that they need to teach students. But mainly for me, for my benefit it would be to help me work out how to do all of the new paperwork or apply for the reassessment.

I: I will feed that back to my boss and let her know your thoughts, anonymously of course!

P: I don't care about that bit, you can tell her it's me.

I: Actually, I have to, part of the research rules! Just to finish up, I just wondered if there

were any other comments you would like to make about the changes or anything else we've discussed.

P: I think I've said everything I can think of, was it ok? Do you need anything, me to talk about anything else that I missed?

I: No this is great, really helpful. Thank you so much for your time, I really appreciate it.