

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS ENROLLED ON SUPPORTED  
LEARNING COURSES WITHIN A FURTHER EDUCATION (FE) COLLEGE:  
PROFESSIONALS' VIEWS OF THE POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION FROM EDUCATIONAL  
PSYCHOLOGISTS

By

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## **Abstract**

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) reforms are due to come into force in Local Authorities (LAs) from September 2014 (Department for Education, 2014). Accordingly, services will need to consider how they can meet the aims of supporting Learners with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LLDDs) up to the age of 25. Educational Psychologists (EPs) currently offer support to young people with SEND whilst they attend school and many Educational Psychology Services (EPSs) will need to consider how to extend their support in view of the SEND reforms.

This case study explores the views of professionals within one LA of how the EPS and local Further Education (FE) College can work collaboratively. Participants include EPs, College Tutors, the SEN Team and the Connexions service. Data was gathered using interviews with the service Managers and focus groups with main-grade professionals and analysed using Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Implications for the EPS within this LA are proposed, which take into account the supportive factors, potential constraints and the considerations that need to be given to the relationship before it is initiated. The proposed next steps include: explaining the role of an EP to the College staff, their partners, LLDDs and their families to ensure that the service is used effectively and efficiently; offering consultation sessions and training to College staff and ensuring that there is sufficient EP resource to meet the needs of the College prior to establishing a relationship.

## **Dedication**

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my parents, my family and all of my friends who have supported me in so many ways, I cannot mention them all. Thank you.

To Martin, your patience and unwavering faith in me, even when my belief in myself dwindled, has made this possible. I will be forever grateful for your encouragement and love.

Finally, I dedicate this research to all young adults with learning difficulties and disabilities who need more support; I'm hoping it's on its way.

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## **CHAPTER ONE:**

### **INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

Reforms to the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) system are due to be implemented locally from September 2014 (Children and Families Bill, 2013; SEND Code of Practice, DfE, 2014). Consequently, Learners with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LLDDs), in post-school provision, will be entitled to support up to the age of 25. This may include support from Educational Psychologists (EPs) who currently support children and young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN) throughout school, up to the age of 19. Hence, there is a need to consider how EPs can extend their support to LLDDs post-school. As most LLDDs who attend College will do so within the Supported Learning Department, this provides the focus of my research in considering what professionals believe EPs can contribute to this area. The aims of this case study are to consider the implications from different professionals' views and propose possible next steps in the development of a relationship between the EPS and local College.

This study is presented in four chapters: Literature Review, Methodology, Results and Discussion, and Reflections. For the purpose of the study, the LA in which the data collection took place has been anonymised and has the pseudonym of 'Buttonsley'.

The focus of this research is predominantly on young people with Statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN) and terminology will be used in accordance with the following: "In post-16 education students with SEN tend to be referred to as 'learners with learning difficulties or disabilities' or LLDDs" (p. 2, House of Commons note, 2012). For the purpose of clarification, the following definition underpins my understanding of this terminology: "Learning Difficulty and Disability has been defined as 'a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of people of that age, or having a disability which prevents the use of facilities generally provided by post-16 education and training providers" (Learning and

Skills Act, 2000). Whilst this Act could be considered dated, subsequent legislation has not provided a definition that differs from this (for example, the Children and Families Bill, 2013) and it is thus considered to be relevant in understanding current discourse. A further area that is discussed throughout this research is that of Further Education (FE), which is understood by this author to align with the following definition: "FE is post-16 education which is below degree level and not taught in a school" (Disability Rights UK, 2012).

### **1.1i Structure of the Literature Review**

This chapter reviews relevant research to provide a context for this study. The intention of the literature review is to reflect on the historical context regarding views of adults with LDD, leading to a consideration of the legislative policies that currently impact upon the education of children and young adults with LDDs. This background will provide a focal point to understanding the current context of education for LLDDs, both nationally and locally, with specific consideration of the Code of Practice (DfE, 2014). Following this milieu, an exploration of the role of EPs, involving national and local considerations, will lead into an exploration of the involvement of the profession with FE Colleges and LLDDs.

### **1.2 Historical Context**

Previously, Western society has viewed adults with LDDs in a negative way, for example through attempting to prevent them from having children, fearing that their offspring would have similar difficulties as their parents (Cleaver and Nicholson, 2007, p. 13). In the nineteenth century, predominant beliefs regarding models of disease resulted in adults with LDDs being labelled as: 'imbeciles', 'simpletons', 'dull', 'idiots' and 'backwards' (Simpson, 2011, p. 545). These various terms do not appear to relate to differing diagnoses or levels of intellectual abilities, rather: "They are an ambiguous zone mopping up the bottom end of the normal intellect and the borderline pathological and thus minimize the problem of defining idiocy sharply from the norm" (Simpson, 2011, p. 545). The figure below is taken from

Simpson (2011) to illustrate the two-dimensional matrix of 'diagnosis' of children and adults with LDDs that was applied during the nineteenth century;

		Dimensions of diagnosis		
		intellectual faculties	social competence	etc.
Functional capacity	non-pathological		normal	
			backward	
	pathological		imbecile	
			idiot	

Figure 1.1; Two-dimensional matrix of classifying individuals with LDDs, Simpson (2011, p. 545).

However, towards the late nineteenth century, Ireland (1877) proposed a three-dimensional matrix of classification, which looked as follows;

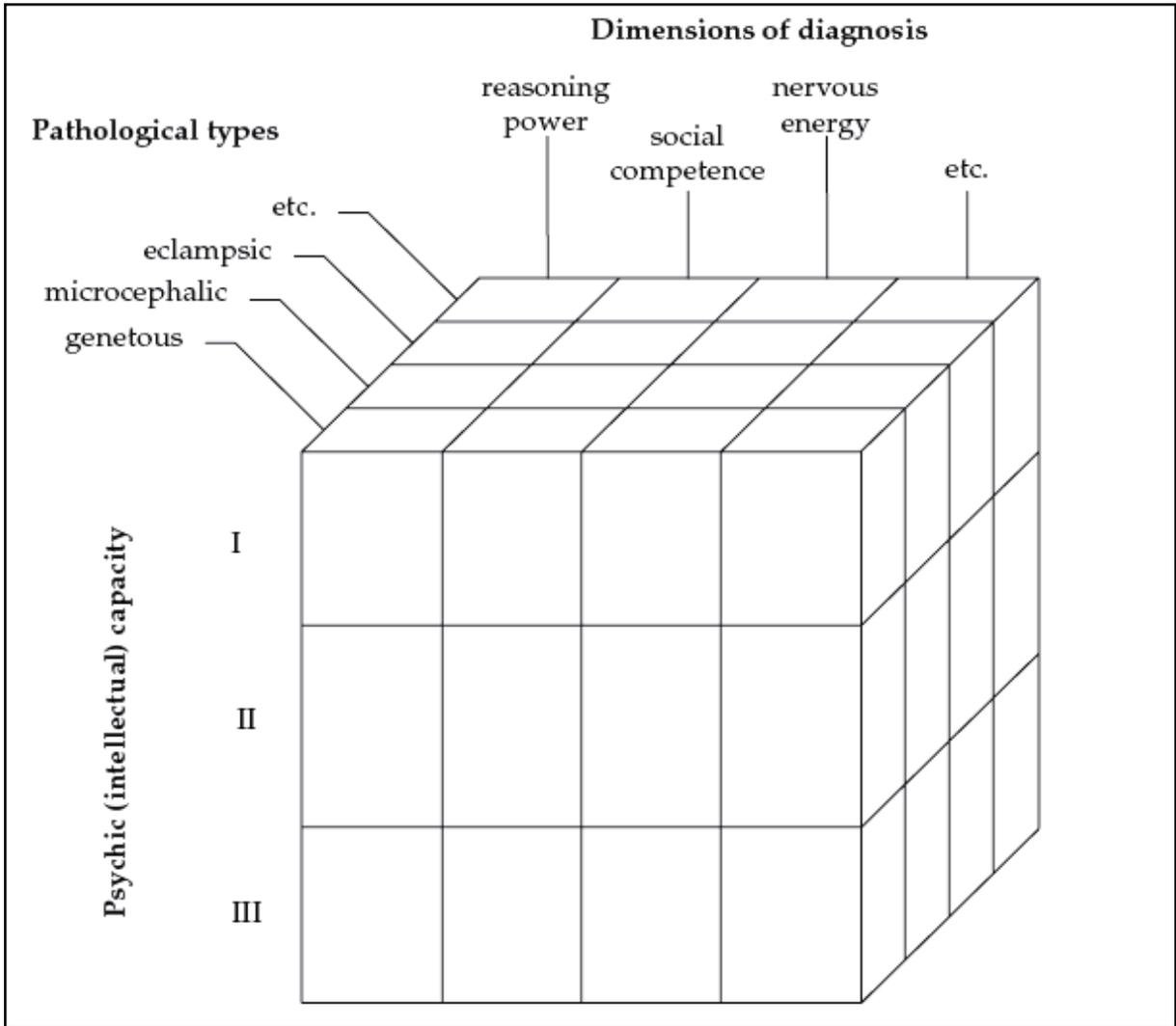


Figure 1.2; Ireland's (1877) three-dimensional matrix of classifying LDDs, Simpson (2011, p. 548).

Psychic ability Level 1 indicated individuals who held only 'passive intellect' as a result of 'sensory impressions'. Level 2 represented individuals who were capable of comparing, reasoning and drawing conclusions, whilst Level 3 referred to those who could form abstract ideas and were of a 'higher level of idiocy' (Ireland, 1877, p. 263).

The development of Ireland's matrix indicated the beginning of a shift in attitudes from the physiological underpinnings of learning difficulties towards a more pathological view.

The belief in this pathological model of diagnosis corresponded with the proposal that children with 'mental defects' were 'ineducable' (Binet and Simon, 1914). Additionally,

Goddard (1912) researched a link between genetics and LDDs through looking at photographs of descendents of one 'feeble-minded' woman and a 'typically-developing' man. He concluded that a large majority of the descendents were also 'feeble-minded', resulting in a prevalent panic among the general population that society was being threatened by people with LDDs having children (Kanner, 1964) and may have contributed to the forced sterilisation of adults who had LDDs (Fennell, 1995). However, the methodology used by Goddard (1912) is far from reliable or valid, as he classified people as being 'feeble-minded' based on looking at photographs of them (including the original mother and father), which has been criticised for a lack of supporting evidence. It has also been proposed that the photographs were amended to give them a more distinctive appearance (Smith 1985). Despite this, Goddard's (1912) findings were revered at the time and may have contributed to the negative view of people with LDDs that was held by some.

Towards the second half of the twentieth century, there is a noticeable change in the discourse used when discussing people with LDDs. Terminology at this time tends to include phrases such as: 'mentally handicapped', 'severely or moderately subnormal' or 'mentally retarded' (Porter and Lacey, 2005). It is noted that there has been a shift in attitudes and treatment of both children and adults with LDDs, particularly during the last hundred years, for example with the change from adults being institutionalised to being recognised as having human rights following the eugenics movement. Additionally, children with LDDs have: 'moved from being viewed 'ineducable' through to being educable (but requiring segregated provision) to being eligible, and – with provisos – an entitlement, for education alongside their non-disabled peers in mainstream schools' (Porter and Lacey, 2005, p. 1).

### **1.3 Legislative Framework of Policy Relating to LLDDs**

Whilst the change of attitudes to people with LDDs was initially slow during the first 70 years, the last 30 years has seen significant developments in the treatment of people with LDDs.

This has been reflected in education policy, beginning with the Warnock Report (1978). This policy introduced the phrase 'learning difficulties' to replace 'educationally sub-normal' and proposed that this group of children should be assessed prior to them leaving school to consider their prospects. Also, it asserted that they should be able to continue in education past the statutory leaving age if they wish, through entering FE Colleges. The Disability Discrimination Act (1995) mandated that all Colleges should provide a report detailing the provision and facilities that they have in place to meet the needs of LLDDs. Later, this was developed by the Learning and Skills Act (2000) which proposed that LLDDs would receive a Section 139a Assessment (also referred to as a Moving Forward Plan or Learning Difficulty Assessment) to help support their transition into Colleges by stating what support they would need in order to be successful.

A key report on the experience of LLDDs in FE Colleges was conducted by the Further Education Funding Council in 1996, known as the 'Tomlinson Report'. This review found that:

“Although many LEAs, colleges, health and social services authorities and voluntary organizations had collaborated conscientiously in the interests of students with learning difficulties, progress countrywide had been very uneven and everywhere the sudden lifting of the FE Colleges out of the local government system had left jagged edges” (p. 187, Tomlinson, 1997).

Therefore, the review made the recommendation that: “A serious re-think on strategy needs to be done if post-16 colleges are to realise the potential of these students, many of whom are clearly disenchanted with education” (p. 61, HMSO, 1996).

A more comprehensive list of policies and legislation affecting LLDDs that has been released over the previous thirty-five years is included in Table 6.1 in Appendix 1.

### **1.3i Draft SEND Code of Practice: 0 - 25 Years**

Currently, there are ongoing significant reforms in the SEND system. These began with the publication of the government green paper 'Support and Aspiration: A New Approach to Special Educational Needs and Disability' (DfE, 2011) and the following 'Progress and Next Steps' (2012) document, which recommended that support should be in place for LLDDs up to the age of 25, with more consistent and coherent support from professionals through Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), which pull together all agencies involved with a particular young person. The intention is that EHCPs will replace the current statements for SEN. The reason for the extension of support to LLDDs up to the age of 25 is explained in the Code of Practice (DfE, 2014) as follows;

"A young person who was well supported through the Local Offer while at school may move to a further education (FE) College where the same range or level of support is not available. An EHC plan may then be needed to ensure that support is provided and coordinated effectively in the new environment. It may also be the case that young people acquire SEN through illness or accident, or have an existing condition that requires increasing support as they get older" (p. 135).

Thus, it is the intention of these guidelines that "under no circumstances should young people find themselves suddenly without support and care as they make the transition to adult services" (p. 127, Code of Practice, DfE, 2014). These proposals formed part of Children and Families Bill (2013), which was given Royal Assent in March 2014. Following this, local implementation of the SEND reforms is due in September 2014, at which time the following should occur: local offers of provision for children and young people with SEN will be published, new assessments and planning will begin for new entrants to the SEND system, LAs will be required to publish local plans for EHCP conversions from Statements of SEN and personalised budgets will be offered to families in the EHCPs (DfE, 2014). These

SEND reforms underpin this research as it is the transformation of this system that has impacted upon the need for EPs to consider how they will support LLDDs in Colleges, in line with the EHCPs protecting the rights of LLDDs up to the age of 25.

As previously mentioned, there has been a monumental shift in attitude towards LLDDs in the last 150 years, from them being viewed as 'ineducable' to being eligible for education alongside their peers (Porter and Lacey, 2005). The Code of Practice (DfE, 2014), published in June 2014, takes this development further by having a central principle that it is essential to consider the voice of the young person and their parents in all aspects of decision-making. For example, it states that Local Authorities **must** have regard to both; "The importance of the child or young person, and the child's parents, participating as fully as possible in decisions; and being provided with the information and support necessary to enable participation in those decisions" and "The need to support the child or young person, and the child's parents, in order to facilitate the development of the child or young person and to help them achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes, preparing them effectively for adulthood" (p. 8). Additionally, a further central principle of the Code of Practice is the centrality of planning for all key transitions; from pre-school to primary school, from primary to secondary school, from secondary school to post-16 providers, and from post-16 providers to adulthood (DfE, 2014). This key focus on planning for successful transitions will be discussed further, in section 1.6.

#### **1.4 Current Context for LLDDs Post-16**

As highlighted through the recent proposals in Government policy, above, the education of LLDDs past the age of 16 has been identified as a significant area to re-evaluate. One motive for this, perhaps, during these times of austerity, could be the potential financial implications of supporting LLDDs into adulthood, as in a review of provision of special

education for young people aged 16-25 in England, the National Audit Office (2011) stated that:

"In the 2009/10 academic year, over 30,000 young people aged 16–25 received extra support for higher-level special educational needs, at a cost of around £506 million. A further 87,700 with lower-level needs in further education received around £135 million of special educational support. An additional 28,800 students with lower-level needs were supported in mainstream schools, where the cost of support is not separately reported" (p. 5).

These figures indicate that this sector requires a significant monetary contribution from the public purse. The review recognises that supporting LLDDs into semi-independent living could have considerable impacts on the amount of money spent on sustaining these young people in later life, as well as beneficial effects upon their self-esteem, personal income and independence (p. 10). The changing intended outcomes for LLDDs attending Colleges have been captured by Williams (2008), who summarises that:

"As the construction of social inclusion develops, varying degrees of emphasis are placed upon the FE sector in providing learners with, amongst other qualities: skills for employability (DfES 2002, 2003a); self-confidence and independence (DfEE 1998b, 2007); basic literacy and numeracy skills for democratic participation (DfEE 2001); and support to lead a healthy life (DfES 2007) or to develop the attributes sought by employers (DfES 2006)" (p. 152).

Thus, it is acknowledged that it is worthwhile investing in services that can support these aims in order to reduce national costs longer-term. However, it states that nearly one-third of LLDDs aged 16-25 are not in education, employment or training (NEET) (National Audit Office, 2011, p. 10).

The National Audit Office's review (2011) concludes that there needs to be a significant improvement in the gathering and management of data related to outcomes from special education providers in order to ensure there is value for money from the special education

support received by young people aged 16-25 in the future (p. 12). As a way of achieving this, it proposes a need to: "ensure that Education, Health and Care Plans place greater emphasis on longer-term outcomes and progression, and a fuller consideration of all viable placement options within the local offer" (National Audit Office, 2011, p. 13). In an evaluation of the impact of the local offer, conducted from an evaluation of the 31 'pathfinder' LAs, it was found that considerably fewer families in the pathfinder group reported having too little information regarding the services that were available to them than did those in the comparison group (41% compared to 57%) (DfE, 2013, p. 65). However, 41% of families did report having too little information, reinforcing the importance of having a comprehensive local offer available to them (DfE, 2013).

However, it has been acknowledged that there needs to be alternative aims for LLDDs attending College, aside from gaining employment, which are equally important and valid. For example;

"Getting a job is simply not a realistic option for many learners with SEN/LDD, and other opportunities such as supported living need to be considered. Uncertainty for young people, their parents and carers and schools and Colleges about what lies ahead limits expectations, rather than lack of belief in what young people themselves can achieve" (House of Commons Note, 2012, comment from Association of Colleges, p. 16).

Accordingly, it would appear that Government proposals (DfE, 2014) to extend the age range of LLDDs to receive support from 19 up to 25 could help to reduce the uncertainty of what lies ahead by ensuring a consistency in approach and support from services throughout this time of transition on a national level.

#### **1.4i Current Context for LLDDs Post-16: Provision**

Whilst the aim of improving outcomes for LLDDs has been made explicit, it is pertinent to consider what provision is available for LLDDs post-16. Wright (2006) presented a literature

review and small-scale research to explore the provision for students with LDDs within FE Colleges in the North-West of England. The author of this paper, a Senior Lecturer at the University of Chester in the School of Education, proposes that 'there remains a group of students with special needs in Further Education who continue to be marginalised in separated and discrete provision' (p. 33). She also states that: 'there is a lack of good quality, current research in this field' (p. 33), speaking specifically of pupils with severe or complex LDDs who may be experiencing mainstream provision, albeit in segregated courses, for the first time after enrolling at College. The research design consisted of an in-depth literature review and detailed interviews with three practitioners who had experience of working directly with students with severe LDDs within a College. The concluding comments included the following; "The hypothesis set out at the start of the article, that provision for students with severe learning difficulties in Colleges of further education has been 'going round in circles', has been largely confirmed but clearly has not been empirically proven" (p. 37). Additionally, she concluded that Colleges need to focus on long-term outcomes for this vulnerable group and strengthen partnerships with providers of employment and other services. These recommendations were concluded with the proposal of the need for more research into this particular context, with the claim that: "For reasons that are unclear, the educational community appears to have lost interest in this group of learners" (p. 34). This current research will be focussed on the potential contribution of EPs to the Supported Learning Department of an FE College. As supported by Wright's (2006) conclusions, it would appear that the Supported Learning Department could be a good place for collaborative working between EPs and FE Colleges to begin, as it supports a high proportion of LLDDs.

Similarly, Elson (2011) explored inclusion and post-16 education for students with Statements of SEN from the perspectives of school staff, students, parents, FE College staff and a Connexions advisor. The Literature Review proposed that 'research findings describe

less than satisfactory provision available for students with special educational needs' (p. 153) and that post-16 choices were only offered in a 'very narrow and specific set of *special* options' (p. 153). The researcher, the head of the 14-19 extended Learning Department in a school for young people with profound, complex and severe LDDs, conducted a case study in a secondary school for LLDDs and found that provision is 'not wholly inclusive, often failing students with autistic spectrum condition or profound and multiple learning difficulties' (p. 158). She also found a huge amount of variance in the quality and range of provision available across different FE Colleges. Although the views of FE College staff were sought, it should be noted that the focus of this research was predominantly on the views of school staff and students. Thus, Elson (2011) recognised that there is scope for further research into the views of FE College staff in this area, supporting the objective of this current research. However, it should be noted that Elson's (2011) research utilised a case study design of one school for students with LDDs, resulting in interviews or questionnaires with 13 school staff, 23 students, 3 parents, 2 College Tutors and a Connexions Advisor. Hence, this research design limits the generalisability of the findings and presents the views of only a small population of each group represented.

Whilst these research articles present a stance of post-16 provision as being inadequate, it has been found that collaboration between FE Colleges and the LA can have a positive impact upon the success of 16-19 year old LLDDs. In 2010, the funding responsibility for the training and education of 16-19 year olds transferred from the Learning and Skills Council to LAs. To facilitate this transition of funding arrangements, the National Foundation for Educational Research conducted semi-structured interviews in nine areas to provide evidence of good practice in collaborative partnerships between LAs and FE Colleges (McCrone et al., 2009). The findings suggest that effective collaboration which has impacted positively upon 16-19 year olds could be grouped into three main areas: comprehensive 14-19 provision; effective information, advice and guidance (IAG); and transition support. The aspects of collaboration that were identified as supporting joined-up working include: "regular

and robust formal and informal communication, strategic buy-in, a joined-up structure, shared vision, and a commitment to raising educational standards for young people” (p. 2). The paper identified challenges to effective collaboration being those of time, resource and capacity of both services.

### 1.5 Local Context for LLDDs Post-16

Having explored the national views of provision for LLDDs past the age of 16, it is pertinent to consider the current local situation for LLDDs. Buttonsley has one local FE College, which is rated Outstanding by OfSTED and has a large Supported Learning Department, with approximately 40 Tutors within it. Using data gathered by the Connexions service, the graph below presents the activities that LLDDs in Buttonsley, from the 2012-13 cohort, went on to after leaving school (a combination of 16 and 19 year olds);

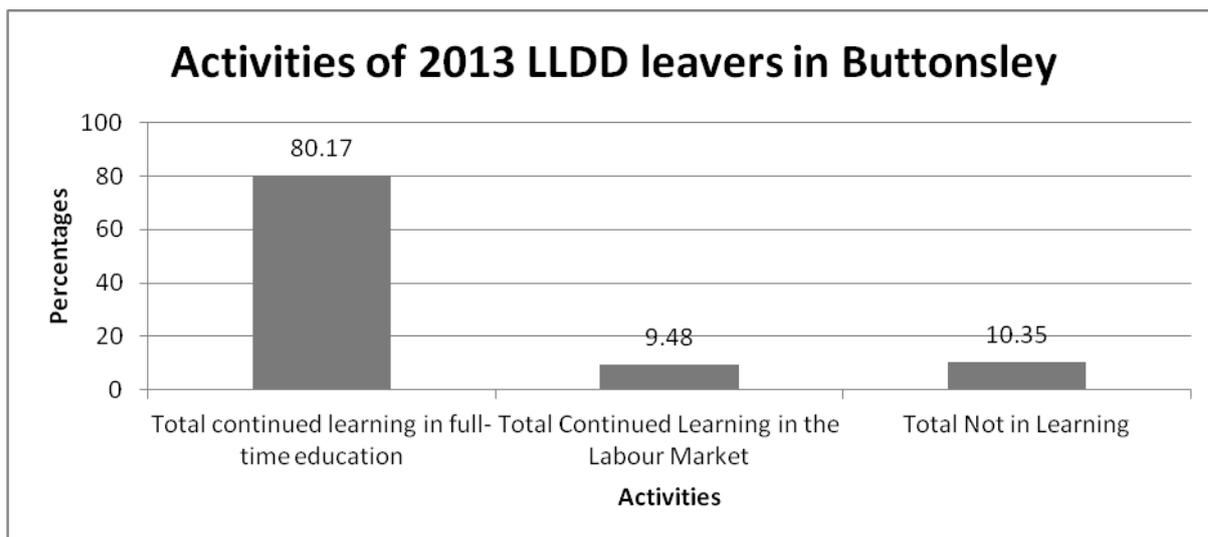


Figure 1.3; Activities of 2013 LLDD leavers in Buttonsley

This graph indicates that the vast majority of LLDDs continued into full-time education, following leaving school in 2013. This provides information for all students leaving school in 2013 who had a Statement of SEN, regardless of whether they left a mainstream or a special school. It shows that 10% of leavers with a Statement of SEN in the year 2013 became NEET, whilst 80% continued into full-time education.

The graph below presents a breakdown of the destinations of LLDDs who continued into full-time education for the academic cohort of 2012-3, indicating whether they stayed on into a sixth form at the age of 16, moved to an FE College or transferred to an alternative school;

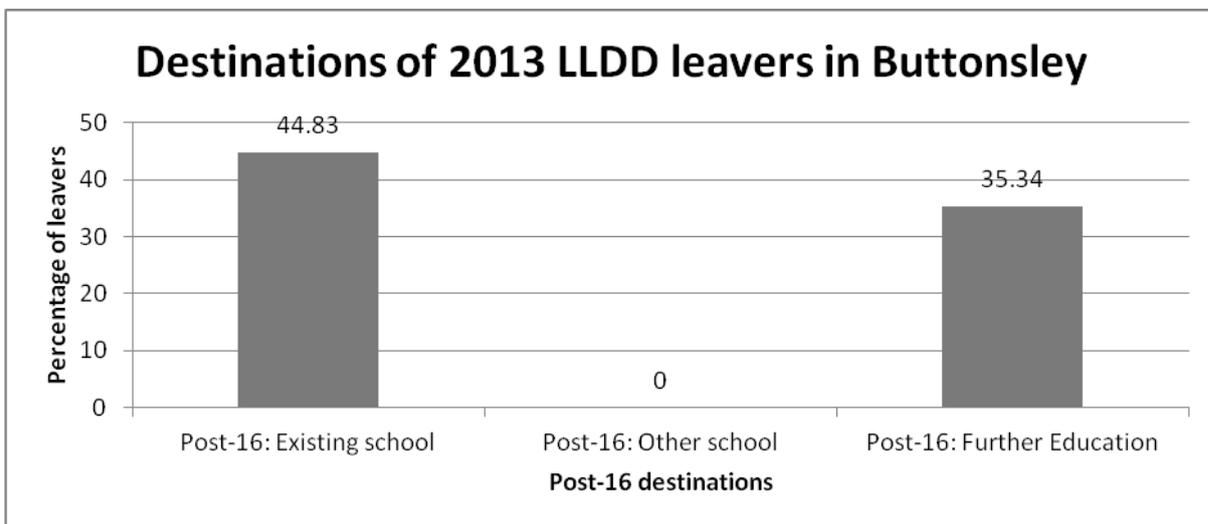


Figure 1.4; Destinations of 2013 LLDD leavers in Buttonsley

This graph presents that over one-third of LLDDs at the age of 16 that had opted to continue in full-time education, did so at College, either within the mainstream provision or within the supported learning department. Whilst data is unavailable for how many were able to remain in this provision for one academic year or more, it indicates that this is a significant destination for LLDDs. Unfortunately, it was not possible to obtain data for LLDDs past the age of 19, with regards to their destinations. However, the graphs show that 80% of leavers at age 16 chose to remain in full-time education, and 35% of these chose to do so at a College, which may suggest that FE Colleges provide a substantial destination for many LLDDs at the age of 19; a consideration that was agreed upon in discussion with the Manager of the LDD team for the Connexions service. Hence, the involvement of EPs with FE Colleges may be an efficient way of extending the involvement of the EPS with LLDDs up to the age of 25.

In a study by Guishard (2000), mentioned below, she surmises that: “Most FE courses designed for students with learning difficulties, focus on personal autonomy, transition to adulthood, consolidation of basic education and the development of social and practical vocational skills” (p. 206). Specifically at a local level, the supported learning courses offered at Buttonsley FE College are defined as follows:

“Because we believe that education should be available to everyone who can benefit from it, we offer a number of innovative courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, designed specifically to encourage independence and build confidence. Taught within the College, the courses include independent living skills, skills for working life, creative and performing arts” (Buttonsley College prospectus, 2013).

It is these supported learning courses that will be the focus for the remainder of my literature review, and indeed in this research as a whole.

## **1.6 Transition**

The Education and Training Inspectorate (2004) conducted a review into the transition processes and arrangements for school leavers from special schools with moderate LDDs. This document states that there is a responsibility on schools to have a transition plan in place for all pupils who have a statement of SEN, drawing together the pupil, their parents and all of the external agencies involved with the young person. The purpose of this plan is to document how all people involved will help to support and guide the young person into their new placement (p. 13). Information for this review was gathered through interviews with head teachers, teachers and IAG advisors as well as through observations of lessons and career guidance sessions, a survey of the views of staff within special schools and a perusal of documents, such as policies, pupils’ work and transition arrangements. A finding of this review was that good practice exists when: “High priority is given to careers education and guidance within a careers education and guidance programme which has been customised

to meet the needs of the pupils and the school” (p. 15). This shows the important role that IAG advisors have to play in the successful transition of pupils with SEN to FE College placements, lending support to the decision to seek their views as a part of this research. Additionally, the Code of Practice (DfE, 2014) has a dedicated subsection to discussing the importance of providing good careers advice to LLDDs from National Curriculum Year eight, up to the age of 25, where necessary (p. 118). A further finding of the Education and Training Inspectorate's (2004) study was that it was recognised by all of the schools involved in the study that some pupils have difficulty in making the transition to post-16 providers. Some of the constraints that were found to be contributing to the difficulty with these transitions included: “the problem convincing some parents of the abilities of the young people to access and benefit from employment, training and FE; the social difficulties of many of the young people and the possibility of them becoming marginalised from statutory services” (p. 18). Research into the role of the EP (MacKay, 2009; Jimerson et al., 2007b) indicates that these are constraints that could be eased through the involvement of EPs, as some of the core functions of the role of the EP are identified as; working with parents, individual assessment, intervention with LLDDs, and having a role in training staff to support LLDDs' social needs (Ashton and Roberts, 2006).

Arnold and Baker (2012) explored transitions from secondary school to employment, further education or training, combining the knowledge and experience of an experienced EP with that of a Connexions Advisor. They proposed that; “Transitions from statutory education to education, training or employment have not attracted much attention from Psychologists, yet there is considerable interest from Government and local authorities in tackling the phenomenon known as NEET” (p. 67). One counter-argument to this observation could be that EPs try to intervene earlier in a young person's educational career than at this stage. However, not all interventions are successful and not all pupils who become NEET receive ongoing support from EPs. Therefore, working with FE Colleges to support pupils with

Statements for SEN could be viewed as intervening early, by encouraging and supporting their inclusion and averting the potential for the College placement to be unsuccessful. Arnold and Baker (2012) developed a screening tool for the early identification of young people at risk of becoming NEET. Having a Statement for SEN was found to be a risk factor. They concluded that;

“There may be both risks attached to young people becoming disengaged with agencies and benefits associated with developing trusting relationships with professionals dedicated to promoting better life outcomes. If so, developing these relationships early, before disengagement sets in, is a positive move” (p. 79).

Thus, there is an argument for ongoing support from agencies, such as Connexions and EPs, to support transitions following school to education, employment or training, particularly as having SEN has been identified as a risk factor. The Code of Practice (DfE, 2014) also emphasises the significance of considering transition from birth until adulthood, with an entire chapter dedicated to transition (chapter eight). Within this chapter, four salient aspects of preparing for adulthood are named as essential when reviewing the EHCPs, which include: support to prepare for higher education / employment, support to prepare for independent living, support in maintaining good health in adult life and support in participating in society (p. 112-113). The implication of Arnold and Baker’s (2012) paper on this current research is to contribute to the identified limited area of research regarding the support for LLDDs post-16.

### **1.7 The Role of Educational Psychologists**

The specific functions that EPs currently conduct were explored in great depth by Farrell et al. (2006) through questionnaires, interviews and site visits, capturing the views of Head Teachers, EPs, parents, young people and professional associations. It was found that EPs engage in work at a range of levels, including individual work, consultancy, intervention and

training, within a variety of contexts and with a range of purposes. EPs were found to have roles within statutory work (contributing to Statutory Assessments and involvement in the reviewing process), multi-agency work, strategic work and capacity building. Arguably, these functions have specific links with key aspects of the Code of Practice (DfE, 2014), for example it states that: "Staff working directly with young people should be trained to support them and work in partnership with them, enabling them to participate fully in decisions about the outcomes they wish to achieve" (p. 22). Thus, EPs may be suited to utilising their skills in strategic work and capacity building, by providing training to staff on eliciting young people's views, as a result of their training and knowledge of child development (Fallon et al., 2010). Additionally, EPs are named as an essential contributor to the formation of an EHCP (DfE, 2014), linking with their previous experience of statutory work. Furthermore, Farrell et al. (2006) found that the majority of respondents identified functions which were unique to the role of the EP. However, the review highlighted that the greatest constraint to effective EP working with other services, including schools, was that of limited contact, with most providers valuing the input of an EP and desiring greater time from the EP service.

Ashton and Roberts (2006) theorized why it can be difficult to define the role of the EP. These reasons included that the client of the EP is unclear; there are conflicting views between what schools want from EPs and what EPs feel they can and should offer; there is little agreement within the EP profession regarding how to work and, finally, there are other services that offer functions which are similar to that of the EP. Thus, in an attempt to gain a clear idea about what is valuable from the EP role, Ashton and Roberts (2006) used a questionnaire design within a school context to explore the views of what Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) valued from EPs and what they felt was unique, in addition to exploring the views of what EPs felt was valuable about their service to schools and what they considered to be unique functions. Through the use of a content analysis methodology, the researchers were able to elicit a range of functions that school SENCOs and EPs considered to be useful or unique. The conclusion was that:

"This research has highlighted that, while there are some areas of agreement between SENCOs and EPs about the role, there is still a gap between the perceptions of the two groups. Some of the differences may be explained by the fact that each individual school will not have the opportunity to experience all of the services that their EP offers, and SENCOs may therefore see a narrower role than EPs" (p.19).

Consequently, there may be a requirement for EPs to explain fully what their role entails at regular intervals as a service user may not be aware of functions that have not already been utilised. Indeed, this point was raised by Kelly and Gray (2000) who stated that there is a need to: "market the functions they [EPs] could undertake" (p. 5).

It has been widely reported that key roles for EPs include supporting parents, being an advocate for the young person and utilising consultative, interpersonal and problem-solving skills to assist in resolving barriers to learning for children and young people (Farrell et al., 2006; Ashton and Roberts, 2006; Fallon et al., 2010; Evans et al., 2012). These identified skills may link with clear principles within the Code of Practice (DfE, 2014) regarding child and parent centred practice and could support Local Authorities to meet proposals, such as:

"Local authorities, early years providers and schools should enable parents to share their knowledge about their child and give them confidence that their views and contributions are valued and will be acted upon. At times, parents, teachers and others may have differing expectations of how a child's needs are best met" (p.10).

This extract identifies that there can be conflict, at times, between parents and teachers (and others) and it could be that EPs, as independent to both sides, could support in mediating their views and ensuring children and their parents can share their views accordingly. Indeed, this is specifically referenced within the Code of Practice as follows;

"This approach is often referred to as a person-centred approach. By using this approach within a family context, professionals and local authorities can ensure that

children, young people and parents are involved in all aspects of planning and decision-making" (p. 137).

As EPs are one of a number of professional groups who are explicitly named within the Code of Practice, it is reasonable to conclude that the key principles of child and family centred planning can be related to the skills that EPs already have.

### **1.7i The Role of Educational Psychologists: Local Context**

Buttonsley EPS makes use of a time allocation system, meaning that each EP has a number of settings that they are responsible for delivering the EPS to, with a designated number of 'sessions' (a session is equivalent to half a day or approximately three hours) for each provision. Each school has a core number of sessions available to them, according to the number of students they have. Buttonsley is also a part-traded service, meaning that schools have the option to purchase additional EP time, either in the form of additional sessions or for the purposes of research or training.

Buttonsley operates a consultative model of service delivery, hence children are not 'referred' to the service, rather all children of concern to the school are raised at a planning meeting and EP involvement is decided collaboratively. Buttonsley EPS makes use of Wagner's (1995) consultation approach, which is described as follows:

"Consultation is a process in which concerns are raised and a collaborative and recursive process is initiated which combines exploration, assessment, intervention and review. The notion of a referral, as a process for passing a child or young person to a psychologist for assessment, does not figure" (p. 2)

Guishard (2000) states that the aim of consultation should be to equip the help-seeker with the skills they need to be able to handle similar problems, should they arise, in the future. Consultation is a highly regarded aspect of the EP role (Farrell et al., 2006; Ashton and Roberts, 2006), although there is disagreement between whether it is a theory-based or a

knowledge-based practice (Dettmer et al., 2005). Furthermore, it has been proposed that consultation has roots stemming from systems thinking (Burnham, 1986), social constructionism (Burr, 1995) and symbolic interactionism (Hargreaves, 1972).

It is unclear how long EPs have been providing consultation for, although it is accepted that is a well-established practice that has existed for many years (Stringer et al., 1992). It has been found to have a number of benefits when used in schools with teachers, including a reduction in 'referral rates', reports of increased professional skills from the teachers, a shift away from a 'within-child' attribution of the problem to a more holistic view and the use of Psychologists in consultative roles has increased feelings of psychological wellbeing amongst staff (Gutkin and Curtis, 1990). Presently, there are no established links between Buttonsley EPS and Buttonsley College and there are no systems in place for EPs to work with LLDDs at the College.

### **1.8 The Relationship Between Educational Psychologists and FE Colleges: England**

Mitchell (1997) published a paper entitled: "Educational Psychologists in Further Education". This made use of three FE Colleges as case examples of different ways in which EPSs could support FE Colleges. The author introduces the paper by suggesting that typically, post-16 support has been "beyond the remit" of EPs, although there were some signs in 1997 indicating a change, as the numbers of LLDDs that attend FE Colleges were increasing (p. 5). Mitchell (1997) proposes five levels of support that EPs can offer to FE Colleges, ranging from; work with individual students; support to College staff, families and carers; staff development work; institutional system work and cross-organisational work (p. 6). It is recommended that these areas of work should be negotiated between the FE College and EPs and formalised through the use of a Service Level Agreement to ensure from the outset that professionals are clear on the nature of work to be completed and when and where it will be carried out.

Mitchell (1997) continued the paper by considering why EP input is beneficial to support FE Colleges. She made the following statement:

“The demand for FE provision from people with disabilities and/or learning difficulties has increased in recent years. At the same time perspectives about the needs and rights of these students have changed. They cannot be regarded as a homogeneous group with disability in common. It is now recognised that particular individual needs arise within the interaction between learner, Tutor and programme of study. A breakdown occurs when the requirements of any one of them are beyond the other's capabilities for meeting them” (p. 10)

This extract highlights important roles for EPs, in ensuring that each student is appropriately placed on a course, through holistic assessment and prior knowledge of support in school, as well as ensuring that the Tutors have access to support for their teaching and the course content.

Whilst providing a compelling argument for more joined-up working between EPSs and FE Colleges, this paper also set out some of the constraints affecting such working. These include the emphasis that LAs place on EPs carrying out statutory work focussed solely within schools; a lack of funding available for FE Colleges to purchase support from EPSs and a need for significant development of the EPS in terms of knowledge and resources. However, despite these challenges, the author proposes that LA-based EPs are better placed to offer support to FE Colleges than are independent or private EPs. This is due to LA EPs having prior knowledge of students and of provision within the LA.

Whilst Mitchell's (1997) paper was written some time ago, many interesting points were raised that may be considered pertinent to my research. Furthermore, it emphasizes that there has been little research relating to the extension of the EP service to FE Colleges and that more recent attention is warranted, particularly in view of the Government proposals (Code of Practice, DfE, 2014).

Interestingly, similar ideas were proposed in Guishard's (2000) research regarding how one EPS had extended its Service to a local College to support them in meeting the needs of students with SEN. This was done originally via three sessions (totalling nine hours), structured as consultation settings. The purpose of these sessions was to increase the skills of the help-seekers and to empower them, in order to enable them to increase their own confidence and skills through the application of Psychology, for example through specific interventions or applying theories. Originally, the author commented that there had been links between the EPS and the FE College before this research, through the use of a link EP, although this role had ended over twelve months previously. Guishard (2000) concluded the report by stating that: "The unique contribution of applied Psychology, however, is that it introduces the potential to meet individual needs, develop confidence and to provide intellectual support for the work of the staff" (p. 211). Providing a working example of how an EPS could form links and offer support to a College is an important aspect to draw out of this paper, although it is to be noted that this is a small case study. Only the views of the College Tutors involved in the consultation session were sought, resulting in a lack of triangulation of their views. Additionally, the information was gathered using questionnaires, administered to the 8 Tutors. Thus, caution must be taken in applying these results more generally. As the project took place between 1996 and 1997, there is also an argument that the context of such work has changed since that time. However, the overall conclusion to the project was that: "For our EPS, and for the profession, this has highlighted the value of our service to the FE sector" (p. 211) and this, along with the proposals in Mitchell's research, is a powerful statement in light of the current SEND reforms.

The Code of Practice (DfE, 2014) recognises that Colleges need to be involved in planning for transition, both into the College and out of the College into adult life, for all LLDDs. This planning and support may need to be provided up to the age of 25 for LLDDs who would benefit from additional time to complete courses within Colleges. As EPs may have been

involved with these LLDDs since birth, it is reasonable to assume that they may have a role in supporting the College to manage these transitions. In addition, the Code of Practice (DfE, 2014) acknowledges that Colleges themselves may need to request an EHCP for a student as;

"Some needs may emerge after a student has begun a programme. Teaching staff should work with specialist support to identify where a student may be having difficulty which may be because of SEN" (p. 103)

Again, in this instance, EPs may be the professionals that College staff seek support from in identifying and understanding a student's emerging needs.

Whilst it is acknowledged that these papers were written some time ago (Mitchell, 1997; Guishard, 2000), it appears that there has been little progress towards establishing a significant and consistent relationship between EPs and FE Colleges (MacKay, 2009; Jimerson et al., 2007b). However, it is clear that the proposed Government legislation, intended to come into force in September 2014, will require a closer relationship between EPs and Colleges. This current research intends to explore how one EPS may begin to plan for this change.

### **1.8i The Relationship Between Educational Psychologists and FE Colleges: Post-School Psychological Service in Scotland (PSPS)**

MacKay (2009) presented an argument that Scotland is the only country in the world to have a PSPS. This article, through a meta-analysis of literature, explores the EP profession generally, considering it in relation to other countries. Beginning with a historical overview of the profession, MacKay (2009) states that one of the earliest international surveys of the profession (UNESCO, 1948) contains only a passing reference to the role of EPs past compulsory school age and that this was only the case in England and Wales. However, MacKay (2009) reveals that this was not an "extension of the role" (p. 9), but rather employment by health authorities to complete work within therapy that had an educational

focus. Following this survey, a second was completed by Wall (1956), which focused on 10 countries within Europe. MacKay (2009) proposes that this report was “50 years ahead of its time in attempting to present a blueprint for the development of Post-School Psychology Services” (p. 10) as the survey proposed future directions for the profession as well as presenting factual information. MacKay (2009) states that: “It made recommendations for every age range, and had sections covering the pre-school and primary school, the secondary stage, technical and pre-vocational education, transition from school to working life and guidance and counselling services at the university” (p. 10). Furthermore, it is proposed that: “The report recognised the discontinuity between school psychological services and the services available post-school, and the fact that the two sectors were governed by different departments and ministries and that they were financed by different budgets” (p. 10).

Following these early surveys, further explorations of the work carried out by educational, school or child Psychologists across various countries were conducted across different decades (Catterall, 1979; Oakland and Cunningham, 1992; Jimerson and the ISPA Research Committee, 2002), although none of these made mention of current or, indeed, potential future, practice in any country relating to a PSPS. In the composition of "The Handbook of International School Psychology", (Jimerson et al., 2007b), a chapter is dedicated to exploring the EPS (or equivalent terminology) in each of 43 countries. Of these, only one country makes reference to supporting students past the age of 16 in a coherent way – Scotland. Thus, these international reviews encouraged the author to propose that Scotland’s PSPS is unique as the only place to offer an extension of the school-based educational support seen more generally, to supporting pupils up to the age of 24.

Scotland established 12 Pathfinder Authorities for the development of PSPS in 2004 and evaluated them over a two-year period (MacKay et al., 2006). In this evaluation, the context

of work EPs undertook is set out as being in the areas of consultation, research, assessment, intervention and training (p. 5). Furthermore, EPs were described as follows:

"Within an educational context they are the only professionals whose functions relate to direct work with the individual young person and family, to developmental work at the level of the organisation or establishment and to work at the education authority or council level, in relation both to the individual and to strategic and policy issues"  
(p. 5)

This indicates that EPs hold a unique position and may be involved in a wide range of work.

The outcomes of the evaluation from these 12 pathfinders indicated that the PSPS was highly valued by a range of stakeholders, including parents and young people, and also led to a number of verifiable improvements in outcomes for young people, particularly through supporting the transition of LLDDs into adulthood. The conclusion of this evaluation stated that the pathfinders had met their aims, leading to the recommendation that there should be a national roll-out of the PSPS into all LAs within Scotland, which has been accomplished since. Certainly, with the upcoming legislative changes (DfE, 2014), the apparent success of the PSPS in Scotland could be worth exploration from EPSs in the rest of the United Kingdom.

## **1.9 Conclusion**

Current national policy recognises that more services should offer support to LLDDs up to the age of 25 (Children and Families Bill, 2013; Code of Practice, DfE, 2014), an extension of the role for EPs, who currently support LLDDs up to the age of 19. Local data from the Connexions' service indicates that one-third of LLDDs opt to attend an FE College at age 16, and it is likely that a significant number of LLDDs choose to do so at age 19 also, hence there is potentially a large number of LLDDs who may benefit from EP support within an FE College.

Farrell et al. (2006) established that EPs have a variety of roles, though not specifically in FE for LLDDs, at a range of levels, and that service users value the input of EPs to a great extent. However, a consistent constraint mentioned regarding the relationship between providers and EPs is that of limited contact, with providers desiring an increased amount of time from EPs. Furthermore, Ashton and Roberts (2006) explored what SENCOs feel is useful about the EP role, as well as EPs themselves, and were able to establish that EPs are seen to have a unique contribution. However, it was concluded that service users can be unclear about the role of EPs (Kelly and Gray, 2000; MacKay, 2002; Ashton and Roberts, 2006) and the role may need to be fully explained. Hence, in this current research, a leaflet explaining the role of the EP (adapted from Frederickson et al., 2008, see Appendix 2) was distributed to participants prior to the data-gathering, and functions elicited in Ashton and Roberts' (2006) study formed a sorting task as the focus of discussions.

In exploring the relationship between a LA and a FE College, McCrone et al. (2009) identified constraining factors to be those of time, resource and capacity, whilst recognising that this joined-up working had a great number of benefits for LLDDs, such as 'improved progression and engagement of young people in education and training' (p. 2). Additionally, Guishard (2000), Wright (2006) and Elson (2011) all identified the need for greater support and provision for LLDDs when attending a FE College. A particular focus of this additional support could be that of transition into FE Colleges, which has been identified as an area that may result in the breakdown of placements (Education and Training Inspectorate, 2004; Arnold and Baker, 2012; DfE, 2014).

Exploring the research on the relationship between EPs and FE Colleges indicates that potential constraints may include EPs' knowledge and resources (Mitchell, 1997), whilst identifying that EPs potentially have a useful contribution to this area, particularly in the area of training College Tutors. This proposal of support for College Tutors from EPs was also identified in Guishard's (2000) paper who recognised that EPs can meet the needs of

learners, whilst developing confidence and providing 'intellectual support' (p. 211), perhaps through consultation or training, to College staff. Transition is a key principle of the Code of Practice (DfE, 2014) and it is reasonable to conclude that EPs will begin to have a more active role in supporting LLDDs in the transition to, during and following their time in Colleges.

Scotland has been identified as the only country currently offering a comprehensive EPS to LLDDs past school-age, through their PSPS (MacKay, 2006; MacKay 2009; Jimerson et al., 2007b). MacKay (2006; 2009) proposes that the PSPS has had multiple benefits for LLDDs, due to EPs' unique contribution of being able to work at a variety of levels, from individual work through to systemic support. An evaluation of the PSPS found that it was highly valued by a range of stakeholders, parents and LLDDs, providing compelling support for the extension of EPSs within England, in light of Government proposals, and the high percentage of LLDDs attending FE Colleges post-school suggests this may be a good place for that involvement to begin.

### **1.9i Research Questions**

The review of literature presented above has provided the foundation of my research, with the particular research questions of:

1. Considering students enrolled on supported learning courses within an FE College: what functions of the EP role, if any, do professionals think would be most useful to supporting LLDDs, within Buttonsley?
2. Considering students enrolled on supported learning courses within an FE College: how can EPs and the local FE College begin to develop a relationship within Buttonsley?

## **CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Denscombe's (2010) proposals for research design and the process of enquiry (p. 111) has been used in order to provide a structure to reporting the methodology used in the research. Thus, it will be presented under the headings of: Purpose and Aims, Design Strategy and Design Philosophy, Methods: Participants and Data Collection, Data Analysis, Evaluation, Ethics and Outcomes. Denscombe (2010) asserts that: "the account of the research design should always keep an eye on the way in which the design is connected to the purpose and outcomes of the enquiry" (p. 110). It is for this reason that his framework for structuring this section has been chosen.

### **2.2 Purpose and Aims**

This case study research intends to provide Buttonsley EPS with an overview of how it could extend its support to students who progress on to supported learning courses within a local College, in line with SEND reforms to increase the amount of support LLDDs receive, up to the age of 25 (Children and Families Bill, 2013; Code of Practice, DfE, 2014), as discussed in the literature review. The Supported Learning Department has been the focus of this research, as proposed legislative changes are due to commence in September 2014 (DfE, 2014), resulting in EHCPs for LLDDs up to the age of 25, the majority of whom will be educated within the Supported Learning department, rather than mainstream courses, following school. Thus, it is imperative for Buttonsley EPs to consider how they will meet this extension of their service. This research explores the views professionals in Buttonsley hold about how this service may be established, extended and applied to this area of professional practice.

### **2.3 Design - Strategy**

Prior to selecting a strategy for the research design, a number of options were explored and discounted. Hakim (2000) outlines a range of research designs that could be used for successful social research, including: research reviews, interviews and focus groups, cross-national comparative studies and surveys. This section explores how the research design was selected.

One approach that could have been adopted was the survey approach. This allows data to be gathered from a wide range of sources and in a wide range of formats, such as in an interview, questionnaire or in a diary entry format (Thomas, 2009). This approach has the advantage of providing descriptive statistics which may represent the views of a population. This could have produced data on what is happening, perhaps on a national level, regarding EPs involvement with supported learning courses in Colleges. Surveys and questionnaires have the advantage of efficiently measuring opinions and generating straightforward data which may be evaluated to indicate variation or similarities (Oppenheim, 1992). However, this would not have provided illuminating responses, in response to the research questions, about what could be useful and how professional groups believe this service development could have the greatest benefit in Buttonsley. As stated by Hakim (2000): "The principal weakness of the sample survey is that it normally involves the use of a structured questionnaire, which necessarily obtains a lesser depth and quality of information than a depth interview" (p. 78). Whilst they may have been used as part of a mixed-methods approach, this was discounted due to the small numbers of professionals available (for example, the SEN Team consists of four team members) and there was concern about achieving a good sample size with this approach. Additionally, this research design is positioned within a social constructionist epistemology, discussed in section 2.4, of which a central tenet is that:

"Social constructionism places great emphasis on everyday interactions between people and how they use language to construct their reality. It regards the social practices people engage in as the focus of enquiry" (Andrews, 2012, p. 5).

As focus groups and interviews are considered to be a good method for opening discussions between people, allowing ideas to be raised, examples to be discussed and clarification to be sought as appropriate (Cohen and Manion, 1994), they were selected as the most appropriate manner of eliciting the information required by the research questions.

Further possible research designs (research reviews, cross-national comparative studies) were excluded from selection as they were viewed to be unsuitable. Research reviews are dependent upon a great deal of similar research being available, of which there is little related to this area. Cross-national comparative studies seek to find similarities and differences in practice across the world; however the intention of this research is to explore the ways in which Government proposals to extend support to LLDDs up to the age of 25 (DfE, 2014), which is unique to the United Kingdom. Furthermore, section 1.8i identified that there is only one country that have an established approach to supporting LLDDs post-school. Thus, it was deemed to be more efficient and useful to focus the research here.

Instead, a qualitative case study approach was deemed to be most appropriate, the definition of which is in accordance with that of Banister et al. (1994), as:

"(a) an attempt to capture the sense that lies within, and that structures what we say about what we do; (b) an exploration, elaboration and systematization of the significance of an identified phenomenon; (c) the illuminative representation of the meaning of a delimited issue or problem" (p. 3)

Whilst this definition may be quite dated, it is aligned with this researcher's understanding of what qualitative approaches are. It is, particularly, the focus upon the 'illuminative representation', the ability to create insight, which prompted the selection of qualitative

methods. It is acknowledged that case studies provide the most flexible approach to research, with variations including the number of methods used to extract data and the number of cases covered, and this flexibility can result in case studies being hard to define and explore in terms of strengths and weaknesses (Hakim, 2000). However, it was considered to be most appropriate for exploring one specific LA in terms of its context and for eliciting potential next steps. Yin (2003) proposes that the aim of a case study is to “expand and generalize theories” (p. 10), rather than to generalize knowledge.

Yin (2003) proposed five criteria for case study designs and these are presented in table 2.1, with consideration given to how each one has been met in this research.

Yin's criteria	Explanation	How criterion have been met
1. Study questions	"The case study methodology is most likely to be appropriate for 'how' and 'why' questions" (p. 21-22)	Research question two: Considering students enrolled on supported learning courses within an FE College: <b>how</b> can EPs and the local FE College begin to develop a relationship within Buttonsley?
2. Study propositions	Each proposition directs attention to something that should be examined within the scope of the study (p. 22)	The research questions arise from literature and upcoming changes in policy (DfE, 2014), which provides the rationale underpinning the study. Explanation regarding the selection of interviews and the chosen participants is also given in sections 2.3 and 2.5.
3. Unit of analysis	"Selection of the appropriate unit of analysis will occur when you accurately specify your primary research questions" (p. 24)	Both of the research questions include reference to Buttonsley EPS, which is the unit of analysis for this research
4. Linking data to propositions	"The actual analyses will require that you	Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) was chosen as the most appropriate form of analysis

	combine or calculate your case study data as a direct reflection of your initial study propositions" (p. 34)	for linking the data to the initial propositions and this is discussed further in section 2.6.
5. Criteria for interpreting a study's findings	"The challenge is to anticipate and enumerate the important rivals, so you will include information about them as part of your data collection" (p. 34)	Yin (2003) states that this aspect should be considered prior to collecting data. To meet this criterion, professional groups that are not directly involved in the relationship between EPs and the local College were also included in this study to reduce potential rival explanations arising from the data. Thus, it could not be argued that the findings result from dominance on either side of the potential relationship.

*Table 2.1; consideration of Yin's (2003) criteria for a case study*

It is important to note that Yin (2003) does not offer guidance on how to meet points 4 and 5 of his criteria, unlike for points 1 - 3. Instead, he proposes that thought should be given to them before data is collected and should be revisited again during the analysis and subsequent write-up of the data.

Both semi-structured interviews with service Managers and focus groups with main-grade professionals were chosen, which was done for two reasons. The first of these was to provide triangulation, as the requirement for triangulation is a contrast between two methods of data collection; hence reducing the likelihood of measurement biases (Bloor et al., 2001). The second reason for this approach is explained by Bloor et al. (2001) as follows: "The researcher should also be aware of differentials between participants that may cause some views to be silenced, for example, groups where individuals vary in status and power" (p. 20). Following this caution, it was decided that interviewing service Managers separately to the focus group and including only main-grade professionals would support all participants to have an equal say, with reduced role-based power hierarchies in the group.

The participants knew each other and were a pre-existing group, as the professional groups were not large enough to avoid this. An acknowledged risk to this formation is that confidentiality cannot be assured outside of the group and so, to reduce any negative effects of this, participants were informed of the topic of conversation prior to volunteering to take part. Furthermore, Kitziinger (1994) advocates for the use of pre-existing groups, as chosen in her own research, as she proposes that: "It is useful to work with pre-existing groups because they provide one of the social contexts within which ideas are formed and decisions made" (p. 105).

There is variability in the reported optimum numbers for inclusion in focus groups, with effectiveness being reported from including as few as three up to as many as fourteen (Bloor et al., 2001). It is noted that small focus groups are at a higher risk of cancellation or limited discussion than larger groups may be; therefore it is fortunate that all focus groups for the purpose of this research were conducted as two focus groups consisted of between three and four participants. However, this small number of people may limit the generalisability of their views.

A 'focusing exercise' was included in the design of the focus group, for two predominant reasons. This involved ranking a number of functions of EPs with regards to their potential usefulness to work in FE Colleges. The first reason for choosing this approach, as described by Bloor et al. (2001), is explained as: "the discussion about the rankings serves to illustrate the deep differences (along with some important similarities) in the tacit understandings of each different group" (p. 43). Hence, the exercise generated discussion between the respective focus groups about the merits and limitations of each EP function and how it could, or could not, be applied to FE Colleges. The second reason for choosing this approach was to provide a framework for a better understanding of the role of EPs to the professionals involved. Initial discussion with the Manager of the Connexions service highlighted that they were not very well aware of the role of EPs, and that the College staff

may not be either. Therefore, along with the leaflet about the EP role sent out with the recruitment information, it was decided that a sorting task may alleviate some anxieties for the participants by offering insight into the role of EPs.

The functions for the sorting task were derived from research conducted by EPs to explore what school SENCOs found useful about the EP role (Ashton and Roberts, 2006, discussed in section 1.7). It is acknowledged that this research has some limitations. It is a small-scale study, as only 38% of schools approached in one borough responded. Also, it makes use of a questionnaire design, which is generally acknowledged to yield more restricted data to that of other methods (Banister et al., 1994; Hakim, 2000). Moreover, only the views of SENCOs were sought, to the exclusion of teachers and senior leadership teams. Despite these limitations, the research is unique in exploring views from both sides of an established relationship between an EP Service and a well-established receiving service; that of schools. As the intention of this current research is to explore how new working relationships could be developed with FE Colleges and EPs, with the intention of supporting students with SEN, directly or indirectly, it seemed that considering professional functions identified as being constructive for established relationships between schools and EPs could be a useful starting point.

The functions were elicited by extracting every function mentioned in this research by either the EPs involved or by the SENCOs. This list was then reduced by excluding any functions which could not be applied to FE Colleges, for example, 'statutory assessment work'. This resulted in a list of 26 functions. During the pilot study, it was clear that this was too many because it took the participants much longer than the designated ten minutes, and that some of the functions overlapped and could be merged into a single category, for example 'working with staff' and 'partnership'. This left a total of 20 functions for use in the research (see Appendix 3). The questions asked in the interview and focus groups are included in Appendix 4.

## 2.4 Design - Philosophy

Denscombe (2010) proposes that:

“Philosophical assumptions constitute the foundations for research in the way that: they underpin the perspective that is adopted on the research topic, they shape the nature of the investigation, its methods and the questions that are asked, they specify what type of things qualify as worthwhile evidence, they point to the kind of conclusions that can, and cannot, be drawn on the basis of the investigation” (p.117).

Hence, philosophy and research in the social sciences are inextricably linked, in that every aspect of the research - including hypotheses, methods of data collection, analysis and presentation of the research - is underpinned by philosophical assumptions. Uddin and Hamiduzzaman (2009) studied the relationships between different ideologies in research and stated that: "Philosophy analyses the entities of the social world from different aspects: reality, nature of knowledge, mind, matter, truth and logic of abstract phenomena" (p. 654).

Within the philosophy of social research, it is important to consider two aspects in particular, those of epistemology and ontology, to encourage deep consideration of what questions are being asked and how to approach answering it, in addition to acknowledging that knowledge is 'frail' and should be 'scrutinised closely' (Thomas, 2009, p. 84). As a very brief definition of these two areas, Thomas (2009) offers that: "If *ontology* is the study of what there is or what exists in the social world, *epistemology* is the study of our knowledge of the world. How do we *know* about the world that we have defined ontologically?" (p. 85).

This research is positioned within the interpretivist paradigm with the intention to study how various professionals envisage the relationship between EPs and Colleges developing. An interpretivist approach intends to: contribute to theories through interviews, case studies and observations as an interacting researcher to consider patterns of thoughts, feelings and behaviour to be reported in a flexible manner (Thomas, 2009).

The epistemological stance is that of social constructionism (Thomas, pg. 88) as it is believed that there is no 'absolute truth' to be sought, but rather the aim is to hear how people who have involvement with EPs and / or LLDDs construct their beliefs about a possible relationship between the two. As Burr (2003) states:

"If our knowledge of the world, our common ways of understanding it, is not derived from the nature of the world as it really is, where does it come from? The social constructionist answer is that people construct it between them. It is through the daily interactions between people in the course of social life that our versions of knowledge become fabricated" (p. 4).

Social constructionism is a term used almost exclusively by Psychologists and is based on four fundamental assumptions; that a critical perspective should be taken of presumed knowledge, that knowledge is historically and culturally specific, that knowledge is upheld through social processes and that knowledge and social action go together (Burr, 2003).

Whilst adopting a social constructionist stance, it is critical to contemplate the link between epistemology and ontology. Ontological positions range between two dichotomous beliefs; a realist perspective, which believes that all beliefs are formed from reality, although interpretations of that reality may differ, or a relativist perspective, which considers that a 'reality' may not even exist, and if it does then "it is inaccessible to us" (p. 23, Burr, 2003) and beliefs are formed from our experiences creating representations of the world (Burr, 2003). It is widely believed that social constructionists must take a relativist perspective, whilst Burr (2003) raises issues with doing so. Thus, it is acknowledged that social constructionist research varies widely in how far the researchers adopt a relativist stance.

The table below, taken from Hewett (2013), illustrates the various perspectives within social constructionism and is followed by consideration of how this current research is positioned.

Types of Social Constructionism	Principles
Constructivism (e.g. Personal construct psychology, narrative psychology)	Assumes that each person sees the world differently and creates their own meanings from events
Discursive Psychology	Denies that language is a representation of internal mental states (whilst not denying they exist)
Deconstructionism / Foucauldian discourse analysis	Assumes that the way we talk about things (e.g. sexuality) has implications for what action is possible for different groups of people depending on the situation they are in
Critical psychology / Critical social psychology	Takes a political stance and focuses on power and inequality

*Table 2.2; Exploration of types of social constructionism and their key principles*

This piece of research is considered to be constructivist, with the definition of this as follows:

"Forms of psychology that see the person as having an active role in the creation of their experience; each person perceives the world differently and creates their own meanings from events" (p. 201, Burr, 2003).

These beliefs influenced every aspect of this research. The use of focus groups and interviews allowed exploration of the social influences on thinking and through exploring the views of four different professional groups. In disputing a common criticism of social constructionism, the denial that a 'reality' exists, this author aligns with Andrews' (2012) proposal that:

"Constructionists view knowledge and truth as created, not discovered, by the mind (Schwandt 2003) and supports the view that being a realist is not inconsistent with

being a constructionist. One can believe that concepts are constructed, rather than discovered, yet maintain that they correspond to something real in the world" (p. 12)

In line with this view, the researcher adopts Andrews' (2012) beliefs that:

"Reality is socially defined but this reality refers to the subjective experience of everyday life, how the world is understood rather than to the objective reality of the natural world. [Constructionists] do not deny the existence of reality; they maintain that the meaning of reality is socially constructed" (p. 19).

Thus, this epistemology influenced the decision to gather qualitative data through interviews and focus groups to explore the social constructs that influenced the participants' views. Whilst recognizing the criticism that social constructionist research may not be able to instigate change, as there is no 'reality' to judge the findings of the research against (Bury, 1986), a counter-argument can be that social constructionist research can trigger real debate, which in turn can lead to change (Andrews, 2012).

## **2.5 Methods: Participants and Data Collection**

Neither LLDDs nor their parents were included in this study as the focus is to explore how professionals in Buttonsley believe EPs could extend their involvement into the FE College sector in line with potential upcoming legislative changes (DfE, 2014). It was decided that professionals would have views about the role that EPs currently have, and knowledge of the systems in place, to support students on supported learning courses in FE Colleges. Whilst parents and LLDDs may have had involvement from an EP previously, this involvement may have been limited or could have been many years previously. Furthermore, as EPs are generally not involved in the post-16 transition process in Buttonsley currently, and the focus of this research was specifically on supporting LLDDs already on supported learning courses in FE Colleges, it was deemed ineffective to ask parents about their views of the contribution of EPs from this time. Rather, as this research intends to explore a potential new way of

working, it was decided that it would be most useful to hear from professional groups regarding gaps in support and what support is already available, as well as exploring what different professional groups believe EPs have to offer LLDDs up to age 25. However, further research in this area could explore the views of LLDDs and their families with relation to the post-16 transition process and the services available during supported learning courses.

Five professional groups were invited to take part in this research and the reasons for each will now be discussed. EPs were selected on the basis that they have the most knowledge about the role of the profession and could offer insight into the work they currently do. Tutors for supported learning courses within the local FE College were chosen as professionals with the greatest knowledge of the needs of LLDDs enrolled on these courses and the support that is currently available to support them and their learning. The Connexions Service was selected as this is a professional group that support the transition into College for LLDDs and they offer IAG to the Supported Learning Department within Buttonsley College. Therefore, they have an awareness of other services that are involved in this area, as well as having a degree of knowledge of the needs of the LLDDs. The LA SEN Team was selected for inclusion as they have in-depth specialist knowledge on the current statutory assessment arrangements and are involved in annual reviews relating to the post-16 transition. Furthermore, they attend Annual Reviews of the Statement of SEN for students past the age of 16 who are educated in mainstream sixth forms or specialist Colleges, bringing knowledge of the current statement arrangements and of the recommendations made to support these young people during their transition from their current educational placement to their next educational setting. Finally, a school for young people with Moderate Learning Difficulties, which is a feeder school to the College, were invited to take part; however they declined the invitation because of the time implications of releasing staff for this research.

In total, the study comprised of 4 interviews with Service Managers, including the Principal Educational Psychologist (PEP), the SEN Team Manager, the Connexions Service Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LDD) Team Manager and the SEN Inclusion Manager from Buttonsley FE College. Four focus groups were held with professionals from the teams outlined above, each containing between 3-9 participants, with three being the minimum optimal number for a focus group (Hakim, 2000). Prior to the data-gathering, a pilot study was conducted, which will be discussed in section 2.5i.

### **2.5i Pilot Study**

A pilot study was conducted in April 2013 with EPs in a neighbouring LA. As proposed by Yin (2009), the participants for the pilot study were recruited out of convenience and access. The Information Sheet (Appendix 6) was sent to seven main-grade EPs, following approval from the PEP. Out of these, three agreed to participate and a date and time was arranged. Participants were sent a document outlining the role of EPs (Appendix 2) to ensure consistency across the study, as well as consent forms.

The pilot study conducted was a focus group, intended to trial the questions and explore the wording of these. It took place in a private room in offices within that EPS and a Dictaphone was used to record the discussion. This recording was transferred securely on to a computer to guide the editing of the questions, although it was not transcribed. The information from this pilot study was not used to inform the research findings.

As a result of the pilot study, some editing of the questions was required. One of the questions consisted of a sorting task, sorting 26 functions of EPs as devised from Ashton and Roberts (2006). These functions were to be sorted in order from 'most relevant EP functions to FE College support' to 'least relevant EP functions to FE College support'. The pilot study showed that there were too many functions to sort and that the time limit of five minutes was too short. Also, it was evident that a number of these functions could be

merged into a couple of categories as there were similarities that could not easily be unpicked by the participants. After these refinements, there were 20 functions rather than 26. The wording of the question was also changed to ensure that participants were clear that they were sorting the functions into an order of highest to lowest priority, although each function did not need to be given a placement number of 1 to 20. Additionally, alterations were made to three more questions to reduce the number of questions asked from 16 to 13.

To conclude, the pilot study was a valuable tool for trialling the questions to be asked and the functions sorting task as it allowed me to edit the wording of questions and reduce the number of functions. Furthermore, it enabled me to practice running a focus group prior to those used in the data-gathering stage.

## **2.6 Data Analysis**

Thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) was applied to analysing this data. It is a "method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and described your data set in (rich) detail" (p. 79, Braun and Clarke, 2006). Whilst there are multiple guides to conducting Thematic Analysis, Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach was selected as it was written specifically for the purpose of Psychology research, thus was deemed the most appropriate for this research. The phases for analysing the data using this approach are set out as follows:

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarizing yourself with your data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Figure 2.1: Phases of thematic analysis, Braun and Clarke (2006) p. 87.

All of the transcriptions were analysed simultaneously, as opposed to individually, as the intention was to look for themes across the data sets in order to propose next steps for Buttonsley EPS.

This methodology was selected for use over alternative theme-based approaches, such as Phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994) or Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), due to the large amount of data generated in this research being unsuitable for these alternative methods, whose strengths lie in analysing small data sets (Guest et al., 2012).

Thematic Analysis has been criticised for not being a rigorous approach to data analysis. This sentiment is illustrated in the following extract, "For many scientists used to doing quantitative studies the whole concept of qualitative research is unclear, almost foreign, or 'airy fairy' - not 'real' research" (Labuschagne, 2003, p. 100). However, Guest et al. (2012) state that: "Thematic Analysis is the most useful in capturing the complexities of meaning within a textual data set" (p. 11). Moreover, in response to this criticism, Braun and Clarke (2006) proposed a step-by-step approach to Thematic Analysis to combat this criticism and this was followed meticulously. The following 15-point checklist for completing high-quality analysis was used to evaluate the analysis after each phase in the analytic process (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 96) to increase rigour:

<b>Process</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Criteria (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 96)</b>	<b>Researcher's actions to meet these criteria:</b>
Transcription	1	The data have been transcribed to an appropriate level of detail, and the transcripts have been checked against the tape for 'accuracy'	All transcripts were transcribed and checked against the recording for accuracy by the researcher.
Coding	2	Each data item has been given equal attention in the data process	Data was gathered approximately ten months prior to handing in the completed research report, allowing considerable time to complete the analysis, allowing each item to be considered in great detail
	3	Themes have not been generated from a few vivid examples (an anecdotal approach), but instead the coding process has been thorough, inclusive and comprehensive	Coding was done by highlighting ideas during transcription, reading each complete extract and commenting on what was said at each point, translating these comments into codes and arranging the codes into themes. Thus, entire data sets were considered, rather than only interesting points, and the process continually referred back to the full transcription (see Appendix 16 for a full example)
	4	All relevant extracts for each theme has been collated, for each data set	See Appendixes 8-15
	5	Themes have been checked against each other	The analysis process involved referring back to original transcripts

		and back to the original data set	frequently and regularly throughout the process and again following initial theme identification. Additionally, a co-researcher (a fellow Doctoral student) completed this stage and codes, sub-themes and themes were discussed and agreed upon.
	6	Themes are internally coherent, consistent and distinctive	Achieved through frequent and regular checks back to the original transcripts. An EP in Training checked the transcripts, codes tables, theme maps and collated theme quotations for accuracy for half of the data sets.
Analysis	7	Data have been analysed - interpreted, made sense of - rather than just paraphrased or described	Involved analysis of the data by identifying interesting aspects of the organised data and considering why that might be the case in order to name themes.
	8	Analysis and data match each other - the extracts illustrate the analytic claims	Data analysis involved a fluidity of scrutiny between data sets, items and emerging codes. Furthermore, collating the quotations for each theme and sub-theme ensured final changes were made to reflect the data
	9	Analysis tells a convincing and well-organized	See chapter 3 – Results and Discussion

		story about the data and the topic	
	10	A good balance between analytic narrative and illustrative extracts is provided	See chapters 3 - Results and Discussion
Overall	11	Enough time has been allocated to complete all phases of the analysis adequately, without rushing a phase or giving it a one-over lightly	Allocated study time was planned out with a great deal of time allocated to the analysis stage, with enough time following this to allow for further reflection
Written report	12	The assumptions about, and specific approach to, thematic analysis are clearly explicated	This methodology chapter sets out to explain what was done in the data analysis process, with support from detailed examples within the results section and appendices. Also, Braun and Clarke (2006) recommend reading examples of research using Thematic Analysis and this was done prior to, during and following the analysis
	13	There is a good fit between what you claim to do, and what you show you have done - i.e. described method and reported analysis are consistent	The analysis was completed alongside writing this methodology chapter to ensure that all steps were captured, recorded and explained
	14	The language and concepts used in the report are consistent with the epistemological position of the	My epistemological position is discussed in section 2.4 and my aim was to ensure this underpinned every aspect of my research

		analysis	
	15	The researcher is positioned as active in the research process; themes do not just 'emerge'	During analysis, Braun and Clarke's (2006) paper was referred back to regularly to follow the guidelines meticulously. Upon completion, the themes were written at the top of the transcriptions and were re-read again to ensure they captured what the entire data set presented. Additionally, a co-researcher verified the themes and sub-themes by examining the data separately. Any discrepancies were discussed to resolution, with edits made to the analysis as necessary.

*Table 2.3: A 15-point checklist of criteria for good thematic analysis, Braun and Clarke (2006) p. 96.*

To increase further the rigour of this assessment, complete examples of the analysis are included within Appendix 16. This Appendix shows a complete transcription with initial codes, followed by three thematic maps illustrating how codes were arranged into the final thematic map. Section 2.6 of this methodology chapter will detail how the analysis was conducted, enhancing the replicability of the methodology.

### **2.6i Familiarizing Yourself with Your Data**

All of the focus group and interview recordings were transcribed by the researcher. Transcripts and tables of codes for the SEN Team focus group data set are included in Appendix 16. This is due to the large amount of data elicited for this research, rendering it impractical to include all transcripts and codes tables in the Appendix. A focus group example was chosen to be included in the Appendix instead of interviews to further preserve the anonymity of the interview participants, as there is one PEP, one SEN Team Manager, one College Inclusion Manager and one Connexions Manager. The focus group selected for inclusion is the SEN Team and was chosen at random.

### **2.6ii Generating Initial Codes**

Braun and Clarke (2006) report that “codes identify a feature of the data that appears interesting to the analyst” (p.88) and they suggest that successful coding is achieved by working "systematically through the entire data set" (p.89) and ensuring that "all actual data extracts are coded" (p.89). It is also advised to code as many potential patterns in the data as possible, to retain as much of the content around the code as feasible and to code extracts for as many different themes as necessary (p.89). These steps were followed during the coding stage and an example of this is included below:

Quotation from transcript	Initial comment	Codes
I think giving advice. I would think giving advice because you know you've got an Educational Psychologist who's done all this work and got to where they are	Advice giving as a highest priority; EPs have worked hard to get where they are	Potential - EP knowledge

*Table 2.4: Focus group with SEN Team, example of generating initial codes*

This example shows that an initial comment was made on the data extract. The purpose of this was to reduce one of the criticisms of Thematic Analysis, which is that some of the context may be lost (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 89). Additionally, initial comments further enabled a deep familiarisation with the data, as proposed in phase 1 of thematic analysis (p.87). During the coding phase, some extracts were coded more than once.

### **2.6iii Searching for Themes**

‘Searching for themes’ is described by Braun and Clarke (2006) as ‘collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme’ (p. 87). This was achieved by eliciting all of the codes from a data set and grouping them according to perceived similarities to form the first thematic map (see the example in Appendix 16). The data set was re-read prior to and upon completion of grouping the codes for context around the individual codes. Furthermore, the research questions were visible throughout the entire process. No codes were deleted during this phase, as Braun and Clarke state: “do not abandon anything at this stage, as without looking at all the extracts in detail (the next phase) it is uncertain whether the themes hold as they are” (p. 90).

## 2.6iv Reviewing Themes

There were some codes that could not be included in other groups because they did not fit into alternate themes and could not form a distinct sub-theme on their own. These were deleted in this stage, 'reviewing themes'. The deleted codes are included in the table below:

<b>Data set</b>	<b>Code</b>
Focus group with Educational Psychologists	EPs' identity outside of LA
Focus group with SEN Team	Uncertainty about EP's strategic role
Interview with FE College Inclusion Manager	College focus on progression
Interview with FE College Inclusion Manager	Moving Forward Plans helpful
Interview with FE College Inclusion Manager	Funding issues

Table 2.5: Deleted codes

Following the generation of the initial thematic map in phase 3 and primary grouping of codes (as seen in the example in Appendix 16), themes were reviewed against the initial data set and were refined by collapsing themes, creating separate themes and rearranging themes to form clear patterns that were coherent with the data set and relevant data extracts. Braun and Clarke (2006) advise that: "as coding data and generating themes could go on *ad infinitum*, it is important not to get over-enthusiastic with endless re-coding" (p. 92). Thus, at the stage when all data extracts had been coded, grouped and checked against the data set for further refinements, this stage was considered complete.

## 2.6v Defining and Naming Themes

This stage required interpretation of the data, beyond simply reporting what was said. To complete this, the original transcripts were constantly referred back to and consideration was

given to what was interesting about the extracts of data and why this might be the case (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 92). Through moving between the thematic map and the data set, it was possible to elicit themes, sub-themes and links between the two from the context provided, the validity of each theme and the frequency with which it was referred to (in the case of interviews) or extent of agreement or disagreement (in the case of focus groups).

## **2.6vi Producing the Report**

This stage was completed following the analysis and is included in chapter three, alongside presentation of the results. At this point, the data analysis was considered in relation to the literature and in response to the research questions of this study.

Upon completion of the analysis, an EP in Training, with previous experience of Thematic Analysis for a dissertation, checked the codes, themes and quotations with the original transcripts of four out of eight data sets. Half of the data was examined in this way due to time constraints and the large amount of data gathered for this research. They were selected alphabetically for fairness, including: College Tutors' focus group, College Inclusion Manager interview, Connexions' Advisors focus group and Connexions' Manager interview. All data was talked through and two small amendments were suggested and agreed. The other half of the data was then reflected upon in the same way as a lone researcher following this process. The themes were confirmed as valid and representative of the original data.

## **2.7 Evaluation**

Yardley (2000) proposes four characteristics of good qualitative research, which have been used here to emphasise the importance of plausibility and confirmation in qualitative research studies. These four characteristics are: sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, transparency and coherence, impact and importance. They will each be discussed in relation to this research study.

## Sensitivity to context

Through providing a review of the literature related to this research area, the context in which it is situated has been presented. Furthermore, reading examples of research that has employed Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) as the methodology has further grounded the understanding of the methodology and its relationship with the philosophical underpinnings of this research. Finally, through describing the local context of this case study (sections 1.5 and 1.7i), a picture of the context was discovered, with relevant sensitivity applied to the interpretation of the data, accordingly.

## Commitment and rigour

Yardley (2000) proposes that commitment is achieved through prolonged involvement with the topic. This is demonstrated through my previous experiences, as follows; through experience as working with FE Colleges as a Connexions Personal Advisor with the LDD team and witnessing first-hand the level of need that students and Tutors within these organisations presented, strong beliefs were formed which shaped the notion that more professional support needs to be given to this area. Subsequently, the experience within an EPS as an Assistant Psychologist further compounded this belief when it was evident that EPs had a great range of skills that could be applied to supporting in FE Colleges, although this relationship between EPs and FE Colleges did not exist. Upon commencing the Doctorate in Child and Educational Psychology, there was a desire to explore this area in greater detail to confirm or refute the belief that EPs have a contribution to supporting in FE Colleges. Commitment is also achieved through 'immersion in the data' (p. 221), which was achieved through transcribing the data manually.

Rigour can be desirable through employing "triangulation of data collection or analysis in order to achieve a rounded, multilayered understanding of the research topic" (p. 222). Thomas (2009) regards the importance of triangulation to be "that viewing from several

points is better than viewing from one" (p. 111). In this study, the views of five different professional groups were desired, and ultimately four services took part – enabling triangulation.

#### Transparency and coherence

Yardley (2000) propose that transparency and coherence relates to the belief that: “the function of any story, including the story of a research project, is not to describe but to **construct** a version of reality” (p. 222). To achieve this, examples of the transcribed data are included within section 3 and the process of the analysis is described in great detail in section 2.6.

#### Impact and importance

This research was co-devised with the Principal Educational Psychologist of Buttonsley EPS as the topic is of central importance to the EPS’ future developments. The research questions are presented in chapter 3 when presenting the discussion of the data analysis to illustrate how the data has answered these questions. Furthermore, the findings have been presented back to Buttonsley EPS (appendix 19) and a working group has been established to take the actions forward, in light of the SEND reforms (DfE, 2014) coming into force in September 2014.

Finally, the epistemological stance of this research proposes that:

"Social constructionism would regard objectivity as an impossibility, since each of us, of necessity, must encounter the world from some perspective or other (from where we stand) and the questions we come to ask about that world, our theories and hypotheses, must also of necessity arise from the assumptions that are embedded in our perspective" (Burr, 2003, p. 152).

This stance necessitates that the researcher acknowledge that the findings originate from a relationship between the participants and the researcher, in that a shared conclusion was drawn from the influence of both parties. Burr (2003) proposes this is achieved through acknowledging one's beliefs and values, as above, and reflects on this throughout the research journey.

## **2.8 Ethics**

The Heads of Services were sent a letter (Appendix 5) and an information sheet (Appendix 6) explaining the study and requesting their support. They were invited to allow staff members in their teams to attend focus groups and to their own involvement in an interview. It is noted that such requests rely on an element of professional 'goodwill'. An information sheet was sent to all professionals working in the EPS, Connexions Service in the Learning Difficulties and Disabilities Team, all Assessment and Monitoring Officers (AMOs) in the SEN Team, all staff within the 16-19 department of the special school and all College Tutors who teach supported learning courses in Buttonsley FE College (Appendix 6) explaining the study and asking for volunteers (British Psychological Society, ethical guidelines 1.3, 2009; BERA ethical guidelines 11, 2011). This explained that, as there are limited numbers of professionals in each Service, the focus group will commence at a time most suitable for the majority and will be arranged accordingly, following permission from Service Managers for this to proceed. In this information sheet, the procedures for confidentiality and the right to withdraw were explained (British Psychological Society, ethical guidelines 1.2, 1.4, 2009; BERA, ethical guidelines 12, 15, 2011). The consent forms (see appendices seven and eight) were completed prior to the interview (British Psychological Society, ethical guidelines 1.3, BERA, ethical guidelines 10).

Due to the data being gathered face-to-face in an interview or focus group, participants were not anonymous, however the data will be safeguarded and codes will be used to protect their identities. The data gathered will remain confidential: audio files will be password-protected

and hard copies of data will be kept in a lockable cabinet. These will be destroyed or deleted after ten years, in accordance with the University of Birmingham's policy. In the interview transcripts, participants will be identified by a code rather than by name. Any names of children that are mentioned will also not be included. Interviews took place in a room where we could not be overheard by others; a sign was put on the door to inform other staff that a private meeting was taking place. Permission was sought to include in the data anything that the participant feels may make them identifiable, for example any mention of previous experience they raised may result in other professionals who know them recognising who they are (British Psychological Society, ethical guidelines 1.2, 2009; BERA ethical guidelines 25, 12, 2011). For both the focus group and the interviews participants were made aware that their responses will be shared collectively in a research paper and that the data will be accessible to University supervisors and examiners.

## **2.9 Outcomes**

This research has been conducted within one LA in the West Midlands, hence it is not possible to generalise the findings elsewhere, as relationships and working practices of the services involved may differ. However, the intention of this research is to consider possible next steps for Buttonsley EPS in response to changes in legislation proposed to begin in September 2014 (DfE, 2014), which will likely require them to work with LLDDs up to the age of 25.

## CHAPTER THREE:

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Presentation of Data

The aim of this chapter is to present the findings in a complete and coherent manner, as Braun and Clarke (2006) advocate: "tell the complicated story of your data in a way which convinces the reader of the merit and validity of your analysis" (p. 93). This will be done by presenting the data extracted from the sorting task in each data set in a graph format for ease of reading and comparison. A table of the functions, indicating how they were rated in each data set, is presented in appendix 17.

Following this, there will be a presentation of the final thematic map. Each dominant theme will then be presented with its sub-themes, with quotations extracted from the data to supplement each one. The quotations selected and presented in this chapter are illustrative and intend to show breadth within each theme and sub-theme. A full list of quotations, broken down into themes and sub-themes, for each individual data set is presented in appendices 8-15.

The themes and sub-themes for across all of the data sets are presented together to tell one coherent story of the context and relationship between Buttonsley EPS and the local FE College. It appears imperative to provide this inclusive synopsis to propose next steps for Buttonsley EPS; rather than providing a breakdown of the views of each individual professional group. Please see appendices 8-15 for a presentation of all of the themes, sub-themes, relevant quotations and process of analysis for each data set.

In each section, the data is presented, followed by a discussion of the data. Subsequently, the implications for Buttonsley EPS are presented in each section. The research question which the discussion applies to is represented within each discussion for ease of reference.

### 3.2.1 EP Functions Sorting Task Data

The graph below provides a summary of the level of priority given to the EP functions provided during the focus group or interview. Participants were asked to sort them initially and then to choose the highest (presented in bold font in the table in Appendix 17) and lowest priority functions (presented in italic font in the table in Appendix 17). Dashes represent occasions where the level assigned was unclear from the transcript. The final column in the table presents a numerical value assigned to each function across the data sets. This was calculated by assigning values as follows:

<b>Priority level</b>	<b>Value</b>
Lowest	-2
Low	-1
Middle	0
High	+1
Highest	+2

*Table 3.1: Value weightings*

To present this information visually, the values were used to form a graph. This is presented below, in figure 3.2i:

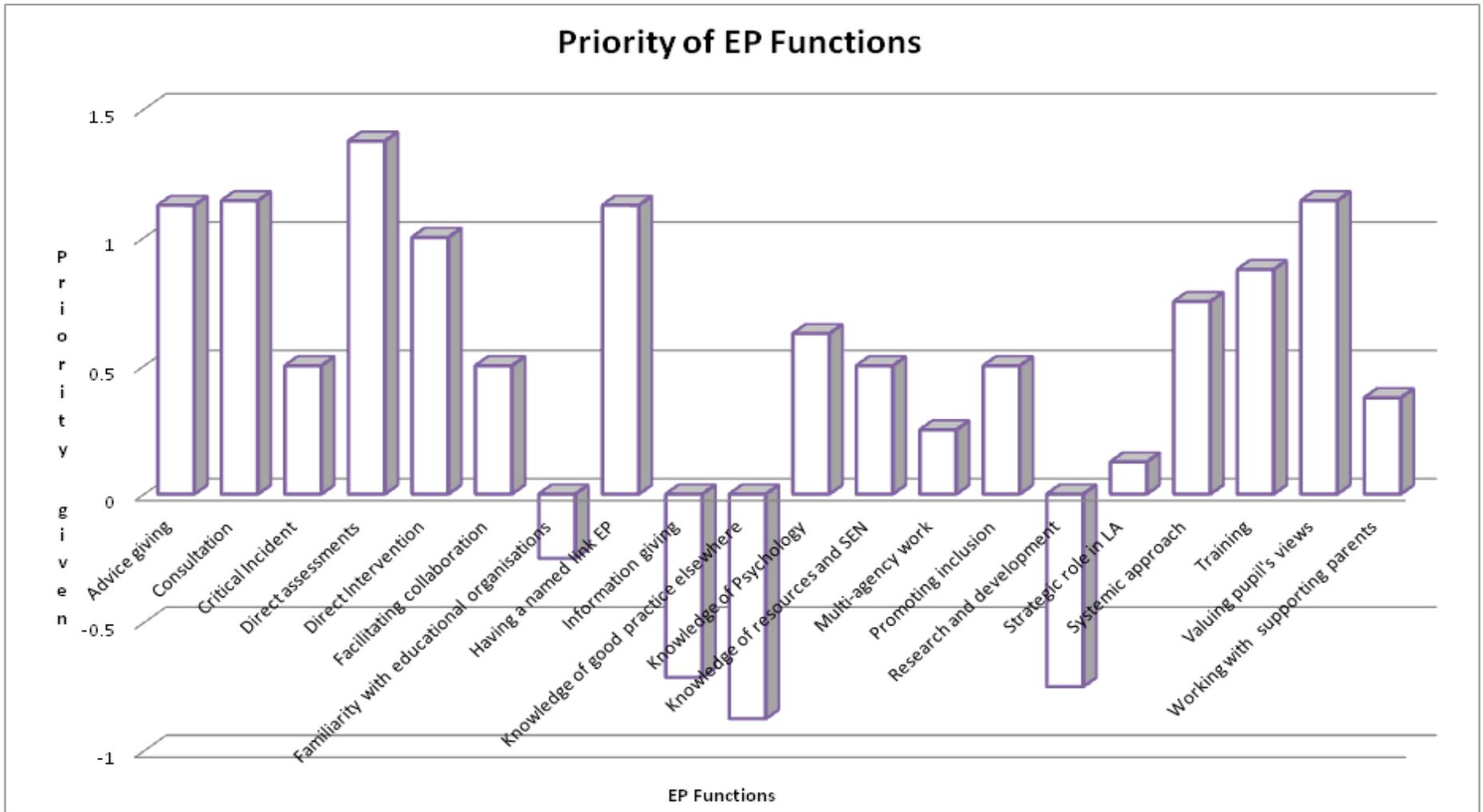


Figure 3.2i: Graph showing the priority weighting given to functions of Educational Psychologists

### **3.2.2 Discussion of Function Sorting Task Data**

This graph (figure 3.2i) represents the value given to EP functions across different participants. The weighting assigned to each function indicates the level of importance given to each, as an overview from all of the data sets. This suggests that the following functions were considered to be the most important: advice giving, consultation, having a named link EP and individual work with students-individual assessments. The EP functions that appear to be the lowest priority are: research and development, information giving and having knowledge of good practice elsewhere. In instances when it was unclear from the recording whether the function had been rated as a high, low or middle priority, an average was given to the scores from those that were gathered (hence, in some cases the total score was divided by seven rather than by eight). It should be noted that as some data was incomplete, hence these conclusions cannot be considered to be definitive (please see Appendix 17 for a view of how functions were rated in each individual data set).

### **3.2.3 Implications for Buttonsley EPS**

*Research question one: Considering students enrolled on supported learning courses within an FE College: what functions of the EP role, if any, do professionals think would be most useful to supporting LLDDs, within Buttonsley?*

With regards to question one, the functions that were rated as the highest priorities, in section 3.2, include: advice giving, consultation, direct assessments, having a named link EP and valuing pupil's views. Thus, this may have implications upon the model of service delivery, whereby it is considered important to have an EP linked with the College for offering support. Consideration needs to be given to whether this is possible instead of having EPs 'follow' students they are supporting who go on to attend a supported learning course at Buttonsley College or whether having a named EP for the College can be additional to that support.

The identification of 'valuing pupil's views' as an important role for EPs when supporting LLDDs may be associated with the SEND reforms and the EHCPs, as the 'Progress and Next Steps' document states that children and young people will be involved in designing the services which affect them (DfE, 2012, p.44). The importance placed upon eliciting the views of young people in the Code of Practice (DfE, 2014) is momentous, with references such as: "Young people may be finding their voice for the first time, and may need support in exercising choice and control over the support they receive" (p. 22). Hence, the finding that 'valuing pupil's views' is one of the most highly rated across all professional groups in Buttonsley has essential links with upcoming changes as proposed in the Code of Practice (DfE, 2014). Thus, it could be concluded that EPs may be one of the most appropriate professionals for eliciting young people's views and ensuring that they are represented in all decisions that impact upon them. Furthermore, the finding of advice giving, consultation and direct assessments being viewed as high priorities could indicate the areas of work that EPs might begin engaging in with the College to initiate a relationship. Certainly in Guishard's (2000) example of an effective partnership between EPs and a College, this was done through EPs offering three 'free at the point of delivery' consultation sessions to the College over the course of a year. As consultation has been recognised as a high priority, it could be a good method for Buttonsley EPS to apply to developing this relationship.

### **3.3 Presentation of Qualitative Data from Thematic Analysis of Data Sets**

Braun and Clarke (2006) encourage researchers to select quotations according to their apparent salience to the theme, proposing an element of researcher autonomy in doing so. Hence, each of the themes will be presented in a thematic map, followed by maps of each individual theme and the sub-themes. These will be illustrated by making use of extracts from the data sets to exemplify the views within each sub-theme.

The presentation of qualitative data will begin with the final thematic map of themes in figure 3.3i. Following this, figures 3.3ii - 3.3v will present individual themes and the sub-themes, with illustrative quotations following each figure.

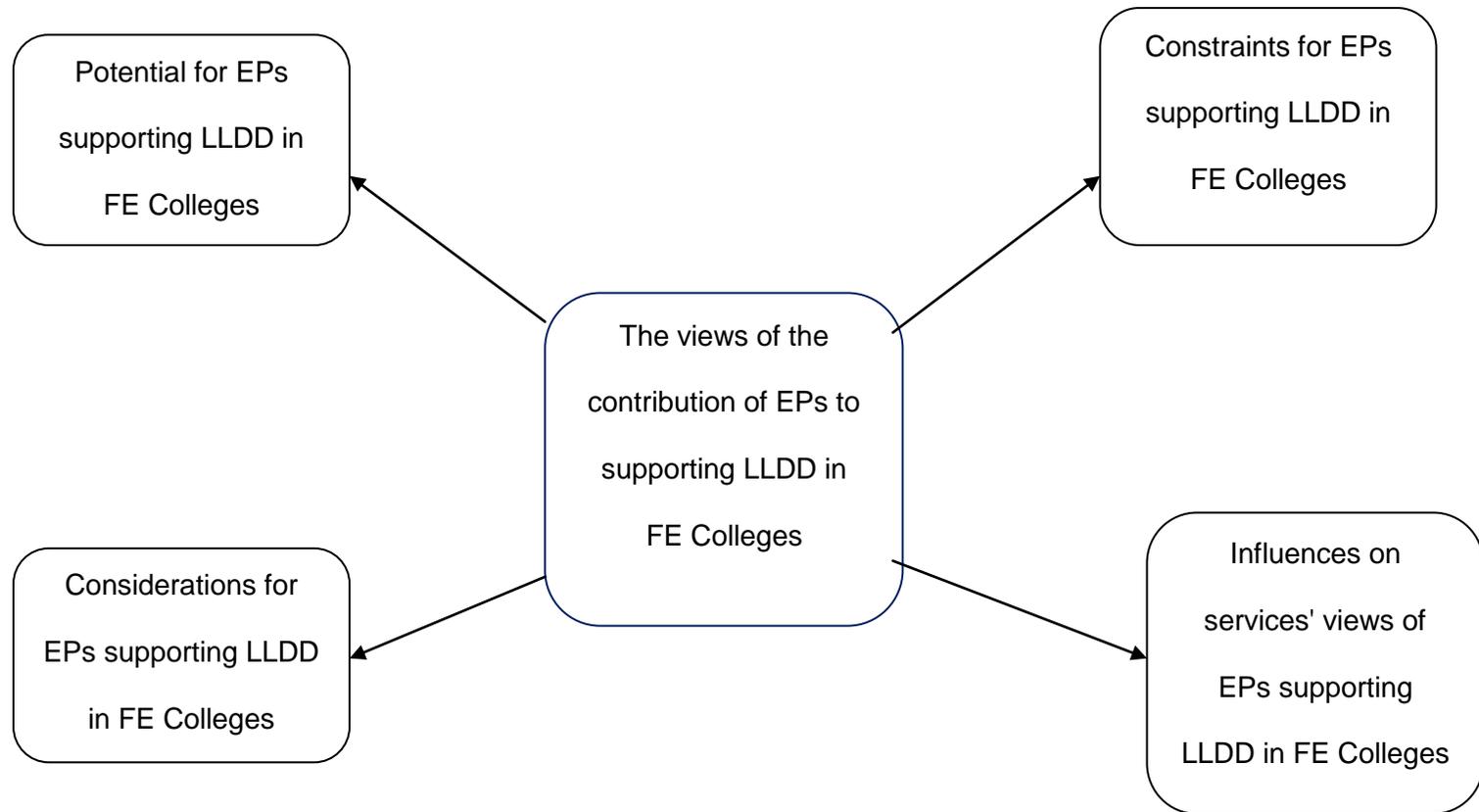


Figure 3.3i: Final thematic map from thematic analysis of all interview and focus group data sets

In relation to figure 3.3i, it is pertinent to note that the sub-themes have not been included on this figure. The sub-themes of each over-arching theme will be explored in greater detail in the sections below. The presentation of the themes and sub-themes are presented together in the following section, arising out of the focus groups and interviews with all of the participants. However, in appendices 8 - 15, the related quotations are presented from each individual interview and focus group.

Whilst the sub-themes are presented as being separate from each other, there are some instances when they may overlap and a quotation may be used to illustrate more than one of the sub-themes.

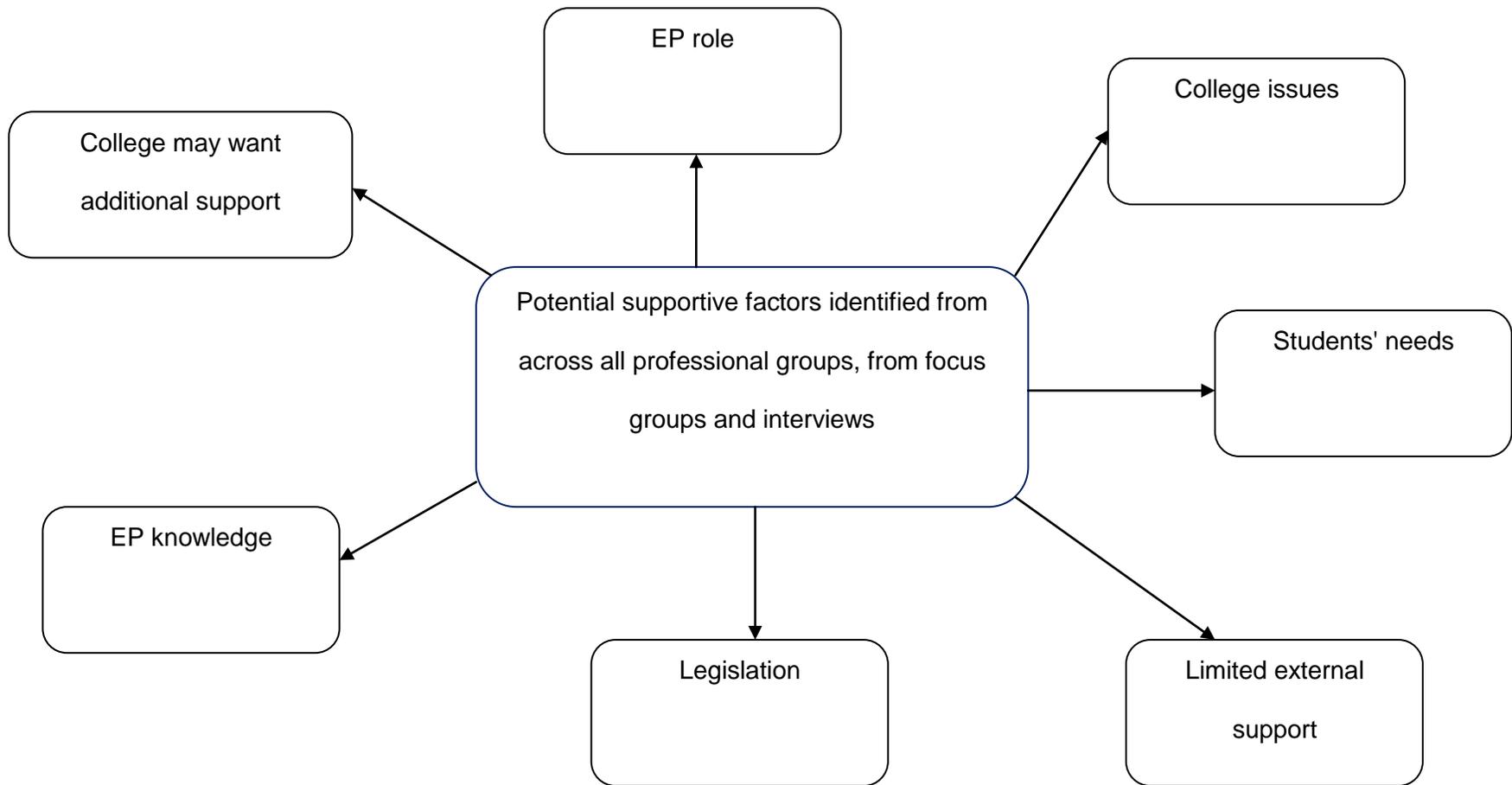


Figure 3.3ii: Potential supportive factors identified from thematic analysis across all professional groups, from focus groups and interviews

### 3.3.1 Theme 1: Potential Supportive Factors to the EP-College Relationship

All of the data sets indicated that there were potential supportive factors for the relationship to develop between EPs and the local College, which may prove beneficial for LLDDs. Some of these factors related specifically to the role of the EP (for example the EP role or EPs' knowledge), whilst others related to College issues (for example that College staff may want the support, that there is limited support available to the College from external agencies and that there are some acknowledged issues with the College provision currently). Further factors that were recognized as creating the potential for EP involvement in Colleges included current changes in national legislation, in addition to the fact that many LLDDs have needs which may be met by EPs.

#### *Sub-theme 3.3i: College may want additional support*

College staff express that they face challenges in their role and would appreciate support from an EP to make progress with them. The PEP believes that the College would request particular support, including training, whilst stating that all functions of the EP role would be useful to Colleges and their students. This theme was identified in the data sets from the PEP, College Tutors and the College Inclusion Manager.

College Tutors- Focus group	<p><i>"P7: I sort of think, that where Tutors could talk to Educational Psychologists or are we talking just from a pupil point of view? Cos there are times when I would like to talk to somebody of that ilk and say 'I've got this issue with somebody, how do you think we approach it?'</i></p> <p><i>P7: I think that would be my, that would be my area that I would like some work like, training and such</i></p> <p><i>P4: Or just access to you [EPs], yeah</i></p> <p><i>P7: Cos I think like it was alluded to earlier, you're sort of given this job, and then you learn it. Rather than someone saying there's these sort of</i></p>
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	<i>traits that you can look at so I think that could be quite a training need"</i>
College Tutors- Focus group	<i>"P4: We could have done with like an extra kind of support and guidance and psychology really"</i>
College Inclusion Manager – Interview	<i>"Having a named link EP someone who is regular and familiar with that learner who can help them in College to achieve the targets and out of College as well [is a high priority]"</i>
Principal Educational Psychologist - Interview	<i>"Training on specific conditions: I think this is one of the things the College would ask for and it's useful, it gives you a general starting point I think."</i>

#### *Sub-theme 3.3ii: EP role*

This sub-theme was identified in the interviews with Managers and focus groups from EPs, the Connexions service and the SEN Team. The PEP acknowledges that there is no relationship between EPs and the College at present but that there is potential for it developing.

Connexions - focus group	<i>"P5: I had a review this year with a pupil in year 9 and the EP was there and she was talking about the strategies she used with the young person to help them do things like remember the time and this that and the other and it was really useful and, um, that could have been forwarded to the College."</i>
Connexions Manager - Interview	<i>"If there are any issues, or if there is anything that could help youngsters to remain engaged, would be really good. So I think any support in that respect would be useful."</i>
Educational	<i>"I would have thought that knowledge of Psychology is going to be fairly</i>

Psychologists - Focus group	<i>high because that's our unique position, isn't it? I wouldn't have thought there'd be anyone else supporting the students in College providing that role?"</i>
Principal Educational Psychologist - Interview	<i>"So the relationship from a starting point of none, which I'm saying is the situation at the moment really, then I think we could make quite a bit of progress over the next few years"</i>
SEN Team - Focus group	<i>"P1: You know, because for young people who are going to need this help and support of the EP, in my opinion, are always going to need that help and support. They are going to be in a learning environment for the whole of their lives"</i>
SEN Team Manager - Interview	<i>"I think that transition over into the "big bad world" it might be useful [for them to have EP input] just to see that they are settled in the interim, just to get them settled, because getting this on a bigger thing going all the way to 25 it's not going to happen quick but even now, it's just that transition to get them over, settled, make sure things are in place, things are happening for them"</i>

#### *Sub-theme 3.3iii: College issues*

Issues were identified that relate to the limited capacity of the College to meet the needs of some LLDDs, which may result in the termination of the College placement for those students. This sub-theme was identified in the EPs' focus group, College Tutors' focus group and Connexions' focus group, as well as in interviews with the Connexions and College Managers.

College Inclusion	<i>"In our case, we are like an FE College with SLDD provision, so sometimes we have to hold our hands up and say, you know, we've not</i>
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Manager - Interview	<i>got the facilities or resources to support a particular learner but we can't do that without working with the person first and assessing their needs"</i>
Connexions Manager - Interview	<i>"What is kind of in my mind, is I know you said MLD and SLD but also EBD as quite often, well, in the past, the past 3 years, we have not had a graduate from the EBD school complete their course at College. So they might have started a course and for some reason, something has happened along the way where they've been excluded."</i>
SEN Team Manager - Interview	<i>"Some of those children do need intervention because thinking of children who go from [SEBD school] not one child in the 5 years I've been in Buttonsley has completed a course in the College. Not one! Zip, nada. So there does need to be some work done directly with those students, why are they failing so abjectly?"</i>
College Tutors - Focus Group	<p><i>P2: I think there's a bit of pressure on us as well because we have 6 weeks cut-off, we can keep students for 6 weeks to see how their behaviour is but it takes them a lot more than 6 weeks to settle down so we're making a judgment on their biggest transformation of their life in 6 weeks when it's going to take a lot more</i></p> <p><i>I- Is that specific to this College or is that national?</i></p> <p><i>P5: It's a funding issue. All figures, isn't it figures or funding?</i></p> <p><i>P9: both</i></p> <p><i>P5: Ah, both. Figures and funding</i></p> <p><i>P4: If students are withdrawn before 6 weeks, they don't count on your figures. So we're urged to make decisions on whether we keep students before 6 weeks</i></p> <p><i>P8: There's also an area where you could look at them for 6 weeks and say whether they're on the right course or not it isn't just about data. You</i></p>

	<p><i>can transfer them to other courses, it ain't just about data</i></p> <p><i>P5: It is our dirty little secret I think, that one. It's about data.</i></p> <p><i>P2: No it is about being on the right programme as well, because they could be on the wrong course that doesn't suit them</i></p> <p><i>P8: It is about data, I'm not saying that you're wrong. But there is a point where you can look at people who have been on the wrong course, like one, who's going on to catering in the mainstream but we've put in place that if he can't cope with that then he comes back on to our catering course</i></p> <p><i>P9: I think the sort of-</i></p> <p><i>P8: -Maybe we should look at that more than we do with-</i></p> <p><i>P9: -I think that we lost some students really in the past that really needed to come here because of that thought, a big problem's there, it's a lot of work, we're not sure they're going to achieve so, I call it like a cull, it is like a cull really, the ones who needed the most help-</i></p> <p><i>P8: -Yeah-</i></p> <p><i>P9: -from us and we let them down</i></p>
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*Sub-theme 3.3iv: Students' needs*

It is acknowledged that students have particular needs that require early intervention and Psychological support. This sub-theme was identified in the data sets from interviews with the PEP, SEN Team and College Managers and the College Tutors' focus group.

College Tutors - Focus Group	<p><i>"P2: I was going to say that I think sometimes as well the students have already made the decision before they see AMO [Assessment and Monitoring Officer from the SEN Team] that that is the end of College and it would be better to have an earlier intervention before they've made any</i></p>
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	<i>decisions"</i>
SEN Team Manager - Interview	<i>"I don't know that they [College students] get very much individual intervention for Psychological reasons at the minute and I think that a lot of those children probably need it"</i>
College Inclusion Manager - Interview	<i>"We have a group of counsellors, one which specialises in SLDD so that's one step you know if there's a death in the family we would always point a student to that but sometimes it's not suitable for whatever reason so then it's the next steps"</i>

*Sub-theme 3.3v: Limited external support*

Included below are extracts indicating that the support offered to Colleges or LLDDs from external agencies is not as high quality as it should be. This sub-theme was identified in the data sets from the College Tutors and Manager.

College Tutors - Focus Group	<p><i>"P7: See we've got counsellors for some students but with other learners it's like what's going on their heads?</i></p> <p><i>P4: Counselling's good but it's not enough</i></p> <p><i>P7: Well it's not proactive, it's reliant on, we need someone to say 'this is the problem here'</i></p> <p><i>P8: Yeah, counselling really should be someone who understands a particular type of learner and shouldn't be a generic counsellor"</i></p>
College Inclusion Manager - Interview	<i>"Social services are a really good example of that, of how it doesn't work, in my opinion. Whereby, I know one learner who started in September who has had about 10 different social workers in 9 months and to me that's completely unacceptable and that's where we step back and think right we're not going to work with this person or this named contact because they're not helping the learner"</i>

*Sub-theme 3.3vi: Legislation*

Discussion about legislation highlights potential benefits for the relationship between EPs and Colleges to develop, including that EPs may be involved more past year 9 as the changes to the statutory assessment process may mean that school staff realize the opportunity to involve EPs at a later stage, where necessary. This sub-theme was identified by the PEP and in focus groups with the SEN Team and EPs.

Educational Psychologists - Focus Group	<i>"There might be a change as well when the new legislation comes in because the new ideas of statements - obviously in the past they haven't involved us after year 9 because by the time you went through the process and it went to a panel and you got a statement of special needs out of it, the child's sitting A-levels so you know, it hasn't been worth it"</i>
Principal Educational Psychologist - Interview	<i>"I think it can start from the EPS so if we showed that there was a need and a market then I think that we could encourage decisions to be made, so I think it can start from us so I don't think anyone from above is really going to make it, they may make that decision based on the Children and Families Bill but there are things that we can be doing on the ground to make things happen, to create that demand"</i>
SEN Team - Focus Group	<i>"P1: But that's going to happen isn't it when it goes to 0-25 next year? P2: I guess so, it will still be monitored"</i>

*Sub-theme 3.3vii: EP knowledge*

Acknowledgement that EPs have a high level of training which can result in their ability to give advice to support LLDDs. This sub-theme was identified by the PEP and in focus groups with the SEN Team and Connexions Advisors.

SEN Team Focus Group	-	<i>"P1: I would think giving advice [is a high priority] because you know you've got an EP who's done all this work and got to where they are and..."</i>
Connexions Focus Group	-	<i>"P5: I had a review this year with a pupil in year 9 and the EP was there and she was talking about the strategies she used with the young person to help them do things like remember the time and this that and the other and it was really useful and, um, that could have been forwarded to the College. She suggested other ways for her to learn, um, some of the teaching assistants didn't seem too keen on but she found it worked in their sessions so. I mean for the College, I mean she still can't tell the time at the moment but she has got a little bit better so whatever she was doing has helped her so that could continue at College couldn't it if that was in the Moving Forward Plan"</i>
PEP – Interview		<i>"And I know that at school they would have had work on relationships and I suppose they would at College too but I think it's a part of psychology."</i>

### 3.3.2 Discussion of Theme 1

The sub-themes within Theme 1 provide an overview of supportive factors for the development of a relationship between Buttonsley EPS and the local FE College. All of the data sets made reference to the potential contribution that EPs could make to supporting LLDDs after they have transitioned into the post-school sector. These supportive factors have been identified as follows;

- The College staff reported that there have been times when they would have liked the opportunity to discuss their concerns with an EP. Professionals also identified that the College staff may want to access training
- There have been some issues in Colleges identified that may result in unsuccessful placements for LLDDs with complex needs, including students with SLDD and those with EBD
- The students may need input from external agencies, and specifically may benefit from Psychological support
- Currently, some of the services that should provide support to LLDDs in Colleges are inadequate and do not offer the level of support that is required, with specific examples being social care and counselling services
- The upcoming changes in legislation have resonated with the professionals, some of whom have expressed that these changes may be beneficial for offering support to LLDDs post-school
- Acknowledgement that, currently, College Tutors have limited access to training and are not offered support through professionals reviewing the provision for LLDDs after they have started at the College
- The level of knowledge that EPs have from their training

By raising the challenges young people with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) face when attempting to complete courses at College (in section 3.3iii), it is interesting to consider what is happening for this consistent failure, of no pupils from the SEBD school completing their College courses, to occur. Indeed, the Tomlinson Report (HMSO, 1996) identified that students with SEBD were one of three groups which were under-represented within FE Colleges (with the other two being young people with profound and multiple learning difficulties and those with mental health difficulties). Attwood et al., (2004) reviewed a programme in a local FE College aimed at attempting to meet the needs

of students with challenging behaviour and found that: "there is a continuing tension within, between the need to have formal records and procedures and the very personal and individualised approach which has been an important part of the success of the project" (p. 117). It also concluded that personal relationships, particularly with the College Tutors, were very influential for successful placements. Whilst this research did not focus on the role of EPs in the wider FE College, or with students from a school for children with SEBD specifically, it has emerged that this is an area that would benefit from further research and that this may be an area in which EPs could have involvement. MacNab et al. (2008) also recognise the need for more support for College Tutors when working with this group (raised in sections 3.3i, 3.3v and 3.3vii). Their literature review concludes with the reminder that:

"What could remain a potential difficulty, however, is the lack of appeal of teaching this group of young people – it must be recognised that there are staff who chose to teach in FE specifically so that they did not have to teach such young people. Potentially this could be a permanent problem if it is not acknowledged and readdressed. One way forward could be to offer relevant training for all further education staff." (p. 245).

It has been identified in my research that a role of EPs in beginning work with Colleges could be to offer training and consultation (section 3.3i and in figure 3.2i) to College Tutors, and MacNab et al.'s (2008) findings could suggest that this function may be useful College-wide, rather than restrained to the supported learning department. During the focus group with the College Tutors, they stated that they would like to have support from an external service, such as the EPS (section 3.3i). They explained that they share problems together to support the students, as the following extract demonstrates;

"P9: We tend to talk problems round the table don't we?

P7: Yeah we do

P9: Once every meeting don't we, so that's our action isn't it?

P7: That's what we'd normally be doing tonight

P2: It's like student focus, so we all go through each learner and if we've had any problems for them...

P7: And then it's again thrown across the table of how do you think you should deal with it?"

This process was identified as being supportive for a number of students as it allowed the Tutors to support each other through problem-solving together. This process appears to align with Buttonsley EPS' consultative model of service delivery, underpinned by Wagner's (1995) consultation paradigm (discussed in section 1.7i). As found in research by Farrell et al. (2006) and Ashton and Roberts (2006), consultation is a highly valued function of the EP role and is considered to be unique in accordance with EPs' skill set. Thus, it is appropriate to propose that consultation could be a valuable starting point for the relationship between Buttonsley EPS and Buttonsley College to develop from. This proposal is supported by Guishard's (2000) research, which evaluates the relationship between an EPS and an FE College as being successful, with this relationship developing from three consultation sessions (totalling nine hours) being offered to the College over the course of a year (discussed in section 1.8).

However, the College Tutors identified that there are some situations that are more complex and stated that they would like support to manage these, including instances involving social media causing in-College issues for students, and they reported that they do not feel comfortable in managing situations that are confounded by mental health difficulties, stating that they are experiencing an increasing number of these. Furthermore, the following quotation represents an instance when the Tutors wanted external advice:

"P4: But then I suppose with like, for instance, reviews for let's say, a student who we'll name VA-

P1: -Right

P4: -and um, how like, her behaviour at home and her behaviour here, um...

P1: They are 2 polar differences yeah

P4: - and then the kind of working together of that might then be a role that an educational psychologist could come in and give strategies so that we could run the same at both"

As the College Tutors have identified, there are times when they would like to access support from external services for the benefit of their students. McCrone et al.'s (2009) research into collaboration between an FE College and a LA, discussed in section 1.4i, proposes that support during transition and a comprehensive package of 14-19 provision has a positive impact on LLDDs. Thus, it could be that involvement from EPs before, during and following the transition of young people into Colleges, along with the College staff, could contribute towards the comprehensive package of 14-19 provision, as well as offering specific support to manage the transition. This point is also raised within the Code of Practice (DfE, 2014) which states that: "Colleges should ensure they have access to external specialist services and expertise. These can include, for example, educational psychologists, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), specialist teachers and support services, supported employment services and therapists. They can be involved at any point for help or advice on the best way to support a student with SEN or a disability. Specialist help should be involved where the student's needs are not being met by the strong, evidence-based support provided by the college" (p. 106). This extract also highlights that EPs are specifically referenced as a Service that can offer support within the FE chapter of the Code of Practice, raising the importance of EPSs needing to establish how they can begin to offer this support, if they do not already.

### **3.3.3 Implications for Buttonsley EPS**

*Research question two: Considering students enrolled on supported learning courses within an FE College: how can EPs and the local FE College begin to develop a relationship within Buttonsley?*

The results of this research suggest that the development of a relationship between EPs and the local College in Buttonsley needs to be carefully planned for and negotiated to meet the needs of the local context. However, in answering the research questions, some 'first steps' may be established.

In consideration of research question two, a number of supportive potential factors for this relationship were extracted, including that there are some issues in the College which may have detrimental effects on LLDDs and that the Tutors themselves want additional support. The findings indicate that there is recognition that EPs have knowledge and functions that is unique to them and valuable to LLDDs, helping to meet students' needs. Furthermore, it has been identified that the legislation reforms (DfE, 2014) will result in EPs providing support to LLDDs, whilst recognising that LLDDs currently get very limited amounts of external support which appear to be ineffective in meeting their needs. Consequently, it can be considered that professionals think there is value to a relationship developing between EPs and the College in Buttonsley.

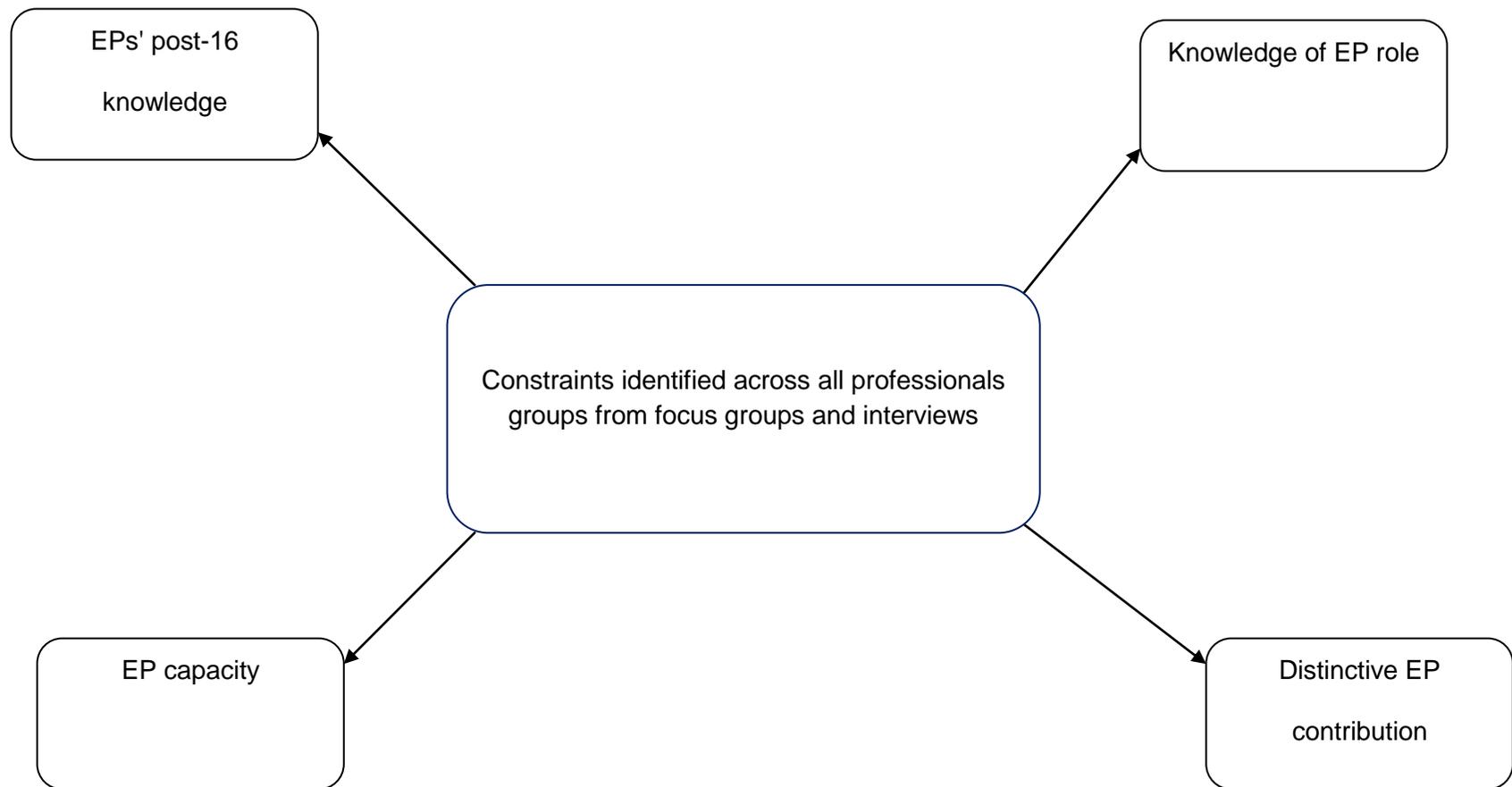


Figure 3.3iii Constraints identified from thematic analysis across all professional groups, from focus groups and interviews

### 3.4.1 Theme 2: Constraints to the EP-College Relationship

A range of restrictions and limitations were identified that may inhibit the development of a relationship between EPs and Colleges from all of the data sets. These included aspects that were related to EPs specifically, such as their potentially limited experience and knowledge of working with LLDDs past the age of 16 or 19, in addition to whether they can offer something which is unique to what is currently available and also whether EPs have the capacity to offer support to post-school providers at present. Furthermore, it was identified that an additional constraint could be that other services, including College staff, may not know what the role of an EP is and what they could offer, which may result in limited (or inappropriate) use of the EP service in the first instance.

#### *Sub-theme 3.4i: EPs' post-16 knowledge*

A variety of professionals discuss that EPs would need overall knowledge of post-school provision and the options that LLDDs have to progress on to, whilst there is acknowledgement that EPs may lack this knowledge currently due to having limited experience with this age range. This was identified by the Managers of the College Tutors, SEN Team and EP Team and by the Connexions Advisors and EPs in the focus group.

College SEN Manager - Interview	<i>"It's having the knowledge of the best support networks, you know, where they can progress to whether it's employment, College, training provider, apprenticeships, whatever it is, it's being able to have that knowledge overall, you know not every detail but being able to point a student in the right direction for them, for their needs"</i>
Educational Psychologists - Focus Group	<i>"P4: I don't do very much work with students above year 9 maybe, or year 10 now and again so my experience of actually working with older people is actually minimal really so you know, I think that's, that would be an</i>

	<i>interesting gap in our experience going into work in Colleges with FE"</i>
Principal Educational Psychologist - Interview	<i>"I'd say we have very little [contact with Colleges] if any at all, to be quite honest. You're talking about this particular service here? Then we have none at all. I'm just trying to think if there would be...occasionally at meetings I meet representatives from the College at some of the strategic meetings that I go to but I wouldn't think that people would have any other contact really"</i>
SEN Team Manager - Interview	<i>"Yeah but I think that's something EPs would have to be on a learning curve for because I don't know how much they are aware of what happens in the Colleges"</i>

*Sub-theme 3.4ii: Knowledge of EP role*

It is acknowledged that LLDDs and College staff may not be aware of the role of the EP and would need to have information about this to decide whether they would like to receive EP support or not. This was identified by the Connexions Manager and the SEN Team Manager.

College Inclusion Manager - Interview	<i>"In terms of College support networks that we know of - none. Whether our students do outside of College and we're not aware of it, that's a different case but we're not aware of any contact [with EPs]"</i>
Connexions Manager - Interview	<i>"Something around marketing the service, might be a gap here, mightn't it? You know marketing your service to an FE student, who is meant to be a bit more independent and a young adult, so making their own decisions rather than it being provided for them, they might seek you out so you may need to market your service."</i>

*Sub-theme 3.4iii: Distinctive EP contribution*

There are a number of functions which have been identified as being offered by alternative professionals to EPs. This may reduce the amount of involvement that EPs would have in a developing relationship with Colleges. This was identified by the PEP, Connexions Manager and SEN Team Manager, and in focus groups with the SEN and Connexions Advisors teams.

<p>Connexions - Focus Group</p>	<p><i>"P5: I mean we offer some of these as well; knowledge of resources and SEN, multi agency working, so we value pupil views, sometimes it's us that bring things up and advocate for them, don't we?"</i></p> <p><i>P2: Yeah definitely</i></p> <p><i>P4: Work to support parents</i></p> <p><i>P2: Yeah, promoting inclusion, information giving. A lot of those as well"</i></p>
<p>Connexions Manager - Interview</p>	<p><i>"I think you find with the supported learning courses, particularly, the College still does maintain that contact with parents. A lot more so than, say, mainstream students. So, say, I'm not too sure exactly what support you [EPs] give to parents at the minute with parents"</i></p>
<p>PEP - Interview</p>	<p><i>"It may be that somebody from the College themselves might do the assessment work and the observation"</i></p>
<p>SEN Team - Focus Group</p>	<p><i>"P2: There are other people that can do that, aren't there? That wouldn't be a key role..."</i></p> <p><i>P3: for an EP? Ok"</i></p>
<p>SEN Team Manager - Interview</p>	<p><i>"Information-giving, I don't think that's a vast thing for Psychologists. Anybody can give information of where to look for things"</i></p>

*Sub-theme 3.4iv: EP capacity*

A range of professionals have identified that EPs can have a limited amount of time, whereas LLDDs may need to be seen very quickly. EPs would like to have the largest possible impact on supporting LLDDs in College, although this would possibly be within a restricted amount of time. Due to this, there may be some functions that EPs can conduct but which will not be a high priority for the College as the time may be utilised in other ways. This was identified by EPs, the SEN and Connexions Advisors' focus groups and by the PEP and SEN Team Manager.

Connexions - Focus Group	<i>"P4: I always had the impression that EPs are obviously in short supply so usually there's a waiting list to see pupils, whereas often issues that are raised in schools or Colleges need to be dealt with quite quickly so I don't know how an EP could respond to a [...]"</i>
Educational Psychologists - Focus Group	<i>"In an ideal world that would be quite a high priority I guess because if you've got limited sessions you'd want to have the biggest impact you can so I suppose training would be very high up there"</i>
PEP - Interview	<i>"One of the issues is capacity because in order to have that happen you've either got to have additional capacity or you've got to stop doing something else in order to develop the work in Colleges so it has to be seen as a priority in some way"</i>
SEN Team - Focus Group	<i>"P1: I think um, I think again it's [research and development] time-consuming and bearing in mind, I think it is important for the EP to keep doing this research and development and that but as for applying it to further education Colleges I think that they could be utilised in better ways and that the research and development should be outside of that box"</i>
SEN Team	<i>"Which is why I said this 'developing a named EP', I shouldn't think there</i>

Manager - Interview	<i>is enough to have 1 EP for 1 College - the size of these Colleges! I think you're going to need maybe a couple at least, rather than just 1!"</i>
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### 3.4.2 Discussion of Theme 2

Generally, the opinions that have been categorized under Theme 2 indicate potential constraints in the development of a relationship between Buttonsley EPS and the local College and these appear to be as follows;

- EPs may have limited knowledge and experience of working with LLDDs past school-age, hence may not have the expertise that is needed to support this group
- Other professionals and LLDDs themselves may not understand the role of the EP, resulting in the inefficient use of the service
- Some of the functions of the EP role may be carried out by other professionals, potentially resulting in a limited role for EPs
- EPs have limited capacity at present and may not be able to meet the needs of LLDDs in Colleges in a time-effective manner

McCrone et al.'s (2009) exploration of good practice for joined-up working between LAs and Colleges identified constraints being those of time, resources and capacity of services. These constraints have been identified on a number of occasions by participants in this study.

A number of professionals stated that some functions of the EP role are carried out by others, such as information giving, work with parents, assessments and observations. It may be pertinent to consider what the distinguishing role of the EP is, and how this might be relevant to work within the post-school sector. As Ashton and Roberts' (2006) research found (in section 1.7), it can be challenging to define the role of the EP as there can be

conflicting views between EPs and their service users as to what they should be doing, in addition to unclear boundaries between their own role and the role of other professionals.

As discussed in section 1.7, Farrell et al.'s (2006) report found that a range of people, from school staff and other professionals that work alongside EPs to parents, believe that an important role for EPs is to offer support to young people with severe, multiple and complex needs. The majority of respondents could name at least one function carried out by EPs that is unique to their role, with the most commonly cited being that of using psychological theories and methods to underpin their work. Despite this, a large number of functions carried out by EPs were considered possible to be carried out by other professionals (p. 32). Hence, a recommendation was made that service users need to be clear about what they require from the involvement of an EP before the contribution begins through negotiation. However, despite this large-scale and comprehensive review of the role of the EP, it neglected to consider their contribution to the post-school sector, exploring only their input to nurseries, primary and secondary schools, along with Pupil Referral Units and special schools. Thus, it is not possible to ascertain whether the same views of the distinctiveness of the EP role could be applied to Colleges. Elson's (2011) research into post-16 provision for students with SEN, as discussed in section 1.4, found that the support for LLDDs with profound and multiple difficulties was inadequate and often meant that this group were failed. Whilst there is no explicit mention of this within the Code of Practice (DfE, 2014), there is acknowledgement that young people with Autism have needs across all of the identified areas of SEN which will need careful consideration and planning to meet their specific needs. As stated in Farrell et al.'s (2006) research, EPs are believed to have an important contribution to supporting students with complex and multiple learning difficulties.

### **3.4.3 Implications for Buttonsley EPS**

*Research question two: Considering students enrolled on supported learning courses within an FE College: how can EPs and the local FE College begin to develop a relationship within Buttonsley?*

Some potential constraints to a relationship between EPs and the College in Buttonsley were identified. This research indicates that the relationship between Buttonsley EPS and the local College may be hindered by the lack of clarity and boundaries of the EP role. It is apparent from research that EPs are viewed as having a potential supportive role to LLDDs in Colleges, hence it may be pertinent to explore what support there is for LLDDs currently in Buttonsley and ensure that careful planning and negotiation between all relevant stakeholders is conducted, ensuring effective multi-agency working. It is proposed that Buttonsley EPS consider how to explain their service to the College, LLDDs and their parents to ensure that their service is used effectively and efficiently. It may be that delivering a training session to these groups on the functions of the EP role, drawing on research which explores the unique role of EPs (Ashton and Roberts, 2006; Cameron, 2006; Farrell et al., 2006) would be an effective precursor to the relationship. Certainly, Guishard's (2000) exploration of joint-working with EPs and an FE College established that: "The unique contribution of applied Psychology, however, is that it introduces the potential to meet individual needs, develop confidence and to provide intellectual support for the work of the staff" (p. 211). This suggests that there is a unique contribution from EPs in this domain that needs to be made explicit.

Additional constraints to this relationship were drawn out, including the acknowledgement that EPs may not currently have the knowledge of the post-16 sector that is needed to support LLDDs. Hence, it may be necessary for Buttonsley EPS to consider whether there is a need for training to skill-up the EPs in the service. On a wider level, it may be that EPs in

Training need to receive input from the Doctorate course at University on how to work in the post-school sector, an element that is recognised as supporting the PSPS in Scotland (Hellier, 2009). This training need was an area identified as a limitation to the relationship between EPs and an FE College in another LA (Mitchell, 1997), as discussed in section 1.8 above. In response to the acknowledgement of the need to develop EPs' knowledge in this area, the BPS is arranging training courses for EPs to attend (BPS, 2014).

A further constraint identified in this research and in Mitchell's (1997) paper was that of 'EP capacity', with some respondents stating that EPs may not have the resource available to undertake this additional work. Therefore, Buttonsley EPS needs to consider how they can meet this increase in work and ensure that there is the resource available prior to the relationship developing.

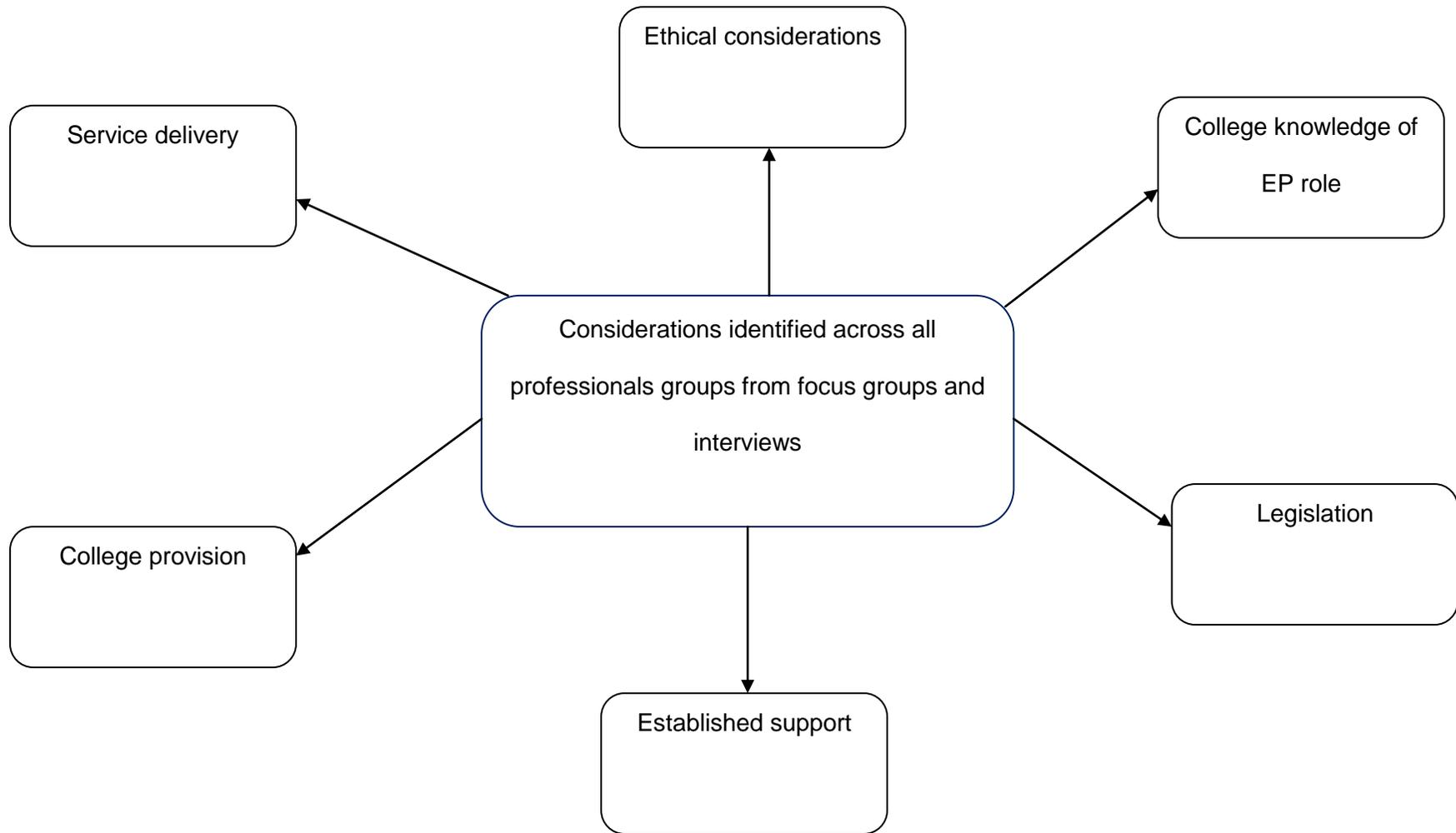


Figure 3.3iv: Considerations identified from thematic analysis across all professionals groups, from focus groups and interviews

### 3.5.1 Theme 3: Considerations Required for the Development of an EP-College Relationship

Across the data sets, an array of aspects to be considered, prior to developing the relationship between Buttonsley EPS and the local FE College, were elicited. These aspects neither hindered nor supported the development of this liaison; nevertheless they include features that need to be considered in order for the partnership to be successful in supporting LLDDs. These considerations include ethical issues and national legislation, through to College-wide matters (including consideration of support already in place) and the nature of the service delivery, down to the more individual level of students' needs.

#### *Sub-theme 3.5i: Service delivery*

Considerations of whether the College would be able to access the EPS as part of a core offer (through 'free' sessions) or whether it would be on a traded basis (with paid-for support) are raised, along with whether the service would offer early intervention, be placed at a systemic level and whether it would be framed in an 'expert' model of service delivery. This consideration was raised in the focus groups with College Tutors, EPs and the SEN Team, and by the SEN Team Manager.

College Tutors - Focus Group	<i>"P4: So we're saying there that we want EPs to kind of step in when things are bad but should we not have them as a kind of training role where they actually come in and say, 'this is how you teach people with supported learning' which is what OfSTED kind of picked up on with us. Maybe that's important to actually come in regularly and say this is what you should do?"</i>
Educational Psychologists - Focus Group	<i>"P2: You see, I was thinking of the systemic work it might be that you'd be better to have more than one EP because you'd have certain members of staff who were working on different systems effectively within the College"</i>

SEN Team - Focus Group	<i>"P3: Not thinking "I know best, therefore..." It's that delicate balance isn't it? Because your ethics might be totally different to someone else's ethics and their views and not saying 'we know best' type of thing"</i>
SEN Team Manager - Interview	<i>"How that develops will depend very much on where does this go - are you getting that as a core or are you buying it as a traded? Because if it's traded, you're putting yourself into the 'sell yourself as something they don't know that they need or want' which is an entirely different thing, from 'we're about to give you the service and it's not going to cost you anything'"</i>

#### *Sub-theme 3.5ii: Ethical considerations*

Issues regarding consent, with relation to the capacity of LLDDs to understand what they might be consenting to and the involvement of their parents in this decision, were discussed. This issue was discussed in all of the data sets.

College Tutors - Focus Group	<i>"P6: I think going back to your point about it being different, the areas of consensual issues that you've found  P5: It's blurred isn't it?  P6: Whereas with a young child, there's no consensual is there? So from that point of view, there are going to be areas which are very grey  P5: And particularly as well, I find that what the young person wants and what the family want often clash so you know, what do you go with?"</i>
College Inclusion Manager - Interview	<i>"P: It's a very tough question actually [consent] because obviously parents or carers, especially any young adults from 16-19 but again they need to know the benefits of it and, sometimes, you can have a battle."</i>
Connexions - Focus Group	<i>"P1: They might not want your support  P2: I was going to say they might not want to engage because they are</i>

	<p><i>adults</i></p> <p><i>P4: Whether you should or shouldn't involve parents is a big issue for post-16</i></p> <p><i>P1: Also, the level of support that they need because they will be at an age when they are starting to become a little bit more independent so it's that plumb line isn't it about what level of support is going to be right"</i></p>
Connexions Manager - Interview	<p><i>"Well where the young person has capacity, I think it should be the young person that gives consent."</i></p>
Educational Psychologists - Focus Group	<p><i>"P1: Yeah, that's the other thing isn't it, whether they're able to give informed consent themselves if they have severe learning difficulties then they might not be able to give informed consent in which case I think you'd be going to the parent or carer for that. But you'd still want to know that they were happy for the work to go ahead"</i></p>
Principal Educational Psychologist - Interview	<p><i>"I think consent will be a big one, is going to be a big one. Because often it won't be the young person who's asking for EP involvement and I wonder who the College personnel would approach to get permission, to get consent, for involving the EP so I think all of that would have to be very carefully resolved before we could offer a service to FE"</i></p>
SEN Team - Focus Group	<p><i>"P2: I think it's perhaps the young person [that should consent], unless they're not able to</i></p> <p><i>P1: Yeah</i></p> <p><i>P3: But when do you define when's not able to?</i></p> <p><i>P2: Exactly, that's the problem isn't it?"</i></p>
SEN Team Manager -	<p><i>"If the child has got mental capacity, then they are entitled and legally entitled to make their own decisions. And what you as an EP may be saying</i></p>

Interview	<i>to support the child could put you in conflict with the parents who, who have different wishes for their children and that could put you in an ethical [...], are you supporting the child or the family?"</i>
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*Sub-theme 3.5iii: College knowledge of EP role*

The College may need to give thought to their understanding of the EP role and to consider how they want to make best use of the service before it begins. This was discussed in the focus group with the College Tutors and was raised by the College and SEN Team Managers.

SEN Team Manager - Interview	<i>"So that can be important because [a relationship between EPs and the College] is going to be something new, the Colleges ought to be finding out how can they best use having an EP there that they've never had before"</i>
College Inclusion Manager - Interview	<i>"P: In terms of College support networks that we know of - none. Whether our students do outside of College and we're not aware of it, that's a different case but we're not aware of any contact."</i>
College Tutors - Focus Group	<i>"P6: Who would? P4: The educational psychologist. Are we on the right track?"</i>

*Sub-theme 3.5iv: Legislation*

Discussions about the legislative changes and that it may take time for the systems to be in place in line with proposals for more support for LLDDs up to 25. There is acknowledgement that legislation changes regularly and that there may be separate changes in Colleges as

opposed to for the school years. Legislation was considered by the SEN Team and College Tutor Managers.

College Inclusion Manager - Interview	<i>"When I started it was focused on the individual's progression and the funding aspects of that were that you would deliver what's best for the learner whereas the last 4 years it's gone back round to qualifications - the learner must achieve this - which has meant we've had to be flexible in terms of, because we know that students have to achieve that for us to get the funding but at the same time we didn't want to take the focus away from their needs but now it's going back round to study programmes where we can design a curriculum to meet the needs of the learners which isn't qualification-led."</i>
SEN Team Manager - Interview	<i>"It will take time to put systems in place, they can't suddenly announce that EPs are now going to work with young adults up to 25 because you don't have the capacity to work with all those up to 25 so there has to be a massive overhaul of how all of it works"</i>

#### *Sub-theme 3.5v: Established support*

This sub-theme captures the contemplation regarding the support that is already in place, from services such as social care, the SEN Team, a counselling service, Connexions and CaMHS. The College itself is discussed in terms of the support it offers and the reputation it has established for itself, which appears to encourage professionals to feel comfortable about LLDDs attending that provision. This was discussed in all data sets.

College Inclusion Manager –	<i>"There's prospects [Connexions] that covers some of these. I mean social services are supposed to be that link"</i>
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Interview	
Connexions - Focus Group	<p><i>"P4: I think SEN Teams within schools sometimes they have like people who sort of specialise with particular special needs. So, not to the same extent of the Psychologists but specialise in working with particular types of pupils, autistic pupils, or [...]"</i></p> <p><i>P5: I mean we offer some of these as well"</i></p>
Connexions Manager - Interview	<p><i>"I think all Colleges have, yeah, some counselling. And they also have recently, because they have changed our role, they also have their some of their own Advice and Guidance workers"</i></p>
Educational Psychologists - Focus Group	<p><i>"P1: I think that perhaps there are people who are doing those kind of roles now who we would be able to support in those roles or that could do that work"</i></p>
Principal Educational Psychologist - Interview	<p><i>"Possibly some of the schools might do, provide some information to Colleges about the young people who are going in I presume. I don't know whether Connexions do, what sort of services they would provide"</i></p>
SEN Team - Focus Group	<p><i>"I mean you hear stories that Buttonsley College has a very good reputation and you have confidence in the fact that although the statement's ending, there's a good link with Connexions and that Buttonsley College gets a good press but is that true of all Colleges"</i></p> <p><i>P3: If you worked in another authority, passing them over from a school to another College, would you have so much confidence in that?"</i></p> <p><i>P2: You do hear it's often said that they wouldn't put up with that at College, they won't cope at College?"</i></p>
SEN Team	<p><i>"Well if they're extreme, there's CaMHS. For the average child who's doing"</i></p>

Manager - Interview	<i>ok, no. For the child who's having difficulties, you've got YOS, you've got Spurgeons, you've got targeted youth support, you've got IYPSS, you've got Positive Activities... you know, but they tend to be people who have had significant difficulty"</i>
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*Sub-theme 3.5vi: College provision*

The College Inclusion Manager emphasized that the current statement of SEN is not applicable to Colleges and discusses what the College provides to meet the needs of LLDDs when they attend the College. This was discussed by the College and Connexions Managers and in the focus group with College Tutors.

College Inclusion Manager - Interview	<i>"The SEN statement is not a legal document when they come to College but our role is basically working with the learner, with parents, carers, with anyone else we know of that's involved with the care of that learner and to meet their needs from a curricular point of view and socially as well."</i>
Connexions Manager - Interview	<i>"The Colleges are very much about the students progressing, uh, and retention now is another biggie."</i>
College Tutors - Focus Group	<p><i>"P4: Well it's everything isn't it? Because we teach them, yeah, so it's 5 days a week, pastoral support and functional skills, vocational, everything</i></p> <p><i>P7: Accommodating them</i></p> <p><i>P2: And in the first term, it's more pastoral care than it is actual subject-based</i></p> <p><i>P6: Yeah</i></p> <p><i>P2: Sorting out practical things from sorting out bus passes to just getting to College isn't it, a lot of the stuff?"</i></p>

	<i>P4: It's also reading through those reports and putting them into profiles to share with the rest of the team."</i>
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### **3.5.2 Discussion of Theme 3**

The sub-themes within Theme 3 propose a number of aspects that need to be given consideration before a relationship between Buttonsley EPS and the local College can begin.

These considerations include the following;

- What the model of service delivery might look like in terms of core versus traded, the level of support offered (from systemic to individual) and whether it is consultative or expert model.
- Ethical issues, including how to elicit consent and ensure that it is fully informed. LLDDs may not have the mental capacity to do so, although they are legally allowed to.
- How the needs of LLDDs are currently met in Colleges and what priorities the College staff have for LLDDs
- The extent of the knowledge that College staff have about the EP role may be limited currently and time may need to be dedicated to ensuring that they can plan for the involvement that is most beneficial to them
- National legislation is changing and it may take a while for systems to meet the government proposals to become established, whilst also recognising that legislation for the post-school sector might be different to school-based legislation
- The services which currently offer support to the Colleges and what functions they provide
- The support that the College provides presently

All of these areas need to be considered by EPs in Buttonsley prior to them developing a relationship with the local College.

With regards to concerns raised about ethical issues and the capacity of LLDDs to give consent, this is an area that is given considerable attention within the Code of Practice (DfE, 2014). It states that: "After compulsory school age (the end of the academic year in which they turn 16) the right to make decisions etc under the Children and Families Act 2014 applies to them directly, rather than to their parents" (p. 115-116). Thus, professionals need to follow this guidance, whilst having regard to the Mental Capacity Act (2005), as referenced in the Code of Practice as follows: "The underlying principle of the Act is to ensure that those who lack capacity are empowered to make as many decisions for themselves as possible and that any decision made or action taken on their behalf is done so in their best interests" (p. 116).

In section 3.5vi, the College Inclusion Manager identified that the College staff have specific targets which are focussed on the retention and progression of students. This is an area that was raised in Mitchell's (1997) research that considered what contribution EPs could make to supporting LLDDs in Colleges. In this research, Mitchell (1997) proposed that EPs can have a systemic role in supporting the development of admissions policies that enhance the appropriate matching of students' needs to courses within the Colleges to increase the amount of courses that are completed. A further role identified in Mitchell's (1997) paper was the advice EPs can offer to College Tutors about the students' individual needs and teaching strategies that support their learning (discussed in section 1.8).

### **3.5.3 Implications for Buttonsley EPS**

*Research question two: Considering students enrolled on supported learning courses within an FE College: how can EPs and the local FE College begin to develop a relationship within Buttonsley?*

As identified in section 3.5iii, College staff may have little or no knowledge of the role of the EP. Previous research has also suggested that EPs and FE Colleges know little about each other's service and that it is this limited knowledge that has resulted in the two working independently of each other, with little crossover. However, it could be beneficial to LLDDs if these services worked collaboratively, as identified in Mitchell's (1997) research:

“Some College staff are unaware of the specialist support services which EPs can offer, and some EPs working primarily or exclusively in schools are unaware of the needs within the FE sector. Yet each could benefit from knowing more about the other” (p. 5, Mitchell, 1997).

Consequently, it could be deduced that the first step towards collaborative working would be increasing the knowledge base of these two services regarding what the other does. This was supported in my research as the College Tutors discussed that they were unaware of what the role of the EP was and of how support from an EP could benefit them or LLDDs. Additionally, the Connexions Manager identified that the EPS needs to market their service more effectively if they are to appeal to LLDDs aged 16-25 who may not be aware of the support EPs could provide. Furthermore, this could link in with the debates that were raised about whether the service delivery would initially be as a traded service or a core service and what the implications of this could be.

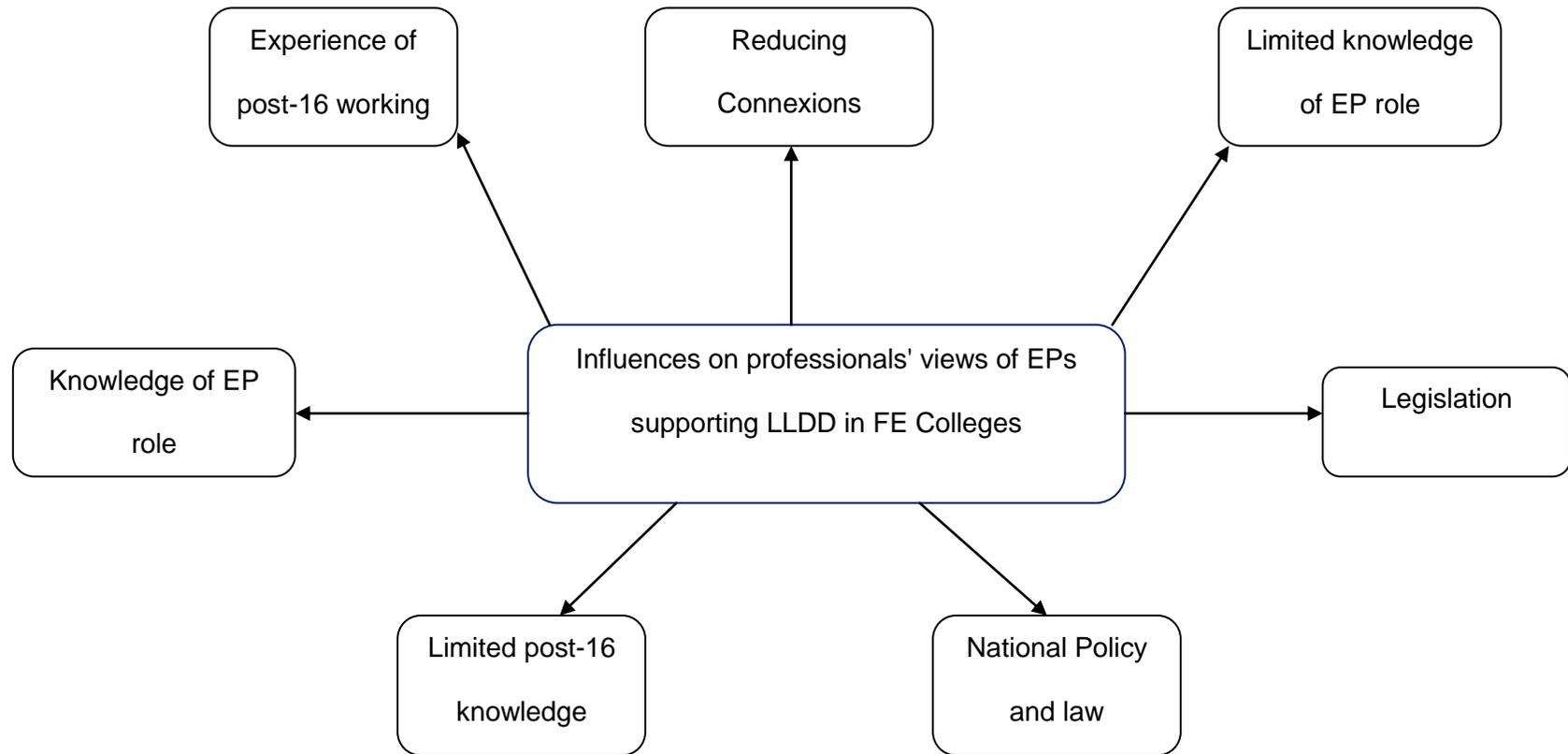


Figure 3.3v: Influences on professionals' views of EPs supporting LLDDs in FE Colleges, taken from thematic analysis of interview and focus groups

### 3.6.1 Theme 4: The Influences Impacting on the Views of Professionals when Considering the Relationship Between EPs and Colleges

The sub-themes that form Theme 4 represent the variety of influences that may be impacting upon the views of the various professionals in this research. These must be acknowledged, in accordance with the social constructionist paradigm, to raise the features that are contributing to the constructions professionals hold about the potential development between EPs and the FE College. Thus, even if these sub-themes were identified in only one data set, they are presented here.

#### *Sub-theme 3.6i: Experience of post-16 working*

The Connexions Service has a lot of contact with the post-16 sector and with the FE College. The advisors have LLDDs on their caseload that they monitor and offer support to when needed. In addition to Connexions, the College Tutors and College Inclusion Manager report that they have extensive experience of working with LLDDs, which may impact upon the views they have given.

Connexions - Focus Group	<i>"P1: Quite a lot [of contact with the College], in the sense that, I telephone them quite often to chase College applications, I have supported students with College interviews, I have worked probably quite closely this year, compared to other years, with the College inclusion team as well"</i>
Connexions Manager - Interview	<i>"We would work quite often with the College, up until this past year we have had a caseload allocated to the College so we've actually covered the supported learning department and we still actually take referrals from any LDD mainstream students who still need a guidance service"</i>

*Sub-theme 3.6ii: Reducing Connexions service*

There has been a decrease in the funding for the Connexions Service, which has resulted in a reduction of their role. Thus, there are functions they could carry out previously to support LLDDs in College that they are now unable to do.

Connexions - Focus Group	"P4: No, because that's been axed  P5: Oh right. Oh I see, because it's been pulled back?  P4: So no one actually checks whether they're actually getting the support that's actually recommended"
Connexions Manager - Interview	"We have had a reduction due to staffing reductions"

*Sub-theme 3.6iii: Limited knowledge of EP role*

Professionals identify that they are unsure of what the role of an EP consists of. Whilst the SEN Team staff acknowledge that they have a lot of contact with EPs, it emerges that they do not understand the full extent of the EP role. This was raised in both data sets from the College and Connexions staff, as well as in the SEN Manager's interview.

Connexions - Focus Group	"P5: I feel like I don't really know everything that an EP offers, or can do, or the role really. I've only come in to contact with them in a review, uh [...] so I'm not sure what work they actually can do."
Connexions Manager - Interview	"Well, bearing in mind, I'm not familiar with exactly what the relationship is now [between EPs and College]"
SEN Team	"As you said, it's counsellors, but they're not necessarily trained"

Manager Interview	- <i>Psychologists. Do they need them? Is a counsellor enough? What is the difference? I don't know. More questions, questions in that respect but why Psychologists rather than trained counsellors? What is it that a Psychologist could offer that a trained counsellor can't?"</i>
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*Sub-theme 3.6iv: Legislation*

Legislation changes may be impacting on some of the presented views of professionals in this research as they are aware that there is a national incentive to increase the support for LLDDs up to 25. Hence, this may be shaping and influencing the views they hold. This was raised in the interviews with the Connexions and College Managers and in the focus group with EPs.

Connexions Manager - Interview	- <i>"If an EP has been involved we may refer to it but I think formalising that in terms of more a multi-agency approach, so all those interested parties would actually be involved with that Education, Health and Care Plan."</i>
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*Sub-theme 3.6v: National policy and law*

The SEN Team discussed legal precedents on a number of occasions, possibly because their role is influenced by official policies, such as the legal age of consent (as seen in the quotation below).

SEN Team Focus Group	- <i>"P3: it doesn't matter what their learning disabilities lie, when they come to 16 legally, they're allowed to smoke aren't they and we couldn't stop them doing that. At 18, they can go to the pub, you wouldn't say to a person "oh legally, you're not allowed in the pub because you've got a learning disability" or "you're not allowed to make that decision". Could you take that</i>
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	<i>same approach? Legally, if they're the age of consent and so forth, that should be their choice"</i>
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*Sub-theme 3.6vi: Limited post-16 knowledge*

The SEN Team acknowledge that their role does not extend past school-age presently, resulting in limited knowledge about what happens to LLDDs in Colleges. This was present in both data sets from the SEN Team staff and EPs and PEP.

SEN Team - Focus Group	<i>"P3: Our difficulty to some extent is that we don't really know what goes on beyond [schools] so it's difficult to make a judgement about how effective some, I mean you hear stories that Buttonsley College has a very good reputation and you have confidence in the fact that although the statement's ending, there's a good link with Connexions and that Buttonsley College gets a good press but is that true of all Colleges?"</i>
SEN Team Manager - Interview	<i>"I don't know enough about what goes on in Colleges, quite honestly, so I don't know. But it's very interesting! Because you never, I'd never questioned it, what happens when they leave school. Never had to because I've never been involved with them once they leave school part of the world"</i>
PEP Interview	<i>"I'd say we have very little if any at all, to be quite honest. You're talking about this particular service here? Then we have none at all."</i>
EP - Focus Group	<i>"P1: I don't have any P2: None P3: None P4: No I don't have any either, no [contact with FE Colleges]"</i>

*Sub-theme 3.6vii: Knowledge of EP role*

Whilst it has previously emerged that there may be limited knowledge of the EP role, which could be affecting the views professionals present, it also emerged that specific knowledge of the EP role may impact upon those views. Hence, in the extract below, it is clear that the SEN Team do have knowledge of the role of the EP and that their contact with EPs may have some bearing on the opinions that they reflect.

SEN Team - Focus Group	<p><i>"P3: I suppose it depends what you mean by contact, as you said. Obviously we're getting contact every day through doing draft statements and obviously that's a contact because we're reading your reports, or the EP reports and we do have...</i></p> <p><i>P1 and P2: Phones. Yeah.</i></p> <p><i>P3: We have a lot of contact through phones and obviously through annual reviews and just through general chit-chat and obviously we have the EP/AMO meetings termly which are important. It would be hard to specify actual percentage but I think that's an important area isn't it, the contact we do have</i></p> <p><i>P2: We could certainly say that your work affects us every day"</i></p>
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**3.6.2 Discussion of Theme 4**

The sub-themes that form Theme 4 of these results reflect that there are a range of factors that have contributed to the views that professionals hold about this topic. By acknowledging these influences, it fits with the social constructionism paradigm which states that:

"Social constructionism insists that we take a critical stance toward our taken-for-granted ways of understanding the world, including ourselves. It invites us to be critical of the idea that our observations of the world unproblematically yield its nature

to us, to challenge the view that conventional knowledge is based upon objective, unbiased observation of the world." (Burr, 2004, p. 3.)

The influences of the views of the professionals in this results section include the following:

- Their involvement with the post-school sector resulting in an awareness of the needs of LLDDs and College staff
- Reductions to the Connexions service mean that functions that were previously carried out by them can no longer be
- Some professionals recognise that they do not have an extensive understanding of what the role of the EP is
- Some professionals have been influenced by the upcoming changes to SEND Legislation (DfE, 2014), as well as established national and legal policies
- Some professionals concede that their role typically ends when a young person leaves school, meaning that they do not have knowledge about Colleges and what occurs within the post-school sector
- The SEN Team state that they have a lot of contact with EPs and this knowledge of the areas of work that overlap between the two teams may have influenced their opinions about what EPs can, or cannot, offer to the post-school sector

Within this theme, two sets of polar constructs became apparent; those of experience of post-16 working to limited post-16 knowledge and knowledge of the EP role to limited knowledge of the EP role. Whilst acknowledging that all professionals involved in this study would be positioned somewhere along these linear polarities, it is pertinent to consider the impact upon their views, according to which side they are closest to. When considering the SEN Team, for example, they state they have a lot of contact with EPs and consider themselves to hold knowledge of the EP role. Thus, they are positioned towards the 'Knowledge of EP role' end of the construct. However, the SEN Team work in the statutory

assessment domain, with ensuing reviews, and this is where their work with EPs overlaps. It has been noted in prior research (Farrell et al., 2006; Ashton and Roberts, 2006) that EPs spend a large amount of their time engaged in work related to statutory assessments, although a considerable amount of their functions outside of this are considered to be exceptionally valuable, for example therapeutic work (Cameron, 2006). Whilst the SEN Team consider themselves to understand the role of the EP, their views are shaped by the role that EPs have within the statutory assessment process, which may restrict their view on how EPs can offer support to LLDDs. Conversely, towards the opposite end of this polarity lie the Connexions and College staff who admit that they have little understanding or experience of the role of EPs. Hence, their views may be emerging from the information provided to them in the leaflet and in the sorting task about what EPs can do.

The second polarity that was found in this theme, that of experience of post-16 working to limited post-16 knowledge, has implications on the need to "challenge the view that conventional knowledge is based upon objective, unbiased observation of the world" (Burr, 2004, p.3). As EPs and the SEN Team recognise they have limited knowledge of post-16 workers, this may have impacted their views on what support could be offered. However, the Connexions service and College professionals are positioned towards the opposite end of the spectrum as they have awareness of what the situation is currently like for LLDDs, in addition to what needs they have that EPs may be able to offer.

By bringing these influences to the surface, the intention is to recognise that the views provided have been done so in a complex framework. Whilst aligning with the social constructionist paradigm, this element is also crucial to an effective case study. As stated by Flyvbjerg (2006);

"Case studies often contain a substantial element of narrative. Good narratives typically approach the complexities and contradictions of real life. Accordingly, such

narratives may be difficult or impossible to summarize into neat scientific formulae, general propositions, and theories. This tends to be seen by critics of the case study as a drawback. To the case study researcher, however, a particularly “thick” and hard-to-summarize narrative is not a problem. Rather, it is often a sign that the study has uncovered a particularly rich problematic. The question, therefore, is whether the summarizing and generalization, which the critics see as an ideal, is always desirable" (p. 237).

Thus, by recognising that the views presented in this research were influenced by a variety of factors, including redundancies, upcoming legislative changes and national policy and law in addition to the polarities discussed above, it is apparent that the milieu surrounding the potential relationship between EPs and the FE College in Buttonsley is a multifaceted one. It is proposed that the next steps to be taken by Buttonsley EPS in establishing this relationship are cautious ones, with careful exploration of the factors discussed in this research and consideration given to the influences on the views presented.

## CHAPTER FOUR:

### REFLECTIONS

#### 4.1 Limitations: Case Study Design

This research is framed within a case study design frame; exploring one regional area in terms of the relationship between an EPS and an FE College. The design was selected in this instance, as Yin (2009) states that: "The case-study is preferred in examining contemporary events, but when the relevant behaviours cannot be manipulated" (p. 11). Evidently, Buttonsley EPS was not in a position to alter their behaviour from not having an established relationship with the local FE College to having a recognized one in the short period of time available for this research, hence the intention of this research was to explore the 'contemporary events' prior to there, potentially, being a change in this relationship.

It is acknowledged that case-studies can be the subject of criticism from researchers (Thomas, 2009) for reasons such as: they comprise of limited rigour, may be subject to bias and can lack clear definition (Yin, 2009). Although it has been proposed that case-studies may lack definition, this may be perceived as an asset, in that case-studies "are good for uniqueness" (Thomas, 2011, p. 19) and the circumstances surrounding this particular instance are unique. This research considered Yin's (2003) 5 criteria for a case study and has discussed how they were met in section 2.3.

A further common criticism of case study designs is the belief that they cannot add to scientific knowledge because findings with this research frame cannot be generalised to situations other than the specific case that was studied (Flybvjerg, 2006). However, this is disputed as follows;

"One can often generalize on the basis of a single case, and the case study may be central to scientific development via generalization as supplement or alternative to other methods. But formal generalization is overvalued as a source of scientific

development, whereas “the force of example” is underestimated" (p. 228, Flybvjerg, 2006).

It is intended that the results from this research will contribute to understanding the contribution that EPs can offer to supporting students past school-leaving age, supported by current Government proposals to provide more comprehensive and continued support for LLDDs up to the age of 25 (Children and Families Bill, 2013; Code of Practice, DfE, 2014). It is acknowledged, however, that EPSs nationally have different service structures and models of service delivery, whilst also recognizing that there are some EPSs that offer support to post-school students or to FE Colleges already. Thus, implications for practice are only applicable to Buttonsley EPS.

Returning to Thomas' (2009) criticism that case studies have limited rigour, when considered through a social constructionist paradigm, reliability and validity are not considered essential markers of eminence, as reasoned by Burr (2003):

"Social constructionist research is not about identifying objective facts or making truth claims. There can be no final description of the world, and reality may be inaccessible or inseparable from our discourse about it; all knowledge is provisional and contestable, and accounts are local and historically/culturally specific. The concepts of reliability and validity, as they are normally understood, are therefore inappropriate for judging the quality of social constructionist work" (p. 158).

Therefore, limitations arising from a positivist paradigm cannot be applied to this research, although this presents a problem with justifying the analysis. However, attempts to achieve this have been made using criteria set out by Taylor (2001) who proposes that it is essential to include comprehensive and exhaustive information about how the analysis was conducted, which is set out in thorough detail in section 2.6 of this study. Additionally, Wood and Kroger (2000) propose that a full example of the analysis should be provided so that

readers can follow the process for themselves as a way of improving the rigour of a study, and this is included in Appendix 16.

A final limitation of the case study design in this research is as follows;

"When the case study is carried out by an active participant (in a social group or an organisation, for example), ethical issues may arise, and there may be practical difficulties in combining the sometimes conflicting roles of team member and researcher" (p. 73, Hakim, 2000).

In this instance, the researcher was also a member of the EPS. This caused some confusion for participants, as many times when referring to EPs, they used the word 'you', perhaps illustrating their awareness of the researcher's position as an EP. This could have an impact on the information that was shared, with an awareness of historical relationships between teams, such as the SEN Team who have had ongoing involvement with the EPS and with whom the researcher works on a regular basis. Alternatively, the Connexions Service and the FE College Tutors were unfamiliar with EPs generally and at times asked specific questions about the role, perhaps affecting the responses that were given..

#### **4.1i Limitations: Data Analysis**

Thematic Analysis was used to analyse the data from the interviews and focus groups and it is acknowledged that researcher prior experience and knowledge of research can result in bias (Braun and Clarke, 2006). In this instance, the researcher was working as an EP within Buttonsley, which may have influenced the responses from the participants as well as the way in which the data was analysed. As the researcher had prior experience of working with the Connexions service to support LLDDs in College, it is possible that the previous experiences may have biased that analysis. To reduce the potential of this bias, a co-analysers was used to verify initial codes, sub-themes and themes across half of the data set and reflection upon the remaining half took place following the co-analysis. Furthermore, the

use of multiple sources of participants offers a triangulation of views. However, it is recognised that a co-researcher for the entire study could have limited researcher bias in the analysis further, although time did not permit this. Alternatively, a programme such as NVivo could have reduced researcher bias, but the researcher believed it may have missed important subtle points related to the complexity of views presented and would not have permitted the researcher to have the depth of knowledge from analysing the data independently.

The method of gathering the data for analysis was through interviews and focus groups. A criticism of this method is as follows;

"Conducting interviews is a complex, labour-intensive and uncertain business, fraught with tricky issues that social scientific researchers, and particularly psychologists, are often ill-equipped to address" (Banister et al., 1994, p.49).

Banister et al. (1994) argue that interviews require an element of detachment between the researcher and participants, which goes against the training that Psychologists receive to form relationships during personal contact with people.

#### **4.1ii General Limitations**

One limitation of this research was that participants were not offered the opportunity to explore the data analysis and give their views on it, as recommended by Pring (2003). Unfortunately, this was not possible due to time constraints as a large amount of data was gathered for this research and the generation of new data (Bloor, 1997; Richards, 2009) would have made further analysis unmanageable. However, the researcher would have liked to have held feedback groups as they have other recognised benefits, such as helping gain access, which may have been useful for Buttonsley EPS in establishing a relationship, and as a courtesy to the participants (Bloor, 1997).

A further criticism of this research is that the interviews and focus groups were audio-recorded and transcribed, resulting in some 'missing' data, particularly from the sorting task. Had these interactions been filmed, it may have been clearer to ascertain where the functions were placed in terms of priority. However, as the professional groups were small (with only three members taking part in the SEN Team focus group), it was decided that any potential barriers to inclusion should be reduced, and filming has been found to provide anxiety amongst participants and lower volunteer rates (Banks, 2007). Despite this decision, it is acknowledged that:

"There cannot be a *perfect* transcription of a tape-recording. Everything depends upon what you are trying to do in the analysis, as well as upon practical considerations involving time and resources" (Silverman, 1993, p. 124).

Thus, to reduce any negative impact on the findings, the researcher followed the steps proposed by Bloor et al. (2001) of: transcribing all of the speech that was recorded, not 'tidying up' speech but transcribing pauses and fillers as well as noting alternative oral communication (such as laughter) and to identify the speaker wherever possible. Bloor et al. (2001) also recommend considering the context of the data extracts that are presented and this was done when choosing which extracts to select to illustrate the sub-themes in chapter 3, choosing the ones which provided the most amount of context as well as selecting more than one to represent each sub-theme.

This researcher has a dedication to eliciting the views of young people and their parents / carers, although this was not done in this research. As this focus of this study was on upcoming SEND reforms, it was decided that professionals' views would be most useful in extracting an overview of how EPs and College might work together. However, further research should strive to include the views of LLDDs and their families regarding the involvement of EPs to ensure that their needs are met.

A final limitation regards the position of the researcher. Reflexivity was employed throughout this research to ensure that ethical issues were reduced and appropriately managed. This included the process of the application for ethical review (see Appendix 18) before the research began to ensure that ethical considerations were at the forefront. However, the pilot study could have been analysed and written as a report to practise the analysis to further reflect upon the researcher's positionality.

#### **4.2 Value of the Research**

The value of this research is to provide Buttonsley EPS with a representation of how professionals believe they could extend their service to supporting LLDDs accessing supported learning courses within the local College. This focus is related to the SEND reforms (DfE, 2014) which are due to commence in September 2014. Thus, the next steps for Buttonsley EPS have been proposed as:

- The need to explain the functions of EPs in Buttonsley to the College staff, their partners, LLDDs and their families to ensure that the service is used effectively and efficiently
- A relationship may begin by offering consultation sessions to the College for the Tutors to discuss their concerns about meeting the needs of LLDDs, whilst also offering training
- High priority was given to having a named link EP, whilst EP resource was noted as a potential constraint - thus, Buttonsley EPS need to consider the model of service delivery they will employ to ensure they have the resource available to meet the College's needs prior to initiating a relationship

The findings of this research have been presented to Buttonsley EPS in a team meeting; please see Appendix 19 for the PowerPoint slides and notes used during this presentation.

Whilst this is specific only to Buttonsley EPS, the case study design is also a strength of this research, as proposed by Flybvjerj (2006);

"Social science has not succeeded in producing general, context-independent theory and, thus, has in the final instance nothing else to offer than concrete, context-dependent knowledge. And the case study is especially well suited to produce this knowledge", (p. 223).

Hence, this research can also be considered to provide up-to-date 'concrete, context-dependent knowledge' on the upcoming SEND reforms and Government legislation (DfE, 2014), in addition to proposing next steps for Buttonsley EPS.

#### **4.3 Future Research**

Future research that explores the contribution of EPs to supporting LLDDs and FE Colleges could seek the views of LLDDs and their parents or carers to ensure their needs are being met. Additionally, as the special school approached for this study declined to take part, upcoming studies could seek to capture the views of staff who prepare students with SEND to make the transition into College.

Students with SEBD have been identified as having significant difficulties in succeeding at College and further exploration is needed to consider whether this group would benefit from the support of EPs. An alternative perspective of exploring the success of LLDDs would also offer potential guidance for services who are considering how to extend their service to support young adults with LDDs up to the age of 25. Furthermore, a review of how the relationship in Buttonsley has developed in the future as a result of the SEND reforms would allow a comparison of whether professionals believe the relationship is effective and meets the views they proposed in this research.

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## Appendix 1: Summary of relevant legislation and related policies

This research is focused on exploring how Educational Psychology Services (EPSs) in England could extend their support, in line with current Government proposals, to work with LLDDs up to the age of 25, as it is currently offered up to the age of 19. There has been a great deal of national legislation and Government policies that have had implications on this area and these are presented together and summarised in Table 6.1 below;

Legislation	Impact
The Warnock Report (1978)	Replaced the term 'educationally sub-normal' with 'learning difficulties' and stated that LLDDs should be assessed two years before they leave school to consider their future prospects. It also stated that they should be allowed to stay in school past the statutory leaving age and should be supported to access courses of further education
The Education Reform Act (1988)	Established a legal responsibility for LAs to make educational provision for LLDDs after they turn 16, upon request
The Further and Higher Education Act (1992)	Focussed on giving particular responsibilities to both LAs and the Further Education Funding Councils for LLDDs
The Charter for Further Education (DfE, 1993)	Further reiterated the entitlement of all young people to receive education, post-16
The Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (DfE, 1994)	Mandated that all professionals who are involved in educational provision for young people past the age of 16 should be involved in the transition planning process
Disability Discrimination Act	Recommended that each FE College must produce a

(1995)	statement detailing the facilities and services on offer to meet the needs of LLDDs
Inclusive Learning (1996)	The report by the Learning Difficulties and / or Disabilities Committee proposed radical changes to the FE system, involving the concept of 'inclusive learning'. This was described as: "a move away from labelling the student towards creating the appropriate educational environment; to an emphasis on understanding better how people learn, so that they can better be helped to learn; and seeing people with disabilities and / or learning difficulties, first and foremost, as learners" (p. 191, Tomlinson (1997)).
Excellence for all Children (DfEE, 1997)	It proposed that LAs and schools need to work collaboratively with FE Colleges to support LLDDs in moving on to further or higher education. It also proposed that the first annual review of the Statement of SEN after a child's 14 <sup>th</sup> birthday should be used to plan the post-school transition
Learning and Skills Act (2000)	Enforced the requirement of LAs to be responsible for the completion of Learning Difficulty Assessments for young people leaving compulsory school and going to training or further education. Having a Section 139a assessment from this act renders the LA responsible for education and training needs for LLDDs past the age of 16, sometimes up to the age of 25
Special Educational Needs:	The Statement of SEN, the Transition Plan and all

Code of Practice (DfES, 2001)	supporting documents should be forwarded to the post-16 provision and a representative from the designated provision should be invited to attend the final Annual Review of the pupil before they leave school
Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act (2009)	Section 41 of this Act sets out that LAs are responsible for providing suitable education and training provision for LLDDs post-16. Where this is unavailable within their LA, a residential specialist College will be considered.
The Equality Act (2010)	This Act replaced most of the existing legislation from the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) and summarised that 'reasonable adjustments' should be made by education providers to promote the inclusion of LLDDs
Support and Aspiration: A New Approach to SEND(2011)	This set out proposals for young people who have a Statement of SEN or a Learning Difficulty Assessment to have a single Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) by 2014. This will set out their needs and will be a legal document until they reach the age of 25.
Children and Families Bill (2013) and SEND Code of Practice (2014)	This Bill, and following Code of Practice, enforced some proposals from the SEN and Disability Green Paper (2011) including the replacement of statements for SEN with a single assessment, EHCPs, and enforced the extension of support services to work with LLDDs up to the age of 25

*Table 6.1: Summary of national policy affecting LLDDs*

## Appendix 2: Leaflet on the role of EPs

Level	Consultation	Assessment	Intervention	Training	Research
Child and family	Individual discussions Contributions to Individual Education Plans Home visits Parents meetings Review meetings, as appropriate	Overall assessment in context Standardized assessment instruments Identifying special needs	Behaviour management programmes Individual and family therapy Working with small groups (e.g. self-harm, social skills, anger management)	Talks to groups of children (e.g. anti-bullying groups) Parenting skills	Single case studies Interactive video research with families
School/ establishment	Joint working with staff Advice on programmes for children and young people Contribution to strategic planning Policy advice for educational establishments, children's homes Review meetings, as appropriate	Contribution to school assessment policy and procedure	Contribution to whole-establishment interventions (e.g. anti-bullying programmes, playground behaviour, discipline, raising achievement) Contribution to special exam arrangements Contribution to curricular innovation/initiatives Joint working with class/subject teacher/LST Supporting inclusion Supporting special college placements	Staff training Disseminating evidence-based practice	Design, implementation and evaluation of action research in single establishments and groups of schools
Education Authority/ Council	Contribution to strategic planning	Contribution to authority assessment policy and procedure Best Value reviews	Contribution to establishing authority-wide interventions (e.g. anti-bullying initiatives, alternatives to exclusion, promoting social inclusion, resource allocation)	Authority-wide training in all areas relevant to psychology Input to multi-disciplinary conferences	Design, implementation and evaluation of authority-wide action research (e.g. early intervention, raising achievement) Informing evidence based policy and practice

*Reproduced from: Frederickson et al. (2008).* NB: Other functions of Educational Psychologists may be carried out at a local level, as well as in other establishments within community settings, e.g. child development centres, family centres, health settings.

### Appendix 3: Functions of the EP role

<p><b>Advice giving:</b> providing advice, suggesting strategies to cope, guidance and direction, being given strategies for working with individual young people</p>	<p><b>Direct work with students - Individual Assessment:</b> observing individuals, assessment</p>	<p><b>Having a named link EP:</b> regular 1-1 contact, building up a relationship with one person, one E.P. developing knowledge of the College</p>
<p><b>“Expert” role:</b> knowledge and skills held uniquely by Educational Psychologists</p>	<p><b>Working with parents</b></p>	<p><b>Knowledge of Psychology</b></p>
<p><b>Multi-agency work</b></p>	<p><b>Familiarity with educational organisations (E.G. schools, Special Schools, FE Colleges)</b></p>	<p><b>Knowledge of resources and SEN</b></p>
<p><b>Providing an extra perspective:</b> help to view things differently, challenging assumptions, bring a different perspective to the understanding of ‘problems’</p>	<p><b>Parents/ FE College/School/EP partnership:</b> links between these to assist effective support for the young person</p>	<p><b>Working with school and FE College staff:</b> this knowledge and experience can assist with a smooth transition, established relationships can help with advice-seeking</p>
<p><b>Knowledge of good practice elsewhere</b></p>	<p><b>Flexibility</b></p>	<p><b>Valuing pupils’ views</b></p>
<p><b>Direct work with students - Individual intervention:</b> e.g. Therapeutic intervention</p>	<p><b>Training:</b> On specific conditions, systems, Psychology, problem-solving models, etc.</p>	<p><b>Facilitating collaboration:</b> between professionals, families and young people</p>
<p><b>Information giving</b></p>	<p><b>Strategic role in LEA</b></p>	<p><b>Promoting inclusion</b></p>
<p><b>Consultation (talking through a problem):</b> A process through which concerns are raised and discussed - stakeholders work together to produce solutions.</p>	<p><b>Systemic approach:</b> exploring the situation as a whole; supporting changes across and within an organisation</p>	<p><b>Research and development:</b> e.g. project work, applying research findings to situations</p>

**Critical incident work:**

Offering tailored support to schools who have suffered a major event, including: • advice on appropriate types of support, • guidance on managing whole-school support, • medium term follow-up support to pupils and families, • advice to schools on assessing longer-term needs and referral to other agencies. Major events are described as; • arising with/without warning, • causes or threatens death, injury or serious disruption to normal life, • affects more people than can be dealt with under normal conditions, • requires special mobilisation and organisation of resources

*Taken from Ashton and Roberts (2006)*

## Appendix 4: Semi-structured interview questions

Questions for focus group

*The following questions are being asked to four different professional groups. The questions are all the same to ensure consistency. For this reason, please feel free to respond with “I don’t know” to questions which you think do not draw upon your professional bearings, although please try to explain why this is the case.*

1. How much contact do you currently have with Educational Psychologists (EPs)? What is the focus of that work?
2. How much contact do you currently have with Further Education (FE) Colleges? What is the focus of that work?
3. What is your role, more generally, with supporting students with Statements of SEN post-16?
4. For the next few questions, I would like you to draw on your knowledge and experience of working with pupils with Statements for SEN within MLD and SLD schools that progress on to a local FE College. I would like you to consider the support they receive in school and what support you think they would need in their College placements to encourage progression in their learning, as considered in transition planning.

Here are 20 functions of the EP role. As a group, please sort them into an order of priority with relevance to supporting students with Special Educational Needs on supported learning courses in an FE College, from the highest priority, down to the lowest priority. It is possible to have more than one function in a position, for example you may choose 3 functions as equally important. Furthermore, you may choose to put some functions in the category of ‘not relevant to FE College support’.

Supported learning courses are described as: “a number of innovative courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, designed specifically to encourage independence and build confidence” (local College prospectus). Generally, they are for students who experience Moderate to Severe Learning Difficulties. You will have 5 minutes to do this.

5. Could you please explain why you chose these 3 functions to be at the top?

6. What made you decide that 'these' functions would be in the middle?
7. How come you decided that these 3 functions are the least important?
8. You've classed these functions as not relevant to FE Colleges – could you explain why?
9. Currently, are you aware of any other Services or agencies that provide any of these functions? If so, which Services provide which function?
10. Are there any functions that are met by other Services at the moment, which you think could be met more effectively by EPs?
11. As a group, please discuss whether there are any other functions that you think EPs could carry out to support students with Special Educational Needs within an FE College? If so, where would they be positioned in terms of importance? Why?
12. What are the ethical issues and potential challenges that EPs could face when working with young adults?
13. Who do you think should give consent for the involvement of an EP when involving a young adult in an FE College?
14. What changes, if any, would you like to see made to the current arrangements for supporting pupils with Statements for SEN after they leave school?
15. Do you have any other thoughts or comments that you would like to share?

## Questions for Interview with Managers

*The following questions are being asked to four different professional groups. The questions are all the same to ensure consistency. For this reason, please feel free to respond with “I don’t know” to questions which you think do not draw upon your professional bearings, although please try to explain why this is the case.*

1. How much contact do you currently have with Educational Psychologists (EPs)? What is the focus of that work?
2. How much contact do you currently have with FE Colleges? What is the focus of that work?
3. What is the role of this service, more generally, with supporting students with Statements of SEN post-16?
4. For the next few questions, I would like you to draw on your knowledge and experience of working with pupils with Statements for SEN within MLD and SLD schools that progress on to a local FE College. I would like you to consider the support they receive in school and what support you think they would need in their College placements to encourage progression in their learning, as considered in transition planning.

Here are 20 functions of the EP role. Please sort them into an order of priority with relevance to supporting students with Special Educational Needs on supported learning courses in an FE College, from the most important, down to the least important. It is possible to have more than one function in a position, for example you may choose 3 functions as equally important. Furthermore, you may choose to put some functions in the category of ‘not relevant to FE College support’.

Supported learning courses are described as: “a number of innovative courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, designed specifically to encourage independence and build confidence” (local College prospectus). Generally, they are for students who experience Moderate to Severe Learning Difficulties.

You will have 10 minutes to do this. Please share your thinking out loud as you do so.

5. Could you please explain why you chose these 3 functions to be at the top?
6. What made you decide that ‘these’ functions would be in the middle?

7. How come you decided that these 3 functions are the least important?
8. You've classed these functions as not relevant to FE Colleges – could you explain why?
9. Currently, are you aware of any other services or agencies that could provide any of these functions? If so, which services provide which function?
10. Are there any other functions that you think EPs could carry out to support students with Special Educational Needs within an FE College? If so, where would they be positioned in terms of importance? Why?
11. What are the ethical issues and potential challenges that EPs could face when working with young adults?
12. Who do you think should give consent for the involvement of an EP when involving a young adult in an FE College?
13. How do you see the relationship between FE Colleges and EPs changing over the next 5 years?
14. What changes, if any, would you like to see made to the current arrangements for supporting pupils with Statements for SEN after they leave school?
15. Do you have any other thoughts or comments that you would like to share?

## **Appendix 5: Letter to heads of service**

Dear xxxxx,

Please allow me to introduce myself to you. I am a Doctoral researcher with the University of Birmingham and currently work as a Trainee Educational Psychologist with Buttonsley's Educational Psychology Service. As a part of my course requirements, it is necessary to undertake a research project in the form of a Thesis. For this, I would like to request the involvement of yourself and members of your team. The working title of my research is: "Professionals' Views on the Contribution of Educational Psychologists to continuing to support pupils on Supported Learning Courses in a Further Education (FE) College" and I would like to hold a focus group with members of your team who are willing to take part, as well as holding an interview with you to discuss this topic. Please see the enclosed information sheet for more detail on the research and what it will entail.

The interview and focus group will each take between 40 and 60 minutes to complete and can be held at any time and location to suit yourself and the staff willing to be involved. If you are happy for me to make contact with members of your team to invite them to take part in this study, please respond to this request with their email address in one of the following ways:

Telephone: 01xxx - xxxxxx

Email:

Letter: xxxxxxxxxx

Whilst there is no obligation for yourself or your team to take part in this research, I may ask for your reasons for declining if you choose not to so that I may make appropriate changes to the research if necessary.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter,

Yours sincerely,

Eleanor Clark

Doctoral Researcher and Trainee Educational Psychologist

## **Appendix 6: Information sheet**

Professionals' Views on the Contribution of Educational Psychologists to continuing to support pupils on Supported Learning Courses in a Further Education (FE) College

This research is being done as a doctoral research project at the School of Education within the University of Birmingham. It is being supervised by xxxx. This information sheet will describe the project.

### **Overview:**

I will explore the constructs that professional groups hold regarding the contribution that Educational Psychology could have in supporting pupils and staff within FE Colleges. This derives from the current Government initiative to extend the involvement of professionals with young people with Special Educational Needs up to the age of 25, as discussed in the Green Paper "Support and Aspiration: A New Approach to Special Educational needs and Disability. Focus groups will be held with a range of professional groups. It is hoped that 3-10 people will take part in each focus group, lasting for between 40-60 minutes.

Each focus group will explore what each group believes Educational Psychologists can offer to this group, with a focus on their distinctive contribution (Cameron, 2006; Farrell et al., 2006). These focus groups will involve main-grade professionals. Additionally, an interview with the head of each of these Services will be held to discuss systemic factors of the service and whether these may influence the involvement of Educational Psychologists in an FE College. These will also be used to discuss the possible future of these services, to the knowledge of the Manager at that time.

### **Taking part in the project:**

There is no obligation upon you to take part – this is your choice. If you choose not to, there will be no pressure to change your mind, although you may be asked for your reasons why to explore if there is something I need to change in my approach or research. You will be asked to sign a consent form to provide a written record of your intention to participate. However, if you change your mind during the discussion, you can leave at any time without explaining why this is. Participants within the focus group will be unable to withdraw their data up until the point they exited the discussion, as this will impact upon the responses of other participants. Interview participants may terminate the discussion at any point and withdraw their data within up to three working days following the interview by making contact with myself.

### **Anonymity and confidentiality:**

As the data will be gathered face-to-face, you will not be anonymous to me as the researcher. However, by signing the consent form you agree to the information you give being included in any reports I write on the project. Care will be taken to anonymise who has been involved and names will not be used. There may be instances where you are identifiable by people who know you due to the small number of professionals involved from each professional group. Your name will not be kept on any document recording what you say – only the professional group and the date of the discussion will be recorded. There will

be a separate list of participants' names with a numerical code assigned to each for the purpose of reporting the discussion. This will be stored on a password-protected document and securely backed up on the University of Birmingham's computer system. Therefore, only I will know the names of participants as numerical codes will be reported in the write-up.

#### **How will the information be used?**

The information will be collated and analysed and discussed as part of a Thesis for doctoral research. Summative reports will be sent to each service and each participant will be invited to a public domain briefing held by myself to discuss the outcomes of the project.

#### **What will be the outcomes of this project?**

At this stage, the outcomes cannot be predicted. It is hoped that the information provided will enable the Educational Psychology Service to explore how their contributions to supported pupils with Special Educational Needs can be extended to work with young people up to the age of 25. The Government Green Paper: "Support and Aspiration: a New Approach to Special Educational Needs" comes into effect in 2014 and proposes many changes that will affect professionals' practices. Therefore, it will be important to explore the current views held by professionals to identify ways in which this Service can meet the requirements of the Green Paper and better support this vulnerable group of young people past the age of 16.

#### **What can I do if I have any concerns or questions about this project?:**

At any point before or after your involvement in this project, you are invited to make contact with myself or with my supervising Tutor. The contact details are:

Eleanor Clark: xxxxx-xxxxxx

Supervisor's name: xxxxx-xxxxxxx

#### **How do I take part?**

Due to the small numbers of professionals available in each group for this study, every effort will be made to accommodate your individual needs. The date and time of the discussion will be arranged to suit you as an individual or as a group. Please make contact with myself to express your interest and begin to arrange a suitable time. Please email me on: [xxx@xxx.xxx.xxx](mailto:xxx@xxx.xxx.xxx) or leave a message for me with the Educational Psychology Service on: xxxxx-xxxxxx

**THANK YOU.**

**Eleanor Clark,**

**Doctoral Researcher and Trainee Educational Psychologist.**

## Appendix 7: Consent form for focus group participants

### Introduction:

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research project. As part of the ethics procedures that all doctoral research projects conform to, people who take part in research are asked to sign to say that they freely agree to do so, and that they understand what the research is about and what they are agreeing to by participating in the project. This form gives a written record of the fact that you agree to be involved in the study. It also confirms that you are aware of the steps that you can expect the researcher to take to ensure that any contributions will be used and stored in a manner that conforms to the ethical standards expected of doctoral researchers at the University of Birmingham.

### Agreement:

This consent form confirms that I agree to take part in a study being undertaken by Eleanor Clark as part of a doctoral research project within the School of Education at the University of Birmingham

I have read, or have had read to me, the Information Sheet that describes what this research is about. I confirm that I understand what was said in the Information Sheet.

I understand that any information I contribute will be kept securely for ten years and that the researcher, researcher's supervisor and examiners will have access to this.

Any contributions made by myself will be anonymised before being included within the research project – therefore, I understand that no personal information will be included. However, due to the limited number of professionals involved in this study, there may be ways for people who know me to identify the comments that I have made.

I understand that I may leave the discussion at any time, without any explanation as to why, although the information I have shared until this point cannot be withdrawn.

I understand that child protection procedures will be followed by the researcher in the event of a safeguarding issue arising.

I am aware that if I have any concerns about issues raised or would like more information; I can make contact with the researcher or the researcher's supervisor at any point after the discussion. The researcher will also be available immediately following the discussion if I wish to discuss any concerns that may have been raised.

I am aware that I will receive a summary of the findings of the study and will be invited to attend a public domain briefing following completion of the study.

---

Signed (Participant):.....

Name (Print):..... Date:.....

Signed (Researcher):..... Date:.....

## Appendix 7: Consent form for interview participants

### Introduction:

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research project. As part of the ethics procedures that all doctoral research projects conform to, people who take part in research are asked to sign to say that they freely agree to do so, and that they understand what the research is about and what they are agreeing to by participating in the project. This form gives a written record of the fact that you agree to be involved in the study. It also confirms that you are aware of the steps that you can expect the researcher to take to ensure that any contributions will be used and stored in a manner that conforms to the ethical standards expected of doctoral researchers at the University of Birmingham.

### Agreement:

This consent form confirms that I agree to take part in a study being undertaken by Eleanor Clark as part of a doctoral research project within the School of Education at the University of Birmingham

I have read, or have had read to me, the Information Sheet that describes what this research is about. I confirm that I understand what was said in the Information Sheet.

I understand that any information I contribute will be kept securely for ten years and that the researcher, researcher's supervisor and examiners will have access to this.

Any contributions made by myself will be anonymised before being included within the research project – therefore, I understand that no personal information will be included. However, due to the limited number of professionals involved in this study, there may be ways for people who know me to identify the comments that I have made.

I understand that I may leave the discussion at any time, without any explanation as to why. I can withdraw my data within three working days of the interview by contacting the researcher.

I understand that child protection procedures will be followed by the researcher in the event of a safeguarding issue arising.

I am aware that if I have any concerns about issues raised or would like more information; I can make contact with the researcher or the researcher's supervisor at any point after the discussion. The researcher will also be available immediately following the discussion if I wish to discuss any concerns that may have been raised.

I am aware that I will receive a summary of the findings of the study and will be invited to attend a public domain briefing following completion of the study.

Signed (Participant):.....

Name (Print):..... Date:.....

Signed (Researcher):..... Date:.....

**Appendix 8: College Inclusion Manager Interview, extracts for each theme and sub-theme**

Theme	Sub-theme	Quotation
<p>1. Constraints for EP-College working</p>	<p>1. EP post-16 knowledge</p>	<p>I think experience is more beneficial, I mean, I didn't have any training when I started at College and I started as a classroom support assistant but I've built up that and I've not gone a course I've gone on you know conferences and other things but it's the experience of working with individuals that helps you to improve the knowledge and learning in that area</p>
		<p>Knowledge of good practice elsewhere. I think it's somewhere near - it's a priority but it borders on a low priority to be honest because I think you've got to have that knowledge but the important thing is you know, what you do yourself, it's no good knowing it if you're not going to be able to apply to your own organisation or to your own practice</p>
		<p>P: That links to advice giving, you know it's having the knowledge of the best support networks, you know, where they can progress to whether it's employment, College, training provider, apprenticeships, whatever it is, it's being able to have that knowledge overall, you know not every detail but being able to point a student in the right direction for them, for their needs</p>
		<p>Knowledge of resources and SEN in terms of resources what's available for the learner, whether that's after school after College, what would suit them, suit the learner for example [is important]</p>

2. Potential	1. Additional Support desired	<p>There are times when we can't do any more, physically or with resources or facilities, we can't do any more for the learner and we have to either point them in the direction or say sorry but...especially behavioural-wise, a lot of the time if we have disciplinaries for example and we've put every strategy in that we can possibly think of collectively in place. Intervention from another source there would be very beneficial especially if it's someone who has worked with that learner throughout their education</p>
		<p>P: I think so yes, in some respects, they sort of link as well, they're all crucial in the role that an EP would be able to play, in terms of they'd have to have a grasp of all these areas to be really successful in the role and to support the student in the best way they can.</p>
		<p>P: In terms of like working with, in FE I think it's in terms of the intervention, especially if intervention's needed whereby I don't know where there's anything linked to behavioural problems and if the EP can follow that through from school in terms of the strategies to support the learner which maybe we'll get to that point, in terms of, from their SEN statement and then perhaps different strategies or try strategies we might think but if an EP can support that from the start it might be quicker progress so I think in terms of intervention when it's needed. I think that's probably the biggest and the most beneficial change that could happen.</p>
		<p>I mean it's ok people researching and if it was to help us in any way it would be good</p>

		<p>So, having a named link EP someone who is regular and familiar with that learner who can help them in College to achieve the targets and out of College as well</p>
		<p>Training - it's a priority, I wouldn't put it at the top, the reason being, especially with Learning Difficulties, there's not really much training available to people. I think experience is more beneficial, I mean, I didn't have any training when I started at College and I started as a classroom support assistant but I've built up that and I've not gone a course I've gone on you know conferences and other things but it's the experience of working with individuals that helps you to improve the knowledge and learning in that area</p>
	<p>2. Students' needs</p>	<p>I think more funding from the government needs to be given to people with learning difficulties. There's a lot of different needs out there and if we're trying to meet all learners' needs perfectly we need the financial backing to be able to do that. Complex needs for example, a person with communication difficulties, if they had money assigned to them as an individual to be able to go out and buy assistive technology that would better support their progression and their development rather than the frustrations they would face</p> <p>P: Yeah. Direct work with students - individual assessments. I think that's a high priority I mean, in our case, we are like an FE College with SLDD provision, so sometimes we have to hold our hands up and say you know we've not got the facilities or resources to support a particular learner but we can't do that without working with the person first and assessing their needs</p>

		<p>We have a group of counsellors, one which specialises in SLDD so that's one step you know if there's a death in the family we would always point a student to that but sometimes it's not suitable for whatever reason so then it's the next steps</p>
	<p>3. Limited external support</p>	<p>Social services are a really good example of that, of how it doesn't work, in my opinion. Whereby, I know one learner who started in September who has had about 10 different social workers in 9 months and to me that's completely unacceptable and that's where we step back and think right we're not going to work with this person or this named contact because they're not helping the learner</p> <p>I mean social services are supposed to be that link although I feel they need to improve quite drastically. They're supposed to, in terms of, intervention more so, like a Prospects person would direct someone to College or to other provision, whatever that may be, if for example there's a problem, say problems with behaviour, problem at College and we needed social services input then that's when the intervention's supposed to come in but it doesn't always happen. It's not everyone, you know, there are some good people out there but most, a lot of the time we, even though we've only known the learner, you know, 9 months, we know more about them than what the person does and what would be best but I think it's in terms of the social workers it's them having the support from their organisation to be able to come in to a place like this and being able to make a decision there and then. The amount of times when we've met</p>

		<p>with social services and they've had to go back, which then delays the support, I think they should be given more authority especially if they know the person</p>
		<p>I think in terms of the changes in other organisations and working with people from an organisation like the social services and care agencies in particular where there's always a lot of changes.</p>
		<p>So an example being, we have a counsellor here at College, well we have a group of counsellors, one which specialises in SLDD so that's one step you know if there's a death in the family we would always point a student to that but sometimes it's not suitable for whatever reason so then it's the next steps</p>
		<p>I've had experience of working with organisations who have been very reluctant to share information about particular individuals, whereby if they would have we would have been able to better support a learner</p> <p>I: ok - so that coherent story over time? Brining it all together</p> <p>P: Absolutely, not cutting parts of the story out I've found that happens a lot not in all cases to be honest but in some cases, it's... it's..., if they feel that 'ooh if the College knows this they won't allow the learner to go' but it's the wrong conception, they've got of Colleges in the first place whereby if we knew the information we could think, 'right what's the support', rather than finding out 6 weeks into a course when we then have to look at what intervention to put in but we could have had that intervention from the start to support the learner</p>

<p>3. Considerations for EP-College working</p>	<p>1. Ethical considerations</p>	<p>One challenge could be parents and their reluctance not, not to, to, help their child, but to, to let them go in some sense because a lot of parents will have a tight leash, understandably so, because, you know, the difficulties that the child faces, but for example, we've had one student successfully go on and do a work placement but at home he's not allowed to make a cup of tea where he is very capable of that, that's just a small example but it's just being able to step back</p>
		<p>I think from the learner themselves, um, it can be very difficult changing their conceptions it depends on their background but if they've been always told they can't do something that's the mentality they have so it's being able to change those, those mentalities.</p>
		<p>P: It's a very tough question actually [consent] because obviously parents or carers, especially any young adults from 16-19 but again they need to know the benefits of it and sometimes you can have a battle. In the case where there is a battle but someone knows actually it's for the best thing for the learner that's where social services or the LEA can get involved in terms of overriding consent if it's not given from parents or carers. And then I think in terms of the educational provider as well there's got to be obviously some sort of consent in terms of coming in and working with that learner, whether it's a school or a College.</p>
		<p>P: Yeah but I think in the small minority of cases, if parents are not giving consent for whatever reason then if it's needed then further intervention should take place</p>

	2. Established support	P: There's prospects that covers some of these. I mean social services are supposed to be that link
		I: Ok, so it's mainly Prospects and Social Services?
		P: Yeah they're the main ones. Dependent on the learner as well, various care agencies, especially those who have been living in supported living or some who are unfortunate enough to not have parents around for whatever reason those are other agencies we work with. We do a little bit of work with Speech and Language Therapists which we're looking to increase actually, but I think those are all of them
		And again, facilitating collaboration between professionals, young people and families - priority, it's got to be the right person, got to have the right mentality, got to be able to be adaptable to suit the particular learner and their family as well. You've got to have that right approach in terms of you know everyone's different, completely different, the people you work with, or families, whether it's a young person, they are completely different and it's being able to adapt to them to be able to facilitate anything to get the best output for the learner
		What we try to do is work with everyone that we possibly can that we know of to meet the needs of the learners and whoever that it is I think it's important to as an (Incomprehensible) to have a discussion to come up with actions whatever that may be and then move forward from there.
	3. College	P: Obviously, the SEN statement is not a legal document when they come to College but our role is

	provision	<p>basically working with the learner, with parents, carers, with anyone else we know of that's involved with the care of that learner and to meet their needs from a curricular point of view and socially as well. We offer courses and deliver the courses dependent on their needs, and it's to help them to progress academically and socially. The focus on the educational side recently, the last 4 -5 years, has been specifically education, the students have had to achieve a qualification in order to attend an FE College but that's changing now which is good but it is that academic change supporting progression.</p> <p>I think everyone has the same access rights as anyone else I mean the way we like to see ourselves is that everyone needs support regardless of whether they have a learning difficulty or not it's just putting that support in place</p>
	4. College knowledge of EP role	P: In terms of College support networks that we know of - none. Whether our students do outside of College and we're not aware of it, that's a different case but we're not aware of any contact. We have our own assessor for dyslexia and until recently we had an inclusive support Manager - that role's been changed - but usually she would have done the learning needs assessments or myself, as SLDD Manager
	5. Legislation causing College	It goes round in circles, I've only been working in education 9 -10 years but it's come round full circle since I started. When I started it was focused on the individual's progression and the funding aspects of that were that you would deliver what's best for the learner whereas the last 4 years it's gone back round to

	changes	<p>qualifications - the learner must achieve this - which has meant we've had to be flexible in terms of, because we know that students have to achieve that for us to get the funding but at the same time we didn't want to take the focus away from their needs but now it's going back round to study programmes where we can design a curriculum to meet the needs of the learners which isn't qualification-led.</p> <p>P: Well the funding, which is changing for the better now, I think a lot of, I mean it is changing in terms of the government realising that it shouldn't be qualification led, funding should be assigned to a particular learner in terms of their needs and meeting their needs and we should be given the financial backing to be able to implement any changes that the learner needs.</p> <p>P: Again, I think it's changing now. If you'd have asked this a year ago I would have reeled loads off! One of the changes coming in is traditionally over the last few years we've only been able to assign support based on educational needs of a learner, whereby with learning difficulty assessments coming in we can now actually support whatever their needs they are whether they're complex needs, emotional needs.</p>
4. Influences on views	1. Limited knowledge of EP role	P: In terms of College support networks that we know of - none. Whether our students do outside of College and we're not aware of it, that's a different case but we're not aware of any contact. We have our own assessor for dyslexia and until recently we had an inclusive support Manager - that role's been changed - but usually she would have done the learning needs assessments or myself, as SLDD Manager

	2. Experience of post-16 working	What we try to do is work with everyone that we possibly can that we know of to meet the needs of the learners and whoever that it is I think it's important to as an (Incomprehensible) to have a discussion to come up with actions whatever that may be and then move forward from there.
	3. Legislation	P: Well the funding, which is changing for the better now, I think a lot of, I mean it is changing in terms of the government realising that it shouldn't be qualification led, funding should be assigned to a particular learner in terms of their needs and meeting their needs and we should be given the financial backing to be able to implement any changes that the learner needs.

**Appendix 9: College Tutors focus group, extracts for each theme and sub-theme**

Theme	Sub themes	Quotations
1. Potential	1. Students' needs	It would be better to have an earlier intervention before they've made any decisions
		2: I was going to say that I think that sometimes as well the students have already made the decision before they see AMO that that is the end of College and it would be better to have an earlier intervention before they've made any decisions
		<p>P5: A big bugbear for me is all the therapy stuff stops there, after, and their hydrotherapy, physio, that kind of thing, it just stops!</p> <p>I- Is there any transfer to adult?</p> <p>P5: No! It just, if they want to do it, they have to find it themselves, or parents have to find it themselves and pay for it</p> <p>P2: And that's everything isn't it? That's the speech therapists, that's the physio</p>
		P2: But it's only as well, with speech, if they fit this category or that category. It's not what they all need, it's only if they're in this area or under that age, it's all like boxes whereas if they need something, they should just get it
		P9: It's the same with students though, once they've left their school they come here, I know it takes me a couple of weeks to get to know the students and look through the information so there's a bit of a dip in

		<p>support there. There's transition information but you've got to be pro-active and go and seek it out but if you had somebody to hand over</p> <p>P4: Hand it over and understand it</p> <p>P9: Well yes</p> <p>P4: Actually look, you know, go into Google and type in pragmatic speech disorder and actually look at it and go, right that's what it is</p> <p>P8: What's that?</p> <p>P4: Pragmatic speech disorder. Anything really, you need to read up on it. So someone to come in and read through it and say this is what this student needs, this is what they need</p> <p>P5: Yeah, yeah</p> <p>I- So at the moment, you get the paperwork but there's not somebody there</p> <p>P4: No, no</p> <p>P2: And the paperwork, can be like 5-6 years old!</p>
		<p>P8: It's easier but it's a similar sort of thing for all students where we have, there's a gradual handover from the schools to ourselves, but it isn't there, to have the staff here on site so they can help you with any problem</p> <p>P9: I think that's something that we've done a bit more the last couple of years as well, talk to the schools</p>

		<p>they've come from</p> <p>P8: There were some students that suddenly appear that we know nothing about really, or what their issues or problems have been in the past. Unless you go and look it up</p>
	<p>2. College issues</p>	<p>P2: I think there's a bit of pressure on us as well because we have 6 weeks cut off, we can keep students for 6 weeks to see how their behaviour is but it takes them a lot more than 6 weeks to settle down so we're making a judgment on their biggest transformation of their life in 6 weeks when it's going to take a lot more</p> <p>I- Is that specific to this College or is that national?</p> <p>P5: It's a funding issue. All figures, isn't it figures or funding?</p> <p>P9: both</p> <p>P5: Ah, both. Figures and funding</p> <p>P4: If students are withdrawn before 6 weeks, they don't count on your figures. So we're urged to make decisions on whether we keep students before 6 weeks</p> <p>P8: There's also an area where you could look at them for 6 weeks and say whether they're on the right course or not it isn't just about data. You can transfer them to other courses, it ain't just about data</p> <p>P5: It is our dirty little secret I think, that one. It's about data.</p> <p>P2: No it is about being on the right programme as well, because they could be on the wrong course that</p>

		<p>doesn't suit them</p> <p>P8: It is about data, I'm not saying that you're wrong. But there is a point where you can look at people who have been on the wrong course, like one, who's going on to catering in the mainstream but we've put in place that if he can't cope with that then he comes back on to our catering course</p> <p>P9: I think the sort of-</p> <p>P8: -Maybe we should look at that more than we do with</p> <p>P9: -I think that we lost some students really in the past that really needed to come here because of that thought, a big problem's there, it's a lot of work, we're not sure they're going to achieve so, I call it like a cull, it is like a cull really, the ones who needed the most help-</p> <p>P8: -Yeah-</p> <p>P9: -from us and we let them down</p>
	<p>3. Additional support desired</p>	<p>P4: Yeah, for me especially the training definitely. Cos I, you never been told this is how you teach somebody who has got this particular learning difficulty or disability, it's kind of you learn it and you by experience you then work out specifically you know, this is what you should do. I think that's desperate, not desperate but very important</p> <p>P6: Then again, each one is individual aren't they so no matter what their disability is, whether they're all</p>

		<p>autistic somewhere along the line, there's some variation</p> <p>P4: But there's a kind of area, a common ground</p> <p>P6: It's how you perceive it and how you would handle it</p> <p>P4: Sure</p>
		<p>P2: Because it's really concerned us and we haven't had anywhere to go</p>
		<p>P4: We could have done with like an extra kind of support and guidance and psychology really</p>
		<p>P5: It's just disgraceful really isn't it that we're put in that position, I hate it, I hate it</p>
		<p>It takes a lot for them not to make it past the 6 weeks but it happens and it's usually that there's some big issues and if we'd have been able to delve into them we may have been able to solve them there and then really but otherwise they just disappear into the ether and that's it</p>
		<p>P8: Yeah but that would be the one that we struggle with most, wouldn't it?</p> <p>P2: Yeah</p> <p>P8: As a Tutor, that would be the one that we would struggle with the most</p>
		<p>P2: I personally would like the option of going to somebody to ask for help who knows what they're on about, rather than being fobbed off from one organisation to another</p>
		<p>Because the advice was to liaise with families and things, but if you have an EP that comes in and talks to students and gets to know particular students, learners and then I think that would be a good idea because</p>

		<p>that's somebody you can build on</p>
		<p>P5: And it's so stressful for the parents and young people I- And when they get stressed, they come to you guys? P5: And we can't do anything unless you're into the disabilities team you can't</p>
		<p>P6: It gets to the stage where there's only so much we can do, we've tried and tried and tried and then like you say you need that other step before you get to there.</p>
		<p>P7: I sort of think, that where Tutors could talk to educational psychologists or are we talking just from a pupil point of view? Cos there are times when I would like to talk to somebody of that ilk and say 'I've got this issue with somebody, how do you think we approach it?'  P7: I think that would be my, that would be my area that I would like some work like, training and such  P4: Or just access to you, yeah  P7: Cos I think like it was alluded to earlier, you're sort of given this job, and then you learn it. Rather than someone saying there's these sort of traits that you can look at so I think that could be quite a training need</p>
		<p>P2: I don't know, we're having more and more students with mental health issues and that as inclusion I wouldn't know in a mental health side, how to include more students with quite severe mental health issues because we're getting more and more but it's dealing with that side of it  P9: At the moment, we haven't got many but we are attracting more mental health</p>

		<p>P4: mmmm</p> <p>P1: That's true</p>
		<p>P1: But the kind of advice I'd go to an educational psychologist for though</p> <p>P4: Advice for education</p> <p>P1: Yeah</p> <p>P4: Learning</p> <p>P1: How can I improve the learning of this particular student in this situation, is there any support mechanisms that I can do rather than more general</p>
		<p>P4: But then I suppose with like, for instance, for instance, reviews for let's say student who we'll name VA-</p> <p>P1: -Right</p> <p>P4: -and um, how like, her behaviour at home and her behaviour here um</p> <p>P1: They are 2 polar differences yeah</p> <p>P4: and then the kind of working together of that might then be a role that an educational psychologist could come in and give strategies so that we could run the same at both</p>
		<p>P2: I'm just going to give a scenario now that happened to students this year, who have been involved in sexual assaults and the police haven't pursued it any further but then I'm not um, qualified to deal with that</p> <p>P4: Qualified-</p> <p>P2: -The police have not followed it through but these two students really need some serious...</p> <p>P7: At the end of the day, they're saying that because of their age and they are seen as an adult</p>

		<p>P2: Then it's consensual</p> <p>P7: Yeah</p> <p>P2: But we know it's not, because they can't make a decision</p> <p>P7: It's there, that's when a psychologist would probably...</p> <p>P2: We would really benefit from</p> <p>P4: Personally, I don't, because if it's learning, well no, I suppose some parents are interested, some aren't though</p> <p>P2: The issues that I come across is that we're looking at 2nd and 3rd generation learning difficulties and now the issue is trying to deal with the issues about their child really when they have learning difficulties themselves is very difficult and can be quite stressful</p> <p>P4: So like, any help for that angle is brilliant you know. But again that's where we've got the working with the parents as well</p> <p>I- That's why you raised that as a high priority? You said that from the start</p> <p>P4: Yeah</p>
	<p>4. Limited external</p>	<p>P7: See if we've got counsellors for some students but with other learners it's like what's going on their heads?</p>

	support	<p>P4: Counselling's good but it's not enough</p> <p>P7: Well it's not proactive, it's reliant on, we need someone to say 'this is the problem here'</p> <p>P8: Yeah, counselling really should be someone who understands a particular type of learner and shouldn't be a generic counsellor</p> <hr/> <p>P5: Yeah. I'd, um, social workers need to be a little bit more involved I think and willing to take responsibility for sorting out the things that they need to sort out</p> <p>P2: We take on a lot of responsibility that we shouldn't do, a lot of the time because it isn't being met by another organisation</p> <p>P5: It's stuff like with the changes as well, like direct payments as well, it has to be a social worker, we can't do anything about that, our hands are tied about</p> <p>P9: With all the new disability allowance and I've had so many letters about it 'can you help' 'can we have a bursary' 'can we do this'</p> <p>P5: And it's so stressful for the parents and young people</p> <hr/> <p>P2: We take on a lot of responsibility that we shouldn't do, a lot of the time because it isn't being met by another organisation</p>
2.	1. College	P4: Well it's everything isn't it? Because we teach them, yeah, so it's 5 days a week, pastoral support and

<p>Considerations for EP-College working</p>	<p>provision</p>	<p>functional skills, vocational, everything</p> <p>P7: Accommodating them</p> <p>P2: And in the first term, it's more pastoral care than it is actual subject-based</p> <p>P6: Yeah</p> <p>P2: Sorting out practical things from sorting out bus passes to just getting to College isn't it, a lot of the stuff?</p> <p>P4: It's also reading through those reports and putting them into profiles to share with the rest of the team.</p> <hr/> <p>P2: Yeah, and a lot of the students, one is maybe on the autism spectrum so coming into a huge environment and the change, we have to accommodate and try to group</p> <p>P5: certainly in the first term when they're with us is all about trying to manage their behaviour and cope with the transition isn't it?</p> <p>P2: Yeah</p> <hr/> <p>P4: Promoting inclusion's not really relevant because we do that</p> <p>P5: We do that</p> <p>P2: We do that very well</p> <hr/> <p>P4: We've almost got these 4 down here so we've only got to come up with...multi-agency work, well we've already got good links with multi agencies</p> <hr/> <p>P5: We've already said promoting inclusion isn't a priority because we do it, is that right?</p> <p>P4: We're very very good at that, aren't we, at promoting inclusion</p>
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		<p>P9: We tend to talk problems round the table don't we?</p> <p>P7: Yeah we do</p> <p>P9: Once every meeting don't we, so that's our action isn't it?</p> <p>P7: That's what we'd normally be doing tonight</p> <p>P2: It's like student focus, so we all go through each learner and if we've had any problems for them...</p> <p>P7: And then is again thrown across the table of how do you think you should deal with it?</p>
	2. Established support	<p>P5: Behaviour support unit, CaMHS, Connexions, Prospects</p> <p>P4: Speech and Language</p> <p>P5: Speech and Language, yeah</p>
	3. Ethical considerations	<p>P6: I think going back to your point about it being different, the areas of consensual issues that you've found</p> <p>P5: It's blurred isn't it?</p> <p>P6: Whereas with a young child, there's no consensual is there? So from that point of view, there are going to be areas which are very grey</p> <p>P5: And particularly as well, I find that what the young person wants and what the family want often clash so you know, what do you go with? The family and their....?</p>

		<p>P5: Having to disclose something that that young person wants to keep confidential</p> <p>P7: Yeah, safeguarding</p> <p>(PAUSE)</p> <p>I- Yeah. I'd suspect that's quite different with young adults</p> <p>P9: Well it's building up the trust with them as well. They aren't going to divulge anything if they don't trust you. If they don't know that person</p>
		<p>P5: Yeah so a lot of parents for instance won't even consider the idea that their young person, that their child can have a sexual relationship, now to me they're young adults and...</p> <p>P8: Well we do have 18 year olds don't we?-</p> <p>P5: Romantic relationship and it's just why they're not got a right to that?</p> <p>P4: There's all sorts of things like that, you know. I know there's certain kids who love being in College because they're out of home, aren't they and they're just kind of off you go but they're happy to be out of that horrible place, basically</p> <p>P7: Having that freedom</p>
		<p>P4: It is tricky because if someone with serious learning difficulties, they, disabilities even, they I don't know what I'm trying to say here</p>

		<p>P7: It's their cognitive ability as well because we have students that are here for social interaction skills but who have got a good mental capability and at the other end of the scale we've got, um, students that can't make a decision about tea or coffee let alone whether they should have someone else interfering with their life</p> <p>P2: So perhaps it's the individual Tutor then?</p> <p>P7: I think it ought to be, in an ideal world, it ought to be the parent, the student as well and the personal Tutor that would be my ideal but certainly it has to be, and they have to give consent don't they, if they</p>
	<p>4. Service delivery</p>	<p>P4: So we're saying there that we want educational psychologists to kind of step in when things are bad but should we not have them as a kind of training role where they actually come in and say, 'this is how you teach people with supported learning' which is what OfSTED kind of picked up on with us. Maybe that's important to actually come in regularly and say this is what you should do?</p> <p>I- In your shortlist, you've put training too</p> <p>P2: I was thinking about individual students with problems, we've got problems with at the moment, if we had some 1:1 then that would surely come back and say this is the problem with this student or if you'd have done this that and the other then we could introduce this change</p> <p>P4: But that's cure rather than prevention really isn't it? But if we had training, we might be able to not have</p>

		got in that situation
		Um, I think having a named link EP is a big one, is it? I don't know. It is if you're doing, if you want them more for the direct working with individuals role but if you are more in a training role then probably not. P7: The benefit is if we had the same person, the continuity is there
	5. College knowledge of EP role	P7: You keep hearing about Facebook and, AA, you know all that business... P8: I think that Facebook anything like that anyway is going to cause problems, um but how you, it's how you P4: We could have done with like an extra kind of support and guidance and psychology really P1: I think we've got good networks there already and good contextual information for our community so that would probably be lower P4: But from educational psychology's point of view it would probably be a good idea for them to know about things but we wouldn't necessarily need any input P1: Yeah, they wouldn't need to feed that back to us Research and development: project work, applying research findings to situations. Well that's always good isn't it because that's how you advance P7: Is it a high priority though? P4: Well yes because otherwise you get stuck in a rut, you've got to keep... P6: Who would? P4: The educational psychologist. Are we on the right track?

4. Influences on views	1. Limited knowledge of EP role	P5: Can you give us a quick definition of what your job role is? P8: That's a good point that is
		P1: I'm just quite surprised that your role includes all of this! I mean, I know we do a lot but that's a lot! P4: -entails all this! P5: That sounds more like a business consultancy kind of role to me than an educational psychologist
		P4: But again, that is more behavioural, it isn't necessarily learning is it? It's not educational, so it's sort of down there a bit
		P7: So do you actually have hands on with learners or just with staff?
		P4: There's the one that's staring at me is the one that's working with and supporting with parents, right to the top? And if it's in an educational role um, is that as important as the other things?

**Appendix 10: Connexions' Manager's interview, extracts for each theme and sub-theme**

Themes	Sub-themes	Quotations
1. Influences on views	1. Experience of post-16 working	<p>We would work quite often with the College, up until this past year we have had a caseload allocated to the College so we've actually covered the supported learning department and we still actually take referrals from any LDD mainstream students who still need a guidance service</p>
		<p>P: Right, post-16s in school it would be the same as pre-16, so anyone with a statement, so all the special schools that have 6th forms, well they all have 6th forms except the EBD school, all those statements that continue to be maintained we would have exactly the same contact. Yeah, yeah so we would just offer the same sort of Information, Advice and Guidance Service. We would still attend the Annual Review of Statement and we would still obviously be involved, very much so, in making sure the transition from school to the next appropriate placement, we are very much involved in making that happen, if you like, and supporting for that. In College, because the Statement has ceased, uh, the Learning Difficulty Assessment, which we call the Moving Forward Plan, any youngster who has formerly had a statement that goes on to College or training we would still continue to support but it's not as rigid as it would be in school so for those that goes to mainstream it's only as and when and if they need our service so they would kind of come back to us for that. For those on supported provision, we would</p>

		actually be allocating a careers advisor to work with them.
	2. Connexions service reducing	<p>P: Yes, that's just because of staff reductions in the team but the work for the College that was formerly done in my team has now moved over to the schools team so as a service Prospects are still covering and we still have that contact and link with the local College</p> <p>We have had a reduction due to staffing reductions</p>
	3. Legislation	<p>P: Right, [...] Uh, well you know, there's the [...] it's all about to change anyway because we've got the Education, Health and Care Plan supposed to be coming in next year, and that is 0-25 and that is meant to be a multi-agency approach from education, health and social care so, at the minute there's, when a youngster leaves school, the statement ceases and then the protection in education is currently given from the Learning Difficulty Assessment which the Personal Advisor or Careers Advisor writes</p> <p>If an Ed Psych has been involved we may refer to it but I think formalising that in terms of more a multi-agency approach, so all those interested parties would actually be involved with that Education, Health and Care Plan. But we haven't had any pathfinder authorities feedback on how it's gone, so we're still in the dark on how it might work so you can sort of like have your own ideas. You see, the Learning Difficulty Assessments have been a little bit haphazard across the country as there isn't a set, there isn't a standard pro-forma so we've developed ours locally and I think it's been recognised as quite a good one</p>

		<p>but, you know, there have been legal challenges, not here but, you know, elsewhere, across the country, and it is a legal document. Once it's signed. So I still think the Education, Health and Care plan needs to have that authority that once it's complete it's legally binding. So, currently when you send the Moving Forward Plan in the College has to put all that support in place so I know it draws down funds and things but it is a legal document. So, I think just as long as we don't lose any of that we currently have, and if we've got more professionals involved, almost like a team around the child or team around the student, that would be good. But I think that's coming and I think that probably will come with the EHC plan.</p>
	<p>4. Limited knowledge of EP role</p>	<p>P: Uh, I would say probably not a great deal. We come across Ed Psychs when we're at Annual Reviews, sometimes, not always. I mean I work in an EBD school and quite often there is an Ed Psych at the Annual Review and that is probably the only time we're in the same room in terms of meeting, we don't tend to meet outside of that, ordinarily</p> <p>P: Well, bearing in mind, I'm not familiar with exactly what the relationship is now</p>
<p>2. Considerations for EP-College working</p>	<p>1. Ethical considerations</p>	<p>P: Right, uh [...] I suppose, I don't know, I mean, if it's about personal choice, so I suppose pre-16 when you are working in school, it's more of a compulsory service, is it? Whereas I guess post-16 or post-18, uh, it might be more down to the young person or young adult, say, opting for your service or declining the service, you know, so, so, there might be something around, I don't know, whether, because</p>

		they might not necessarily seek you out.
		<p>P: Well where the young person has capacity, I think it should be the young person that gives consent.</p> <p>P: Uh [...] and where there isn't capacity, so say quite a few with severe learning difficulties, then I think it should be the parent. But certainly where they've got the capacity, it should be the young person, shouldn't it. I mean, even with our Moving Forward Plans, we cannot share them; we cannot give them to the College unless we have the young person's consent, so I think it's very much around the young person.</p>
	2. Established support	<p>P: I think all Colleges have, yeah, some counselling. And they also have recently, because they have changed our role, they also have their some of their own Advice and Guidance workers so that has reduced our input a bit so we tend to take more referrals or pick up those that the in-house guidance workers sort of can't move on really.</p> <p>P: Um I mentioned the student counselling service</p>
	3. College priorities	The Colleges are very much about the students progressing, uh, and retention now is another biggie. If there are any issues, or if there is anything that could help youngsters to remain engaged, would be really good. So I think any support in that respect would be useful.

3. Constraints for EP-College working	1. Knowledge of EP role	Something around marketing the service, might be a gap here, mightn't it? You know marketing your service to an FE student, who is meant to be a bit more independent and a young adult, so making their own decisions rather than it being provided for them, they might seek you out so you may need to market your service. So, yeah, it's the thing about an adult opting to make use of you rather than it just being done to them.
	2. Distinct EP contribution	Working with and supporting parents. I think you find with the supported learning courses, particularly, the College still does maintain that contact with parents. A lot more so than, say, mainstream students. So, say, I'm not too sure exactly what support you give to parents at the minute with parents
4. Potential for EP-College working	1. EP role	<p>P: Yeah, I think if it's trying to do something like replicating the IEPs, that would be really helpful</p> <p>I: So, more the learning side?</p> <p>P: Well yeah and if there are any social and developmental needs, as well, that would be useful too.</p>
		<p>Uh [...] familiarity with educational organisations. Does that mean the Ed Psych's familiarity and they're bringing that?</p> <p>I: yes, and sharing that with the College</p> <p>P: yes that's important; I think that's quite good. I guess that links the school and College in terms of knowledge and understanding.</p>

		<p>If there are any issues, or if there is anything that could help youngsters to remain engaged, would be really good. So I think any support in that respect would be useful.</p>
		<p>I mean some of the ideas that you've suggested here that might work well in a College I think that if you can try and develop I think there is room for the relationship to be strengthened and developed. I think that would be good</p>
		<p>I think that if you can actually offer a number of these services to Colleges it would be good, for students with LDD in particular. Uh [...] but also, possibly, which you may not have thought about, I don't know if it's just around FE and if it is just around FE that's fine, but given the raising participation age, from 16 to 18, this current year's year 10, all year 10s, have to remain in some form of learning until the age of 18. Uh [...] That learning doesn't necessarily have to be in school or College so training providers might be another area where Ed Psychs could seek to offer these sorts of services</p>
	<p>2. College issues</p>	<p>P: What is kind of is in my mind, is I know you said MLD and SLD but also EBD as quite often, well, in the past, the past 3 years, we have not had a graduate from the EBD school complete their course at College. So they might have started a course and for some reason, something has happened along the way where they've been excluded. And I think if there'd been a therapist, certainly I can think of some cases, where had there been that support, where if there'd been a therapeutic intervention, that might</p>

		<p>have helped with that young person remaining in College because they need, we need, and we have provided one when we've had the funding, mentors, you know mentors. They need this particular youngster, because the College at the minute don't seem to be geared up to having the staff with the expertise or experience to deal specifically with young people, not so much MLD or SLD, but certainly EBD uh so it falls apart, so it falls apart. So if you've got experts in the field that can come and if there's a blip, you know, they can actually come in and, you know [...]</p>
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**Appendix 11: Connexions' advisors focus group, extracts for each theme and sub-theme**

Themes	Sub-themes	Quotations
1. Influences on views	1. Limited knowledge of EP role	P5: I feel like I don't really know everything that an EP offers, or can do, or the role really. I've only come in to contact with them in a review, uh [...] so I'm not sure what work they actually can do.
		<p>P5: Not much, no.</p> <p>P3: I've had contact with one this year, in a review, school review, and uh, that was the first time</p> <p>EC: That was an annual review of a statement?</p> <p>P3: Yes</p> <p>P4: I too have done that. There has been somebody coming to a couple of reviews in school</p> <p>P2: I've come across EPs when, not in annual reviews, but more when there's been a possible change of placement being discussed</p> <p>P1: I've had contact with an EP, last year, in the transition of 2 year 11 students going to College and they were at the review but that's it</p> <p>EC: Ok, so tends to be with placement or annual reviews but not much generally?</p> <p>All: No, not really</p>
		P2: No, we don't really have any direct work with the EP, I've only met an EP at a multi-agency meeting

		so it wasn't necessarily between the 2 of us so it is that that we don't really know what, what you've sort of done with them
2. Reducing Connexions' Service	P4: No, because that's been axed P5: Oh right. Oh I see, because it's been pulled back? P4: So no one actually checks whether they're actually getting the support that's actually recommended P1: That's a good point actually P5: Because a few years ago we used to do like a 6 week review didn't we? P2: Because the Manager used to go in, didn't she a couple of years but I don't think she's done it recently no	
3. Experience of post-16 working	P1: Quite a lot, in the sense that, I telephone them quite often to chase College applications, I have supported students with College interviews, I have worked probably quite closely this year, compared to other years, with the College inclusion team as well There is always like a linked Personal Advisor that works with the supported learning department, uh, so you pretty much work with the youngsters who are on their final year, so I've sort of gone in and done an introductory group talk so they know who I am and what support I can offer and then I do one-to-one guidance interviews to discuss what they're going to do after College	

		<p>P3: Well, the work I've usually done with those students is usually to help them transition from school to College by arranging visits or multiple visits to the supported learning department or to the department where they will do their course as a lot of them are quite anxious about moving on and it's just making sure that their transition is comfortable really</p> <p>P4: Well if pupils are statemented in the 6th form of the school we would still support them and attend reviews and do Moving Forward Plans for them</p> <p>EC: So every pupil with a statement has a Moving Forward Plan</p> <p>P2: Yes, at the point of transition</p> <p>P4: Yes</p> <p>EC: Does it matter where they transition to?</p> <p>P2: As long as it's on to training, education or employment</p>
<p>2. Considerations for EP-College working</p>	<p>1. Ethical considerations</p>	<p>P1: They might not want your support</p> <p>P2: I was going to say they might not want to engage because they are adults</p> <p>P4: Whether you should or shouldn't involve parents is a big issue for post-16</p> <p>P1: Also, the level of support that they need because they will be at an age when they are starting to become a little bit more independent so it's that plumb line isn't it about what level of support is going to be</p>

		<p>right</p> <p>P2: Yeah. Because some, by the time they move on to College, have had enough of school and that kind of, the way they operate. Often, there are many agencies involved and things like that so they almost want to escape to College because they feel it's a more grown up, a more independent place, so it's pitching it at the right level and the right kind of intervention really</p> <p>P5: So that they see it as different</p> <p>P1: Yeah. Again, so if they see it's like school and people interfering, mmmm [...] that can be tricky</p> <p>P5: Because you get a lot that say they don't like the Teaching Assistant sitting next to them</p> <p>P2: Ooh yeah, yeah</p> <p>P5: - and things like that so when they're at College and you speak to them about them getting support in lessons at College they don't like the idea of it because they just want to [...]</p> <p>P4: - It's being sort of singled out really</p> <p>P5: They're being highlighted. Especially when they're starting school again, they just want to fit in with everyone else don't they, so that can be difficult sometimes</p> <p>P4: But I guess your involvement would tend to be one-to-one so I guess so the other students wouldn't necessarily know</p>
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		<p>P2: That's a good thing about College really, the part time hours, I mean it can be anything from 12, well the supported learning is about 16 to 18 hours so any support could be done outside the lessons so no one would have to know about it</p>
		<p>EC: Ok, so the next one is: Who do you think should give consent for the involvement of an EP when involving a young adult in an FE College?</p> <p>P3: The young person</p> <p>All: Indicate agreement</p> <p>P4: It depends if they're</p> <p>P2: In the first instance, I guess it depends on you see the supported learning, it does vary, particularly if we're talking about SLD students, they may not have the capacity, they wouldn't be able to give consent so you would have to involve parents in that situation but I think in the first instance it is with the young person really</p>
	<p>2. Established support</p>	<p>P4: I think SEN Teams within schools sometimes they have like people who sort of specialise with particular special needs. So, not to the same extent of the Psychologists but specialise in working with particular types of pupils, autistic pupils, or [...]</p> <p>P5: I mean we offer some of these as well</p>

		<p>P5: Agencies like T3 and Street Teams do some of this work too</p> <p>P2: Oh yes</p> <p>EC: I haven't heard of these, what are they?</p> <p>P5: T3's smoking and alcohol abuse and then um Street Teams is those at risk of sexual exploitation</p> <p>P3: Yeah</p> <p>P2: Mmm-hmm</p> <p>EC: Are they charitable organisations</p> <p>P5: I'm not sure but they do some prevention work and work with vulnerable students either in school or they run some like sessions, courses that pupils can access</p>
3. Constraints on EP-College working	1. EP post-16 knowledge	<p>P3: Well my experience of reviews and EPs being involved is more with year 8, year 9 than it is with year 11 where they're going through a transition period, maybe to College, so it almost feels like, would that actually be relevant? So if they had involvement with an EP in year 8 or 9 is the information [...]</p>
	2. Distinct EP contribution	<p>P5: I mean we offer some of these as well; knowledge of resources and SEN, multi agency working, so we value pupil views, sometimes it's us that bring things up and advocate for them, don't we?</p> <p>P2: Yeah definitely</p> <p>P4: Work to support parents</p>

		P2: Yeah, promoting inclusion, information giving. A lot of those as well
		P4: I think SEN Teams within schools sometimes they have like people who sort of specialise with particular special needs.
	3. EP capacity	P4: I always had the impression that EPs are obviously in short supply so usually there's a waiting list to see pupils whereas often issues that are raised in schools or Colleges need to be dealt with quite quickly so I don't know how an EP could respond to a [...] I'm not sure how [...]
4. Potential for EP-College working	1. EP knowledge	P5: I had a review this year with a pupil in year 9 and the EP was there and she was talking about the strategies she used with the young person to help them do things like remember the time and this that and the other and it was really useful and um that could have been forwarded to the College. She suggested other ways for her to learn um some of the teaching assistants didn't seem too keen on but she found it worked in their sessions so. I mean for the College, I mean she still can't tell the time at the moment but she has got a little bit better so whatever she was doing has helped her so that could continue at College couldn't it if that was in the Moving Forward Plan
		P1: Uh, I think personally that when we've got to do the Moving Forward Plans, I do think that it would be useful if the student has, you know, interactions with the EP that they also fill in a section of the Moving Forward Plan

		<p>All: Yeah</p> <p>P2: That's a good idea</p> <p>P4: Yeah, because we tend to sort of gather information from the school and from reviews and from what we've seen of the young person but maybe another perspective on what the issues are would be useful</p>
	2. EP role	<p>P4: Yeah I think that one is really important, the critical incident because if like there was a major incident then that is quite often when psychologists are brought in</p> <p>P1: Yeah</p> <p>P2: Yes, true</p>
	3. College issues	<p>P3: Well, I would like the College to give you a menu of what they actually offer. So that when you are doing the MFP at least you know that the support that they need is definitely going to take place. Something more than you maybe see in the prospectus</p> <p>P2: It's wishy-washy isn't it?</p> <p>P1: Mmmm, even at the interviews it can still be wishy-washy, you know, it can</p> <p>P2: Can it?</p> <p>P1: Yeah, it never seems to be clear about as to what kind of support levels are going to be put in place. Even when they offer the young person a place on the course, there's still question marks from the parents.</p>

		<p>And even from feedback when they've been to Colleges and spoken to the inclusion and support staff they're still none the wiser in some of the cases. I mean that could be for a number of things, you know, maybe parents haven't understood exactly what is being explained, but yeah, [...] there have been a few concerns about that [...]</p>
		<p>P4: Possibly some sort of, I don't know that anyone does any sort of follow-up to check whether they are actually receiving what is on the Moving Forward Plan or what is recommended. I don't think anyone actually follows that up do they?</p>
		<p>P5: But then, can we, if it was, an IAG service, and they looked at the Moving Forward Plan and they didn't think things were being put into place, who would you take it to then? So like in school you'd take it to the Local Authority don't you, it should be happening</p> <p>P2: Because the statement is statutory isn't it?</p> <p>P4: So you're just relying on the College actually</p> <p>P5: Rely on them to do as they say</p> <p>P2: Yeah, what they've offered</p>

**Appendix 12: Principal Educational Psychologist's interview, extracts for each theme and sub-theme**

Theme	Sub-theme	Quotations
1. Considerations	1. Ethical considerations	<p>P: Well, I think consent will be a big one, is going to be a big one. Because often it won't be the YP who's asking for EP involvement and I wonder who the College personnel would approach to get permission, to get consent, for involving the EP so I think all of that would have to be very carefully resolved before we could offer a service to FE. How would you speak to a young person about EP involvement and how far do you involve their parents - because by age most young people of 16+ would be able to give permission, would be able to give their consent, so somebody with special needs of this type, would they be able to and how would you decide? So I think that's one thing, would be one of the key things.</p> <p>I think also that the parents/carers, it's about their involvement as well because I think at those ages, because even if you've got, at sixth form if you've got a son or daughter, parents are still involved with making decisions and going to parents evenings and things so involvement of parents as well is maybe an ethical concern as well and allowing the young person to say they don't want that, because that's the other part of informed consent is for them to say no. How might you be able to work, maybe not directly with the YP, but work with College personnel at a more general level to support them rather than working around individuals all the time. I'm sure there are other things as well but that's what springs to mind.</p>

	2. Established support	<p>P: Possibly some of the schools might do, provide some information to Colleges about the young people who are going in I presume. I don't know whether Connexions do, what sort of services they would provide.</p> <p>They do have counselling services in Colleges don't they? But I wonder whether they are appropriate for young people with learning needs, as you've described the client group to me</p> <p>How might you be able to work, maybe not directly with the YP, but work with College personnel at a more general level to support them rather than working around individuals all the time</p>
2. Constraints	1. EPs' post-16 knowledge	<p>P: I'd say we have very little if any at all, to be quite honest. You're talking about this particular service here? Then we have none at all. I'm just trying if there would be...occasionally at meetings I meet representatives from the College at some of the strategic meetings that I go to but I wouldn't think that people would have any other contact really</p> <p>P: Well post-16, if they were staying on at school or if they were in special schools then it would be to support their transition into the next year group into the sixth form or if they are in special schools sometimes they have separate sites for different age groups so it would be to support transition there and to support their learning and you know, just to make sure that they are faring well in terms of continuing their education but we wouldn't really, I'm just thinking if we would generally be involved in supporting</p>

		<p>transition into College? Maybe at special schools, maybe in terms of some of the youngsters who transition to College from the special schools but, to be honest, I am just trying to think of what the potential is - I haven't had any discussions with EPs who work in special schools and talked about work in terms of supporting transition into, say, Buttonsley College...(trails off)</p>
		<p>P: I guess what I would say is what after College? You know, I think College is all very well but then it's what are the choices in terms of the courses that these young people take, how far are the courses personalised so they actually are meeting the needs of the young people and where do they go from there because I think that for parents and carers, they like to see that there's a pathway for their child to be headed down, a direction for them to be going, and I just wonder what, I don't know very much about the courses they undertake, but say, life skills, obviously it's key to do a life skills course but then what? I mean it's probably a good thing in itself because learning is something that can be useful and enjoyable for it's own sake but they still need to be thinking I might do this afterwards or there might be a course that leads on from this, or I might volunteer, there just needs to be lots of different possibilities for them. Maybe there are, maybe I'm just not aware of them.</p>
	<p>2. Distinct EP contribution</p>	<p>It may be that somebody from the College themselves might do the assessment work and the observation so it's there as a possibility but I don't think it's the absolute top priority</p>

	3. EP capacity	<p>One of the issues is capacity because in order to have that happen you've either got to have additional capacity or you've got to stop doing something else in order to develop the work in Colleges so it has to be seen as a priority in some way so how do you make it seen as a priority</p> <p>EPs are not necessarily involved in reviews, we tend to be involved in reviews if there is an issue, so where staff in schools feel that it's all fairly straightforward then we won't be involved at all and I think that's a shame in a sense because it means that maybe certain possibilities are not considered at all. We would not be able to involved in all reviews for YP who were going to be leaving school you know year 11 or year 10 reviews, we couldn't do it but if there was some sort of</p>
3. Potential	1. EP role	<p>There might be a role there in terms of, you know, for seeing what's available in the College, but supporting the development of social relationships. Because if I am just thinking about a young person as a whole person going in to College and how you'd expect a young person in College to develop and what sort of things they might do and move on to as a young adult then obviously the social scene and developing a social life and relationships would be important</p> <p>P: I think it's about multi-agency planning before they leave school, so what are their destinations, where are they going. EPs are not necessarily involved in reviews, we tend to be involved in reviews if there is an issue, so where staff in schools feel that it's all fairly straightforward then we won't be involved at all and I think that's a shame in a sense because it means that maybe certain possibilities are not considered at all. We would not be able to involved in all reviews for YP who were going to be leaving school you know year</p>

		<p>11 or year 10 reviews, we couldn't do it but if there was some sort of, um, proper planning I think taking the YP as a whole, person-centred planning, and thinking about where they are going and transition planning I think</p>
		<p>So the relationship from a starting point of none, which I'm saying is the situation at the moment really, then I think we could make quite a bit of progress over the next few years</p>
		<p>Developing relationships with where the YP was going on to, transitioning to, and I know that some of that happens already but it obviously doesn't happen well enough and I don't think there's enough of a focus on the YP and their aspirations and what they want and what they need and maybe not enough use is made of the current setting and their knowledge of them to make the transition work and maybe not enough of an overlap either so that there's some basic transition planning that happens currently is my understanding and then the YP goes on to College or where they're going and the College can get in touch with the school if there are any concerns but after a while it peters out so I think something more of an overlap and with maybe a closer relationship with some of the school staff going in to the College for a period</p>
		<p>Obviously if College had a link EP, and I haven't put that very high up in terms of the priorities, but if they did have then that might be quite useful in terms of being able to, not attend all reviews but to attend some key reviews and help plan. Maybe not all of them but just key ones and gathering information from</p>

		<p>colleagues because if that link EP has relationship, you know, knows the EPs working in the settings the YP is coming from then in terms of communication it could makes things easier and you know to support, I don't know, sort of, continuity, particular approaches you could develop approaches that are used in the settings that are also used in the College as well so in terms of routine practices.</p>
		<p>Systemic approach (reads card): that's important, I suspect though that to begin with the way that this work would be get off the ground would be more around individual pupils but it would be important to encourage a systemic approach, you know in terms of generalising learning</p>
		<p>P: (LONG PAUSE) Well it's very difficult this is. (LONG PAUSE). Um. It's not easy to say the lowest priority, I think that's hard. Um. I don't know. I can choose 3 but I don't know that it's meaningful to choose the 3. I mean, information-giving, I'm not really sure what that is because some of the others include that, so what sort of information would I be giving? There's no context as an EP where I'm just giving information, um, (PAUSE) you can give information in terms of training. So I guess I'll take that out, I don't know, as it's there already. Working with and supporting parents (LONG PAUSE) um...right...</p> <p>I: Do you want to just leave those?</p> <p>P: Yes, I think so. I really don't know what...</p>
	<p>2. Students' needs</p>	<p>How far are the courses personalised so they actually are meeting the needs of the young people?</p>

		<p>Maybe not enough of an overlap either so that there's some basic transition planning that happens currently is my understanding and then the young person goes on to College or where they're going and the College can get in touch with the school if there are any concerns but after a while it peters out so I think something more of an overlap and with maybe a closer relationship with some of the school staff going in to the College for a period</p>
	<p>3. EP knowledge</p>	<p>And I think I'd go for, maybe Knowledge of Psychology [as a highest priority]</p> <p>And I know that at school they would have had work on relationships and I suppose they would at College too but I think it's a part of psychology. And they do have counselling services in Colleges don't they? But I wonder whether they are appropriate for young people with learning needs, as you've described the client group to me</p>
	<p>4. College may want support</p>	<p>Well there's the potential for developments and I think there will be. I think Colleges probably feel, I suppose I'm more aware of some of the YP who present challenges in terms of their behaviour so maybe children with Learning Difficulties but who may present or may be on the Autism Spectrum as well, so complex Young People, and I think that Colleges would really value having support</p> <p>I think that Colleges would really value having support in terms of, I guess support is the right word really, information and somebody to bounce ideas off someone to get strategies from around some of those complex youngsters so I think that given the opportunity they would probably be very open to EPs working with them</p> <p>It depends on what's negotiated with the College because the College may not see this as being the thing that they think that they need most of all. I mean, I suspect that what the College would need or would</p>

		<p>identify themselves as wanting is support and approaches to working with young people with complex needs and they might see therapeutic intervention as something lower level, perhaps, initially not the thing they want but I think they want the potential to ask for that</p> <p>Training on specific conditions: I think this is one of the things the College would ask for and it's useful, it gives you a general starting point I think. See all of these things I think are important</p>
	5. Legislation	I think it can start from the EPS so if we showed that there was a need and a market then I think that we could encourage decisions to be made, so I think it can start from us so I don't think anyone from above is really going to make, they may make that decision based on the children and families bill but there are things that we can be doing on the ground to make things happen, to create that demand.
4. Influences on views	1. Limited post-16 knowledge	P: I'd say we have very little if any at all, to be quite honest. You're talking about this particular service here? Then we have none at all. I'm just trying if there would be...occasionally at meetings I meet representatives from the College at some of the strategic meetings that I go to but I wouldn't think that people would have any other contact really

**Appendix 13: Educational Psychologists' focus group, extracts for each theme and sub-theme**

Theme	Sub-theme	Quotations
<p>1. Considerations for EP-College working</p>	<p>1. Service delivery</p>	<p>P1: Yeah, in an ideal world that would be quite a high priority I guess because if you've got limited sessions you'd want to have the biggest impact you can so I suppose training would be very high up there</p>
		<p>P1: I think it has to be because I mean that's what we do isn't it? We work through a consultation model and I wouldn't imagine why we would change that model to work with an FE College I guess we'd still be working within a consultation framework</p>
		<p>P2: I mean this doesn't look different to what we do in schools really does it?  All: No</p>
		<p>P1: - I'm not sure of that because I always think you want the ownership of the problem to remain within that system and for us to be there to support but for us not to be the one that's there to take over things</p>
		<p>P2: You see, I was thinking of the systemic work it might be that you'd be better to have more than one EP because you'd have certain members of staff who were working on different systems effectively within the College</p>
		<p>P4: Because I think there's where you've got to go in really to FE Colleges, with a systemic approach</p>
		<p>P1: Cos if we were looking to consult and give advice on an individual student, personally I would want to</p>

		<p>be going in and observing the child in the setting really. I know you can do pure consultation where you never set eyes on the students at all</p> <p>P4: Because you wouldn't want to be slipping in to the expert model</p> <p>P1: That's exactly what I think I was trying to say</p> <p>P4: Which maybe is more a model at FE, they have people coming in and donating, rather than us working with them</p> <p>P1: It would need to be much more of a partnership I think</p> <p>P4: With them on our side</p>
	<p>2. Ethical considerations</p>	<p>P1: Confidentiality, that kind of thing, whether there would be any more challenges there</p> <p>P2: I wonder whether it would be the same, but just at a different level</p> <p>P1: Because we're quite clear aren't we when we work with young people now, I think we're quite clear about what the boundaries are and when we would have to take information and pass it on to somebody else, you know whether it be the parent or the staff, but with young adults...</p> <p>P4: I guess it depends what age a young adult is and how much it's their...you know, once they get to 18 are they making their...</p> <p>P2: Consent, you mean?</p>

	<p>P4: Yeah their consent</p> <p>P1: That's what I was thinking</p> <p>P4: It might be a slightly different relationship, in that sense. Because in that sense, they wouldn't have been, often we work with pupils whose permission had been given on their behalf so maybe that would change the dynamic, I don't know, possibly.</p> <p>P3: It's one thing to say to a 10 year old 'everything you say to me is private, I'm not going to discuss it with somebody else, but if someone is hurting you or something is happening to you that you don't want to happen, and you want it to stop but you don't know how, then I might need to talk to somebody else, is that all right?' Now it's one thing to say that to a 10 year old but if an 18 or 20 year old is coming to you and saying I need to tell you something but I don't want you to tell someone else then that's a different issue altogether isn't it?</p> <p>P1: Yeah I think you'd need to have new procedures and guidelines wouldn't you in place as a service we'd have to have that for working with that age range probably</p> <p>P2: I think we'd have to know about College systems for safeguarding</p> <p>P1: Yeah, I would think</p> <p>P2: And just check that we align as well with their systems as we do with schools</p>
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		<p>P2: But it's not necessarily informed consent from a child</p> <p>P1: But maybe it would be from the level of an adult</p> <p>P2: Well not necessarily if they've got a learning difficulty</p> <p>P1: Yeah, that's the other thing isn't it, whether they're able to give informed consent themselves if they have severe learning difficulties then they might not be able to give informed consent in which case I think you'd be going to the parent or carer for that. But you'd still want to know that they were happy for the work to go ahead</p> <p>P3: And you would have to rely on the College to make sure that was done properly</p> <p>P4: Yes</p> <hr/> <p>P3: There'd be issues about what you kept in terms of records and how you kept them as records because obviously this would come under the freedom of information</p> <p>P1: You might just need more formalised agreements as well in terms of when you speak to the young adult, you know, if I end up writing a consultation record who specifically are you going to agree for me to send this to? I think for children, to a certain extent we don't think about that we say well we'll copy that, you know parents get a copy, school get a copy and if CaMHS are involved we'll send them a copy as long as parents don't mind, but with a young adult there might be certain people they want to have a copy and</p>
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		<p>other people that they think actually no leave them out of it I don't want them to be involved or see what I've said or see what's been written, so you know, there might need to be a bit of tweaking to the procedures probably a little bit</p> <p>P2: So does it raise the issue of who the client it a bit more?</p> <p>P1: It would, wouldn't it</p>
		<p>P2: I suppose ethically there is a big difference isn't there, because children have a right to attend school but no one has the right to attend College so there is a big difference in the work that we would do from that point of view that we've supported schools sometimes to meet the needs of pupils and students but in an FE College, um we've got to be careful that we're not jeopardising their placements I suppose but I don't know how we'd do that with the work that we do but, that there isn't, I presume, I don't think there's the same commitment towards the students in FE that you get in the school and you don't always get it in school, let's be honest</p>
	<p>3. Established support from external agencies</p>	<p>P3: It depends what you mean about information as well because the student support organisation is very very good, and very efficient</p> <p>Colleges have a very good network of counsellors and lots of links with outside voluntary agencies and things like that, all of which have bases within the institutions so they would have access to that sort of</p>

		<p>thing anyway</p>
		<p>I think they'd probably rather pay their own people to do research and development than buy in from outside</p>
		<p>Consultants maybe go in and offer a systemic approach</p>
		<p>P1: There's Connexions, so they would, you know, I'm thinking more information giving</p> <p>P4: They wouldn't be working at this level though, would they?</p> <p>P3: No they're not</p> <p>P4: But then that service is being cut isn't it?</p> <p>P2: OfSTED are quite active around the systemic end</p> <p>P3: Student's union provide a good network of agencies working, and they have a specialist advisors who will help students with financial problems and you know, where to get grants and stuff like this and they have quite a good assessment network as well. They have specialists who would do things like the SpLD assessments and things like this to help students to get their disability students allowance. What they don't have is people who can give psychological advice and it's really hard for adults pupils to get any kind of psychological diagnosis and the only place they can send them is to the GP, the university's GP, and um, to get psychological advice is really difficult</p>

		<p>P3: I can't think of any direct involvement by other agencies with any of my students, either in the groups in the FE College or at the university. I can't think of anybody! And one of the consistent complaints was the fact that social services didn't do anything! Although they'd been involved with them all the time while they were at school. As soon as they went off to FE, they weren't bothered</p> <p>P1: I think from my experience from when I worked for Connexions I think that some of the roles within Connexions and within youth services, sometimes working with older students you'd sometimes end up straying into kinda psychological territory a little with the kind of therapeutic type work</p> <p>P3: Yes!</p> <p>P1: whilst feeling totally inadequate to be doing it but because you'd manage to develop a really good rapport with the student and they trust you, that's where I ended up trying to use psychology from my degree to help me whilst thinking, actually I don't feel like I'm the best qualified person to be doing this, so I think in those situations, if we were thinking about the therapeutic side of things</p> <p>P1: I think that perhaps there are people who are doing those kind of roles now who we would be able to support in those roles or that could do that work so that's the only example that I could think of</p> <p>P3: And some of the mental health agencies, you know adult mental health um, does a lot of work with students who suffer with things likes depression, bipolar and things like that, um, who else? Who else have</p>
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		I come across?
2. Constraints	1. EP capacity	I guess if we think that it would be a time-limited role so if we were, for example, named as a link EP we wouldn't necessarily be able to do all these things fully so would there be any that we'd be saying actually, it wouldn't necessarily be in our remit or would be a lower priority?
		In an ideal world that would be quite a high priority I guess because if you've got limited sessions you'd want to have the biggest impact you can so I suppose training would be very high up there
		But all our traded is to do with schools isn't it, it's do with our capacity so it's difficult. P3: It doesn't have to be though does it? That could be a growth area, if you were looking to trade a service, that would be a growth area
		But it's just the size maybe. I can't imagine being an EP for the College
		It's a huge amount of work potentially
	2. EP post-16 knowledge	P1: I don't have any P2: None P3: None P4: No I don't have any either, no [contact with FE Colleges]
		P4: Going back to, going off on a tangent here, going back to direct work with individual students, I mean I don't do very much work with students above year 9 maybe, or year 10 now and then and again so my experience of actually working with older people is actually minimal really so you know, I think that's, that would be an interesting gap in our experience going into work in Colleges with FE. I think the schools

		<p>maybe have that view that when they get to sixth form, they maybe don't need our involvement already</p> <p>P2: That's a good point really, because at the moment we're meant to work up to 19 but if they leave school at 18, they're not getting us involved really past 16 so maybe extending the age range to 25 is going to drop off at 23 and then they can involve us not much past 20 so we'll just about be going up to the age range we've always supposed to and maybe a bit beyond</p> <p>I've not had any experience of SLD I think I'd find that quite difficult knowing how to pitch things at the right levels so you're obviously respecting the fact that they're young adults but at the same time knowing that the language that you use and the conversations that you have or that you're even able to have would be very, very different so you know they're all things that I think would be more challenging perhaps to some of us who don't have that experience</p> <p>At the other end you have this juggernaut of a system trundling along you don't want to prejudice this child's chances within the system - it's very difficult. It's a whole new ball game</p>
3. Potential	1. College issues	<p>P1: I think what you'd want to see is more of a continuity in the level of support because what I'd hate to see happens and it may be what happens is that these students we're talking about feel very supported throughout their special school education, you know, primary, secondary, and then feel that that support kind of really drops to much lower levels when they get to FE College. You know in the same way, I don't</p>

		<p>know if you've come across it with early years cases where the family might have had a team around the child with all these other people involved and then they go to school and it's suddenly the parents are saying you know 'where are all these key people that were sat around the table and now I've got nobody? What's going on?' And you, I wonder, so I think it's for me it's a continuity in the level of support so they don't suddenly feel that once they're out the door of the school and in the door of the College that they've just been forgotten about really</p>
		<p>P3: Yeah, that is quite important because a lot of the Tutors know very very little about their children other than a label. I've worked with students who I've known in schools and the Tutors have had no idea of the levels of difficulty of these children</p>
		<p>A lot of the complaints I used to get from students a lot of them were living away from home was that especially those who'd come from the care system, they think that now you're at university you don't need anybody you can get on with it now but all these years they've held your hand and done everything for you but now all of a sudden you have to do it for yourself and they used to find themselves quite adrift in a lot of cases, not knowing where to turn, and they needed that bit of support</p>
		<p>They don't have the level of authority to be able to negotiate with Tutors in the same way whereas if you went in with an EP hat on they would probably listen to you more so that would offer a different dimension</p>

		<p>to the university or the College in terms of the way in which Tutors could be supported which isn't available to them at the moment</p>
		<p>The people who don't have the knowledge are the people who are supporting the students and they're the people who need the knowledge but that would be a training issue for the College</p>
		<p>They've had so much work leading up to going to College, you'd hope their needs might have been identified you'd think, but maybe not, maybe it's developing</p>
		<p>Whether Colleges can afford to pay for that and whether they would be willing to pay for that is a separate issue. And a lot of it comes down to finance</p>
		<p>And one of the consistent complaints was the fact that social services didn't do anything! Although they'd been involved with them all the time while they were at school. As soon as they went off to FE, they weren't bothered</p>
		<p>P4: It would be interesting to know how long Colleges do keep them on their books from what you hear anecdotally young people with behavioural difficulties do struggle when they get to College, perhaps don't get the support, but that's just anecdotal really</p> <p>I: So you're saying that sort of data about what happens next</p> <p>P3: I think that information is there, that information is on file, information about statements and things, the</p>

		<p>question is, who reads the file?</p> <p>P1: there are agencies who do, we know about NEETs don't we, not in education, employment, training, so we know there's a whole vast database kept somewhere, or there used to be, whether they still do it now, I think they still are, that was a target population wasn't it, you know young people who are NEET, so there is that data around</p> <p>P3: But that seems to have dropped off the radar lately</p> <p>P3: And what doesn't happen is the review, there's no regular review. Obviously their progress reports go in the files and the learning mentors or support staff whoever is working with the child has an up-to-date running record of what they've done and things like this. But I've never seen any evidence in any of the files that anybody actually sat down and did a systematic review of what the child's, well the student's, needs were, whether they were being met, whether they had to change what was going on and what the student thought. I didn't see any of that. That was probably something that, I'd, I'd be interested to know if any of this does happen. It probably should happen but whether it does or not I don't know</p> <p>P1: I think what you'd want to see is more of a continuity in the level of support because what I'd hate to see happens and it may be what happens is that these students we're talking about feel very supported throughout their special school education, you know, primary, secondary, and then feel that that support</p>
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		<p>kind of really drops to much lower levels when they get to FE College.</p>
		<p>P3: But sometimes these students do need an advocate. I remember being told by a Tutor once that I've spent far too much time with one particular child because you know 'she knows far more than she lets on, she's just been lazy' and I looked at the Tutor and I said that 'she's one of my ex-clients and she has severe language processing problems she can't remember from one minute to the next what she's said and she can't process language to save her life' and the Tutor looked at me and I said 'superficially, you could take her to a cocktail party and everyone would think what a wonderful girl she was but she does not understand a word of what she says or what she does' and this Tutor had no idea of what her level of difficulty was so sometimes you know, they do need an advocate and it's it's what you say, it's this, you know, where do you pitch yourself along this line? Because as a psychologist, you're the advocate for the child but you're trying to promote this child's independence you're trying to take this child's views into account</p>
	<p>2. Legislation</p>	<p>P2: I don't think it has been but I wonder if it will be if we're going to health care plans that go up to the age of 25 then maybe that might be more relevant because then maybe we're looking at assessment in some cases of children who are 18</p> <p>P3: It's to do with funding though isn't it, and once you get beyond the age of 16 you move into a different</p>

		<p>funding regime don't you</p> <p>P2: At the moment but I wonder if that's the plan with the new system</p> <p>P4: It's useful like if we're going to move in this direction if the PEP could have more of a strategic role we need somebody in a sense in that role to push our role into FE Colleges</p> <p>They're not getting us involved really past 16 so maybe extending the age range to 25 is going to drop off at 23 and then they can involve us not much past 20 so we'll just about be going up to the age range we've always supposed to and maybe a bit beyond</p> <p>There might be a change as well when the new legislation comes in because the new ideas of statements obviously in the past they haven't involved us after year 9 because by the time you went through the process and it went to a panel and you got a statement of special needs out of it, the child's sitting A levels so you know, it hasn't been worth it</p> <p>With the gradual realignment of statements, if you like, to where they were meant to be, which was for the more seriously disadvantaged students it might be that teachers will find it a good idea to get us involved with older students because you've taken out the money factor, haven't you?</p>
	3. EP role	<p>I would have thought that knowledge of psychology is going to be fairly high because that's our unique position, isn't it? I wouldn't have thought there'd be anyone else supporting the students in College providing that role?</p> <p>Because I'm thinking if parents are going to staff and asking for support then that might be helpful to staff wouldn't it? If we could put that support in instead of them having to do it P4: Because often it's relationships that are important at all levels are they really?</p>

		<p>I think the senior staff as well, I think for senior staff they're sometimes quite isolated aren't they in all educational institutions but I think the politics is complicated in Colleges and maybe some staff would value having EP involvement</p>
		<p>Because it'd [research and development] be something to really, a very positive thing we can offer about our role isn't it P1: I think so P4: To be going in, it's quite a positive thing to be offering P1: And it's quite a unique thing, I don't think many other agencies - P4: - Even if they don't - P1: - Other agencies that would go in and say 'we feel confident that we can come in and offer this kind of work to you' so I do think it's something that needs to be a high priority</p>
		<p>I suppose we could have a very useful role, it might not come out very often but we might [critical incident]</p>
		<p>P1: What came to my mind was thinking about staff support and that kind of thing, whether there would be a role there in terms of supervision of staff or you know</p> <p>P4: Yes</p> <p>P1: Thinking about stress that they might be experiencing, or even just in terms of their own professional development, whether we might have a role there perhaps.</p>
		<p>P3: Possibly input on specific courses, for people who are going to be going into the caring professions for instance, or into teacher training so some basic psychology you know just, some basic neuropsychology or something like that</p> <p>I: For a professional going into an FE College? Or for the students?</p>

		<p>P3: Yes</p> <p>I: The professionals</p> <p>P3: For students going into the caring professions, things like listening skills, positive behaviour management so you're not just screaming at people because they're not doing what you're asking. You know, there are ways and means, and I think sometimes, that's missing, the worst lecture I've ever seen was actually delivered by somebody who was running teacher training and she said that she wasn't going to be there for the whole of the lecture because she had to go out and do some supervision of a student and she was going out to criticise someone's else's lesson and her lecture was the worst organised learning session I've ever seen, it was appalling. I think sometimes a bit of basic psychology would help on some of these courses</p> <p>I think as psychologists that we would want to be promoting the independence and the autonomy and the resiliency of these young people</p>
4. Influences on views	1. Limited post-16 knowledge	P1: I don't have any P2: None P3: None P4: No I don't have any either, no [contact with FE Colleges]
	2. Legislation	They're not getting us involved really past 16 so maybe extending the age range to 25 is going to drop off at 23 and then they can involve us not much past 20 so we'll just about be going up to the age range we've always supposed to and maybe a bit beyond

**Appendix 14: SEN Team Manager's interview, extracts from each theme and sub-theme**

Theme	Sub-theme	Quotations
1. Influences on views	1. Limited post-16 knowledge	I- None at all?
		M- No reason to. Statements cease when the child leaves school um, any child who's accessing FE some of them do that from 14, through the schools, we have no direct contact with the College, we have contact via through the school who's placing the child in the College for part-time experience. My team has no direct contact with the College. I have some contact with the College as Manager because of different panels I sit on.
		So I have meetings with [name] once every half term. That's it, but most of the team none at all.
		M- We'll support them if they are in a school that has sixth form provision so if they're staying in a school setting we will continue to do the annual reviews or attend the transition reviews, um, but if they leave school none whatsoever. Because the statement ceases and my team is set up to deal solely with statemented children and once they've passed over to Connexions and the LDA process and they move out of school, absolutely none at all. So I've no idea what happens to them. Even if we know what their pathway was when they were leaving, if that doesn't happen, we have no idea. They go.
Critical incident work. (PAUSE). Don't you do that either? Sorry, I'd have thought somebody would have		

	<p>to do critical incident work with Colleges now, so if it's not EPs, who's doing it? Well that's just another gap in my knowledge! I would have assumed that somebody would have been doing critical incident work with them.</p>
	<p>M- They're just assumptions. Assumption, I just assumed that all Colleges would have somebody who would do that.</p>
	<p>And we're only talking at the minute, I'm focused my answers, whether that was what you intended or not, onto Buttonsley College, but that's not the whole raft - an awful lot of children going to independent Colleges, you know, the likes of [College name] or [College name]. So, I don't know if they have psychological input now or not. Some of the great big independent support providers, the ISPs, they do have their own psychologist on board but I don't know about those other little Colleges around here. Do they or don't they have psychology input? I don't know.</p>
	<p>So I don't know, because I don't know enough about that part of the world to know, whether or not, I don't know enough about what goes on in Colleges, quite honestly, so I don't know. But it's very interesting! Because you never, I'd never questioned it, what happens when they leave school. Never had to because I've never been involved with them once they leave school part of the world. Be interesting to see what you get out of all of this.</p>

	2. Limited knowledge of EP role	<p>But individual assessment work? I don't know because I don't know enough about all the standardised tests that psychologists do. At what age do those stop? So what assessments are you going to be doing?</p>
		<p>If it's the standardised assessments, I don't know how high they go, if they stop at 16, do they stop at 18 or do they actually go on to give you adults because different ones come in and out at different levels don't they so that one's hard to tell because it depends on the type of assessments you'd be doing. Certainly no work assessments, but all of those ones on self-esteem. I don't know if they go up as far as College, but that's my own lack of knowledge. I don't know how high they go</p>
		<p>If I was clearer on what these are I think the individual work with students is really important but whether it's the assessment or whether it's the intervention, I'm not sure, because as I said earlier, I'm not sure what assessment you can do</p>
		<p>Because education doesn't stop at school, don't they have educational psychologists in the universities? So who does that there? It does open a can of thought thinking, well how does that happen then?</p>
		<p>As you said, it's counsellors, but they're not necessarily trained psychologists. Do they need them? Is a counsellor enough? What is the difference? I don't know. More questions, questions in that respect but why psychologists rather than trained counsellors. What is it that a psychologist could offer that a trained counsellor can't?</p>

		<p>I- Do you have any thoughts about what that might be?</p> <p>M- I don't know. Is it the assessments? Is it the psychological I mean a lot of counsellors do, say for example, CBT, they don't have to be psychologists to do that. So what is it a psychologist does that nobody else does that nobody else can do? I don't know the answer to that. I really don't know the answer to that. There are certain closed assessments but that doesn't mean that others couldn't do them, just means that psychology profession has a strangle-hold on the ones that they want to hold to themselves because a long time ago, the BPVS was a closed assessment, only psychology, well nowadays, anybody can do that.</p>
<p>2. Considerations</p>	<p>1. Service delivery</p>	<p>Having a named link EP. I think it's always good to have someone linked. They might not do all the work but you're going to have to have a good relationship. It's the way, I'm saying that because it's always the way I've worked as an advisory teacher, it's how I've organised the AMOs, you get far better build up of relationships when it's one person rather than a different person each time because you get to know the school / College and they get to know you. If it's constantly someone new who doesn't have the same knowledge, so that's very important as well.</p> <p>Somebody has to have a strategic position but I think for educational psychology, educational psychology function as opposed to role, are they different things...no. They do have to have because if there is no</p>

		<p>strategic role is the College going to engage?</p>
		<p>So I think that's the thing - development, what is an educational psychology service there for and how are you going to interact</p>
		<p>But the same thing, if they don't have one assumes that would they trade, would they buy you in? Because you wouldn't offer, would it be the same as you offer to local College and the same basis as you offer to schools with a core element and trading, you know, you're not going to offer a core element to independent Colleges so it's all going to be based on trading so it's going to be a totally different relationship between someone who's buying you as a traded service and someone's who's buying you as a core entitlement. So how that develops will depend very much on where does this go - are you getting that as a core or are you buying it as a traded? Because if it's traded, you're putting yourself into the 'sell yourself as something they don't know that they need or want' which is an entirely different thing, from we're about to give you the service and it's not going to cost you anything.</p>
	<p>2. Legislation</p>	<p>If the child has got mental capacity, then they are entitled and legally entitled to make their own decisions</p>
		<p>I suppose that's where the strategic level comes in, what is it that they're going to do strategically with EPs in terms of further education? It's not clear from the Code, I don't think it's particularly in there, you know in the new indicative in there, in the old Code it's not in there at all but I don't know about the indicative Code,</p>

		<p>saying about psychology after post-16, you know, it's still post-16. Participation age is going up but it's not in schools so we've already got that happening, isn't it. The change there. Participation age is going up but that doesn't mean they're staying at school so the statement's still going, although they have to stay in education. Because it can't stay if it's not in a school. So there's a whole, mis-match happening over the next few years.</p>
		<p>M- No, [the statement's] school based and if they go onto independent, or training provider, or go to the College the statements go. So there's, if they stayed in the school, statement stays, but often they're gone. So the age has gone, but the statement hasn't. But it will be in place until the end of the academic year in which they turn 19 if they're in a school. Private or state school, it will remain. Not everybody recognises that. They think because the age is going up, the statement's going up with them, but it's not. So that's something that needs to be looked at too for the next year, it's going to all change.</p>
		<p>M- I think, I've always said, since they've stopped EPs having to be teachers it's a theoretical knowledge, it's not the same as actually having taught in any of those places. It's a vastly different thing. So I think they need to have a very good familiarity but you're not going to get it...it's one thing to talk about teaching, it's another to teach. Sorry, I don't mean to be critical, it's my own personal view about something I don't like about how they've moved that profession on.</p>

		<p>Because it will take time to put systems in place, they can't suddenly announce that EPs are now going to work with young adults up to 25 because you don't have the capacity to work with all those up to 25 so there has to be a massive overhaul of how all of it works</p>
		<p>M- I don't think so. I think it's a massive, massive...I think that somebody has to be looking at it because I can't see anything in any of the documentation, I don't see anything about the psychology service working beyond schools, but if we're going to 25, who is going to psychologically support those youngsters? Some of them won't need it, there's absolutely no doubt that some of them will not need it but I do think I think it's great that somebody's actually looking at this, because I don't think the Government has necessarily. (LAUGHS) There's nothing, as I say, I might have missed it, but I haven't seen anything that says the psychology service will offer support to an older range. And why has it always been to 16? Well, until leaving school.</p>
	<p>3. College knowledge of EP role</p>	<p>Research and development - project work. Isn't that part of the good knowledge of practice elsewhere? It's beyond that because, is it about you doing the research and development, personally as an individual educational psychologist, or is it about using the research and development of others?</p> <p>M- So that can be important because it's going to be something new, the Colleges ought to be finding out how can they best use having an EP there that they've never had before. So I would have thought that</p>

		<p>would have been fairly important as well.</p>
		<p>M- Research and development, I think it's going to be something very new so we're going to have to find out exactly what it is needs doing in psychological terms to support those youngsters because it's not something they've had.</p>
		<p>Schools are very clear of the consultative model, are Colleges? So that will all have to be very clear because sometimes they're going to want them to come in and do this assessment and tell us what we've got to do, you need to be very careful that isn't that we're coming in and telling you what to do, we're suggesting, consulting and I think that will have to be the thing that's smoothed out because I don't think Colleges have a clue what EPs do actually. Because they've never had to work with them so why would they know?</p>
	<p>4. Established support</p>	<p>I- Currently, are you aware of any other services or agencies that could provide any of these functions?</p> <p>M- No.</p> <p>M- Well if they're extreme, there's CaMHS. For the average child who's doing ok, no. For the child who's having difficulties, you've got YOS, you've got Spurgeons, you've got targeted youth support, you've got IYPSS, you've got positive activities... you know, but they tend to be people who have had significant difficulty. I think that whatever the average child looks like, I don't think I've ever seen an average child in</p>

		<p>my life, but one who's gone through school without too many issues, one who's, I think for those... I'm not</p> <p>I- So thinking of those who have a statement...</p> <p>M- No no, even those with a statement who have moderate learning difficulties and go through school with no major issues, they chug along, who have made progress, who are not socially isolated, there's not issues with them in terms of their behaviour, or not significant behaviour issues, those ones terrible phrase, they just chug along. I've no idea who's there to support those children beyond Prospects. But the children who have had a raft of significant difficulties, there's all sorts of support services for them - targeted youth, CaMHS, those ones, I think have got more support mechanisms there but they're the ones who don't do so well in College, so there's a mis-match that the services are there for the ones who actually will struggle but the ones who could go on and keep chugging, I am not aware of any services for those children. Doesn't mean there aren't any - I'm not aware of them.</p>
		<p>As you said, it's counsellors, but they're not necessarily trained psychologists.</p>
	<p>5. Ethical considerations</p>	<p>M- The conflict between parents and the young adult themselves because at one point, if you take mental capacity into consideration, um, if the child has got mental capacity, then they are entitled and legally entitled to make their own decisions. And what you as an EP may be saying to support the child could put you in conflict with the parents who, who have different wishes for their children and that could put you in</p>

		<p>an ethical, are you supporting the child or the family? So that would need to be much clearer as the children became older. When they're children, it's the parents and that's why they have parental responsibility. But at the point where a child has got capacity to make decisions, deemed to make decisions for themselves, like assessing, an example is a youngster I worked with in the past was deemed to have mental capacity and signed a do not resuscitate she had a medical condition, her parents were raging, furious, because they wanted her resuscitated each time she had one of these episodes. She was deemed to have mental capacity therefore her parents had no right to overturn her do not resuscitate. Therefore, that's an extreme situation that's a life and death but I would imagine over educational provision and the way things happen for a child you might find an ethical issue there. But if you're thinking what's right for this child, or young person going forwards, that would then be where most conflict, if any, would come from</p> <p>I- So who do you think should give consent for the involvement of an educational psychologist when we're talking about young adults?</p> <p>M- These young adults. And again that's back to this mental capacity. They have the right to do that. We had a youngster 2 years ago, maybe 3 years ago now, where the mother wanted something the child did not want and she clearly did not want and then there was the question of well actually maybe she does want it and mother's just masking the whole things and she went through a mental capacity test and she</p>
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		had the capacity to decide what she wanted for herself so and she was 16 so therefore it was entirely her call and I think it's if you're talking with the young adult, it needs to be the young adult. It would be a, uh, if the child, with a statement, it would be the young adult making the decision. Why if they're capable of making them, should they not be able to make their own decisions? Might not always be what their parents want but then that happens with children who don't have statements. It's not always what the parents want that happens, is it?
3. Constraints	1. EPs' post-16 knowledge	M- Based on what they ought to know or what they actually know? Because I suspect that knowledge and resources, how much does the EP know about the resources available in Colleges? I think they could and should, if we're going up there
		M- Yeah but I think that's something EPs would have to be on a learning curve for because I don't know how much they are aware of what happens in the Colleges.
		How much experience do EPs have within these organisations to support changes because you don't know what they are to start with
		M- Well there will be one for a start! Right now, there is no relationship between EPs and FE Colleges because to the best of my knowledge, they don't ever go in because that's not how the system's set up.
	2. Distinct EP contribution	Working with and supporting parents. Less so I think, there's an element of it but I think the focus needs to

		<p>be more by they're that age they should be far more independent and parents should be, it's working with them to let them let their children go and be more independent. Because we still hear, 'ohhhh', you know, they've got from little school to big school and now they're going from big school to the big bad world and College. Parents need to, I don't know that that necessarily needs to be the psychologist doing that</p>
		<p>I would have thought less so, because the Colleges can do those assessments</p>
		<p>If it's academic assessments, they can be done by the Colleges.</p>
		<p>Information giving, I don't think that's a vast thing for psychologists. Anybody can give information of where to look for things</p>
		<p>M- Yeah, if you don't have the knowledge of psychology, why are you a psychologist?</p>
	3. EP capacity	<p>I think it will be, either they'll welcome it with open arms but then find it's not what they thought it would be, and they'll back off, I think it'll be quite a rocky path initially because of resources 'what will you actually be able to offer'.</p>
		<p>Which is why I said this developing a named EP, I shouldn't think there isn't enough to have 1 EP for 1 College - the size of these Colleges! I think you're going to need maybe a couple at least, rather than just 1!</p>
		<p>But long term, (exhales) if everybody's to go to 25, I mean our own team, a slight digression, how are we</p>

		going to keep that going if everything goes to 25? We don't have the capacity. So, there needs to be a whole look at how things are going to work. Your service as much as ours.
	4. Knowledge of EP role	I think it will be, either they'll (College staff) welcome it with open arms but then find it's not what they thought it would be, and they'll back off, I think it'll be quite a rocky path initially because of resources 'what will you actually be able to offer'.
4. Potential	1. EP role	<p>Fairly high because I'm assuming this is about information about supporting what's going from schools to the Colleges and about how these children can best be supported if that's what's meant by information giving</p> <p>M- I think they should have a transitional period where if they've..., remember some of these students won't have seen an EP even though they've got a statement, you know, if things are going well for them in school, they won't necessarily have had any more EP input other than maybe for the annual review. They won't have had but I think that transition over into the big bad world it might be useful just to see that they are settled in the interim, just to get them settled, because getting this on a bigger thing going all the way to 25 it's not going to happen quick but even now, it's just that transition to get them over, settled, make sure things are in place, things are happening for them. That wouldn't be a bad thing, to be able to do that as an interim thing</p>

	2. Students' needs	<p>M- Individual work with individual students - therapeutic intervention. I'm going to put that in moderate for now because I don't know that they get very much individual intervention for psychological reasons at the minute and I think that a lot of those children probably need it</p>
		<p>Some of those children do need intervention because thinking of children who go from [SEBD school] not 1 child in the 5 years I've been in Buttonsley has completed a course in the College. Not one! Zip, nada. So there does need to be some work done directly with those students, why are they failing so abjectly? And is that because there is no research and development and project work around finding what it is they need to change the system? Yeah, I think individual work with children. They have it all the way through school and they're dropped like hot potatoes when they go to College and some of them will really need that.</p>
		<p>But in the interim it could be help them transition into the new settings. Some of them won't need much; some of them might need a lot because it is a huge change again. And autistic children in particular find Buttonsley College really difficult.</p>
		<p>M- That beautiful atrium but it's, it's... it's...</p> <p>I- So open?</p> <p>M- Mmmm, it doesn't suit all of them; some of them might find that really, really hard. So having somebody going in to the College to support them could be an interim step.</p>

**Appendix 15: SEN Team's focus group, extracts from each theme and sub-theme**

Theme	Sub-theme	Quotations
1. Influences on views	1. Limited post-16 knowledge	<p>How much contact do you currently have with Further Education Colleges and what is the focus of that work?</p> <p>P2: Very little myself</p> <p>P1: On a day to day job yeah it's very little. I suppose my job is a little different as I deputise for the Manager, the SEN Manager, and also I do attend transition meetings where there are people from further ed..., like Buttonsley College, their SEN department, they attend those meetings and so we can have a direct conversation then, um, but that's really about it. We have very little day to day contact</p> <p>P3: I don't have any day to day contact</p> <p>P2: Maybe the odd phone call</p> <p>P1: what we tend to get more than anything, rather than College, we get the person who's going to attend College or the parent of the person who's going to attend College they might ring us up to ask for another copy of the statement or for something else or could we give advice on this and we do it that way but it's not really direct is it?</p> <p>P2: No. We offer hear a discussion about the College and the reviews about where they're going to go and</p>

		<p>what they're going to do</p> <p>P3: We do through Connexions but no direct contact</p>
		<p>So, what is your role more generally, at the moment, with supporting students who have had statements of SEN when they pass the age of 16</p> <p>P1: Again, um, for yourselves it's, you know, for an assessment and monitoring officer, it's not a great deal; again it might be somebody will ring up and ask for some information that has happened in the past. For my role, I go and do a lot of the out of borough um, so it's either working with health or um social care in bringing a young person back into the borough uh and looking at what is available post-16 back in borough, um, and it's more to do with the finances really.</p>
		<p>P2: We used to support Connexions didn't we but we don't do that any more do we? Write reports?</p> <p>P3: What the transition plan used to be?</p> <p>P2: No. If they were applying for these residential Colleges</p> <p>P1: Yeah, we still do but it, it, it's, it's sort of transferred that the Connexions person that got to do the writing we were just giving the information and they were doing the written up work but at one time we had used to do the write-up of what we felt that the young person would need and benefit from um and what provision they'd had while they were at school but now the Connexions person just that and we just do it</p>

		<p>verbally really</p> <p>P3: But once they've left full time education we don't have any dealings with them even if they've got a statement, but the statement ceases any way doesn't it?</p> <p>P2: Yeah</p> <p>P3: So we don't have any dealings with them at all do we?</p> <p>P3: Our difficulty to some extent is that we don't really know what goes on beyond [schools] so it's difficult to make a judgement about how effective some, I mean you hear stories that Buttonsley College has a very good reputation and you have confidence in the fact that although the statement's ending, there's a good link with Connexions and that Buttonsley College gets a good press but is that true of all Colleges?</p> <p>P2: Yes, Yes</p> <p>P3: If you worked in another authority, passing them over from a school to another College, would you have so much confidence in that?</p> <p>P2: You do hear it's often said that they wouldn't put up with that at College, they won't cope at College, so, but we don't really see that we don't really see what goes on do we. We don't really know figures do we about how many progress or succeed do we?</p> <p>P3: Yeah, yeah, that's right</p>
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	<p>P1: The drop-out rate is very high</p> <p>P2: Yeah, yeah</p> <p>P1: It is high</p> <p>P3: I imagine that would be very dispiriting for schools to see that but we don't get that feedback do we?</p> <p>P2: No</p> <p>I: Would you like to?</p> <p>P1 and P2: Yeah</p> <p>P3: Yeah I think it would be useful, I think it would be useful. Because you want to see is that statement having an impact and is the transition work having an impact and, you know, if it isn't having the desired impact and people are dropping out after a year or so then what was the point in spending all that money and...</p>
	<p>I: Ok, do you have any others thoughts or comments that you'd like to share about what we've been talking about today?</p> <p>P3: I can't think of any</p> <p>P2: No</p> <p>P1: I'm just thinking, what will happen to them?</p>

		P3: Who knows, [P1]?!
	2. Knowledge of EP role	<p>How much contact do you currently have with Educational Psychologists?</p> <p>P1: Ooh, um, we have quite a lot. Putting it in a percentage, I suppose on a daily contact...</p> <p>P2: I suppose it's whether you're talking face to face or just that we're reading what they've written</p> <p>P1: We have a lot of contact from reading information</p> <p>P2: A lot of contact yeah</p> <p>P1: We do attend meetings that they attend, and we do have meetings with the Educational Psychology Service as a separate meeting so sort of 3 aspects so it is quite a lot. I wouldn't really like to put a percentage on it really because it's 3 different lots, isn't it</p> <p>P3: I suppose it depends what you mean by contact, as you said. Obviously we're getting contact every day through doing draft statements and obviously that's a contact because we're reading your reports, or the EP reports and we do have...</p> <p>P1 and P2: Phones. Yeah.</p> <p>P3: We have a lot of contact through phones and obviously through annual reviews and just through general chit chat and obviously we have the EP/AMO meetings termly which are important. It would be hard to specify actual percentage but I think that's an important area isn't it, the contact we do have</p>

		<p>P2: We could certainly say that your work affects us every day</p> <p>P3: Yeah, in a way</p>
	<p>3. National policy and law</p>	<p>P1: Well, I think you've got a legal point of view here as well haven't you? I think technically it should be the young person if they are able to do it. You know, as soon as they reach 18 they should be giving their own consent, if not it needs to be you know, an advocate that they agree to really. Um, and if you've got a severely disabled young person that can't make that decision then you know, parents have to seek um, that legality to be able to do that. So, I think, you know, um, the law...</p> <hr/> <p>P3: I think you might have to make it the young person wouldn't you? Because you couldn't stop legally,</p> <p>P2: As a starting point, yeah</p> <p>P3: it doesn't matter what their learning disabilities lie, when they come to 16 legally, they're allowed to smoke aren't they and we couldn't stop them doing that. At 18, they can go to the pub, you wouldn't say to a person oh legally, you're not allowed in the pub because you've got a learning disability or you're not allowed to make that decision. Could you take that same approach? Legally, if they're the age of consent and so forth, that should be their choice.</p> <hr/> <p>P1: You see, I remember with a young lady that we had here who parents she was very very disabled um and almost non-communicative uh in a way and her parents um had to get an agreement taken out had to</p>

		<p>... (pause) what am I looking for? Power of attorney to manage her finances. And they had to prove that she wasn't able to manage them.</p> <p>P1: Um, as I said, I think from a legal point of view we look at the age group we don't look at the, you know, the functioning, the levels, and perhaps changes should be looked at functioning level not age, not chronological age</p>
2. Constraints	1. EP Capacity	<p>P1: I think um, I think again it's [research and development's] time consuming and bearing in mind, I think, I think it is important but for the Educational Psychologist to keep doing this research and development and that but as for applying it to further education College I think that they could be utilised in better ways and that the research and development should be outside of that box. That's a personal opinion.</p>
	2. Distinct EP contribution	<p>P2: Would they be the most relevant ones to give information though? You have Connexions you have the College themselves...</p> <p>P3: Would that not come from, depends what your information talks about</p>
		<p>P1: Let's think...</p> <p>P2: There are other people that can do that, aren't there? That wouldn't be a key role...</p> <p>P3: for an EP? Ok?</p>
		<p>That's a key role for them or whether someone else would be providing that role?</p>

		<p>P3: -be providing that role? Yeah.</p> <p>P1: I do but I think I think they've got an awful lot to do if independent Colleges have independent EPs they're not going to stop that.</p>
		<p>P2: It is important but would it be their role? Or can that be someone else perhaps?</p> <p>P3: Depends what you mean by facilitate, what sort of collaboration you're talking about, isn't it?</p> <p>P1: It's an extremely broad area isn't it, you know?</p> <p>P2: Do you need an Educational Psychologist to facilitate collaboration or can somebody else be doing that?</p>
		<p>I: It's the same applying to a College if there was a major incident</p> <p>P2: I see</p> <p>P3: Yeah</p> <p>P1: I think that other people could do that</p> <p>P2: Yeah</p>
		<p>P2: But then again, why do you need an EP to do that? Is the EP going to make the decision?</p> <p>P3: That's the role of the EP isn't it?</p> <p>P1: They're contributing, aren't you?</p>

		<p>P2: Connexions would provide a few of those functions wouldn't they?</p> <p>P1: Yeah</p> <p>P2: Information giving, knowledge of resources and SEN, I guess, familiarity with educational organisations, they would do those things wouldn't they? And I suppose collaboration</p>
3. Potential	1. EP role	<p>P1: I think if you were to have an allocated link person to local Colleges, like Buttonsley College, I think that person could sit on the transition team. In fact, it's just altered again but if it was a monthly meeting, so that the link, you know, that link psychologist as names arose for the people going into Buttonsley College, or even elsewhere, if they haven't been directly involved with that young person, they could go to the EP who has been or who has some awareness of that young person and make that link but I think they need to be in the loop in the first place and by attending a transition meeting on a regular basis, that would support that link.</p> <p>I: So having the EPs become more involved in the transition process leading up to the transition over so the EP who does know that child makes it smoother? Is that right?</p> <p>P1: Yeah, yeah</p> <p>P1: I think also, you know we're talking about further education Colleges or post-16, wherever they go but at some point you know, the new role, or next year it will change from 0-25 but there has to be a cut-off</p>

		<p>point somewhere and what happens when it comes to 25, you know? What's going to happen then? Is it just, all this support and help and advice and everything that they've been given and that they have had, is that just going to suddenly stop? You know, because for young people who are going to need this help and support of the educational psychologist, in my opinion, are always going to need that help and support. They are going to be in a learning environment for the whole of their lives. You know, so...</p>
		<p>P3: I guess that's a sense, it's about educating parents or people who have technically been in charge of those children, well children, young people, you know it's about saying to the parents you know you've got to ease the reins of this a bit, when do they become... And that sort of discussion needs to happen probably at an earlier stage because by the time they get to an FE College, they're more responsible aren't they? So it's maybe talking to the parents a bit about that so they can start to ease off so their consent isn't so important as the child's views and maybe the transition work has started to help that maybe I don't know, that the voice of the child's hear more earlier now than it was maybe 3, 4, 5 years ago that we're saying we want to hear the child's voice, not the adult's suggesting what they do for a child any longer</p>
		<p>Where continuing support is needed that should change so that should be more on the I know you've got to have an age range as well but I think you should be looking at the functioning level it's no good having a 21 year old functioning at you know as a 6 year old and um and being expected to you know just fit in um</p>

		<p>there might be other things where an educational psychologist would be needed to give advice and support and help to people around them as well as the young person themselves.</p>
		<p>P3: Training on specific systems and conditions: problem-solving</p> <p>P2: Training for the FE College is it?</p> <p>P1: Yeah</p> <p>P3: Provided by the Educational Psychologist</p> <p>P1: I think if you want continuity from school then that's got to be a high priority</p>
	<p>2. EP knowledge</p>	<p>P1: If they're going on to further learning it would, because learning styles and one thing or another would come through the Educational Psychologist wouldn't it?</p> <p>They're not much use if they haven't got knowledge of psychology!</p> <p>P1: When, if you're looking at students' learning and... yeah, because I mean you you you start really with the very young and it's knowing that somebody who's perhaps 21 (laughs) or 18 moving on somewhere else, you know, that their levels might be that of a young child or even a toddler and yet they're in an adult world so psychologically I think,</p> <p>P3: I think it's essential</p> <p>P1: Yeah, I think it's essential</p>

		<p>P1: I think giving advice. I would think giving advice because you know you've got an Educational Psychologist who's done all this work and got to where they are and...</p>
	<p>3. Legislation</p>	<p>P1: I think also, you know we're talking about further education Colleges or post-16, wherever they go but at some point you know, the new role, or next year it will change from 0-25 but there has to be a cut-off point somewhere and what happens when it comes to 25, you know? What's going to happen then? Is it just, all this support and help and advice and everything that they've been given and that they have had, is that just going to suddenly stop? You know, because for young people who are going to need this help and support of the educational psychologist, in my opinion, are always going to need that help and support. They are going to be in a learning environment for the whole of their lives. You know, so...</p> <p>P3: Yeah, because this false sort of cut-off to a certain extent it's still not meeting the child's needs is it it's taking account of the age isn't it?</p> <p>P1: I mean, if you've got a 6 year old, you take them right the way through don't you because their mental age is still of a 6 year old hopefully if there's no problems and that but if you've got somebody who's got difficulty and they've got the mental age of a 6 year old you come to 16 and that's it finished with, it doesn't make sense, you know - how are they going to progress and move on?</p> <p>P1: But that's going to happen isn't it when it goes to 0-25 next year?</p>

		<p>P2: I guess so, it will still be monitored</p> <p>P1: It will still be monitored yes, but how it will be monitored I don't know</p> <p>I: So you're not yet sure if you will be going into reviews for the Education, Health and Care plans</p> <p>P3: Oh god no, we've no idea at all what will be happening with the Education, Health and Care plans (LAUGHS)</p> <p>P1: one of the things I've heard today from [Manager's name], because she's just been to a meeting, was that the adult social care would be taking charge of it and feeding it down rather than the way it has been starting from the bottom and going up so but that's what she's come back from a meeting and said so we'll...</p> <p>P2: So what stage would they be in charge?</p> <p>P1: Next year when we go over to the Education, Health and Care plans</p> <p>P2: What age would they be involved?</p> <p>P1: Um, well, um, they've got to be in employment or education until they're 18</p> <p>P2: Yeah, yeah?</p> <p>P1: Right, so it'll be from 18 when social care adult services naturally take over in any case that they will take over and so this will fit in with further education um, they will take charge of those um, plans that have</p>
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	<p>already been written and it will work down</p> <p>P2: So education would relinquish those plans at 18?</p> <p>P1: Well at the moment as it stands, education is the only statutory duty. So if you're going to involve an educational psychologist, the fact that they're an educational psychologist and not a clinical psychologist you're going to have to go, you know, something is going to have to happen if it's going to be a statutory duty to carry on past that and so it will because they become adults at 18 social care will take over and the education will still be a statutory part of it because it is the only statutory part</p> <p>P2: So they will be monitoring the education as well as health and social aspects?</p> <p>P1: I don't know about monitoring it but they will certainly be taking the lead on it</p> <p>P3: ok</p> <p>P1: We have to wait and see I suppose, it might change in the near future</p> <p>P2: This is a question I should know the answer to, but when does it actually start? Do you have a date?</p> <p>P3: The new plans? It's meant to be 2014 isn't it?</p> <p>P2: I know, but do we know a better date than that?</p> <p>P1: I thought it was meant to be working with the financial year but I might be wrong</p> <p>P3: Oh, so from April</p>
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		<p>P2: From April?</p> <p>P1: I might be wrong on that, I don't know</p> <p>P2: That's something we should know isn't it really?</p> <p>P3: Yeah, it's all gone quiet though</p> <p>P2: Yeah</p>
<p>4. Considerations</p>	<p>1. Ethical considerations</p>	<p>P1: I think um I think from the young person's point of view, if, if they've got the capacity, they might think they're intruding and why are they talking to my parents as well? I am 18 now, you know, I take control of everything myself. No need to talk to mum and dad, especially in light of the fact that they are expected to take on their own finances.</p> <p>P2: And almost juggling the pupil's views with perhaps the reality. Perhaps, you know, the pupil has, you know, a very low understanding really, and has unrealistic views.</p> <p>P1: Yeah</p> <p>P2: How much you have to guide them - how much is appropriate to guide them?</p> <p>P3: It depends on the person you're talking to, doesn't it. Also, I think not trying to impose your views on them</p> <p>- P2: Yes, that's what I mean really</p>

		<p>- P3: Trying to achieve that balance,</p> <p>- P2: because if someone's very limited...</p> <p>-P3: you might feel you can guide them in a certain direction but it's about listening to their feelings as well isn't.</p> <hr/> <p>P2: You know, sometimes perhaps you ought to, I don't know, not support a child in an unrealistic expectation when they're going to College to do courses that they're probably never going to work in that area, to be honest, you know, do they understand that? And what would be the role of the EP in discussing that with them?</p> <p>P3: Because there's some dichotomy between what we would want for that child and what is physically available for that child, isn't there? We might say "oh, this child should have X, Y and Z" in an ideal world but X, Y, and Z may not exist within that authority or those facilities may not be available. So ethically, what do you say to that person, do you go down the line of what is ethically right, IE what is best for that child, in the ideal world or do you go down the line of I know what's available for this child in terms of resources and therefore we've got to fit that child into that resource. So I mean, that's an ethical question isn't it?</p> <hr/> <p>who do you think is best to give consent for young adults with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities for an</p>
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		<p>EP to become involved with them in the first instance</p> <p>P2: It's very difficult isn't it, depending on the individual child and their capacity to understand</p>
		<p>P2: I think it's perhaps the young person, unless they're not able to</p> <p>P1: Yeah</p> <p>P3: But when do you define when's not able to?</p> <p>P2: Exactly, that's the problem isn't it?</p>
	<p>2. Established support</p>	<p>Currently, are you aware of any other services or agencies that might provide any of this support that we've been talking about to FE Colleges at the moment?</p> <p>P2: Connexions</p> <p>P3: Connexions, yeah</p> <p>P1: Yeah you've got organisations for like autism and things like that would give advice and support to the Colleges. Social care...</p> <p>I: Social care?</p> <p>P1: They would also find information that can support them</p> <p>P2: CaMHS I suppose, in some cases</p> <p>P1: Mmm, CaMHS</p>

		<p>P3: CaMHS, yeah, I suppose</p> <p>P2: Medical professionals such as physio</p> <p>P3: Yeah, I suppose those like physio yeah or if they've got physical disabilities yeah. I suppose the services we work there anyway</p> <p>P1: Mobility</p> <p>P2: Mmm. Visually impaired...</p> <p>P3: Sensory teams, things like that yeah.</p> <hr/> <p>It's sort of transferred that the Connexions person that got to do the writing we were just giving the information and they were doing the written up work but at one time we had used to do the write-up of what we felt that the young person would need and benefit from um and what provision they'd had while they were at school but now the Connexions person just that and we just do it verbally really</p> <hr/> <p>I mean you hear stories that Buttonsley College has a very good reputation and you have confidence in the fact that although the statement's ending, there's a good link with Connexions and that Buttonsley College gets a good press but is that true of all Colleges</p> <p>P3: If you worked in another authority, passing them over from a school to another College, would you have so much confidence in that?</p>
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		<p>P2: You do hear it's often said that they wouldn't put up with that at College, they won't cope at College, so, but we don't really see that we don't really see what goes on do we. We don't really know figures do we about how many progress or succeed do we?</p>
		<p>P1: I think there's got to be more, or what I'd like to see, um, is greater links with the schools I think that's emerging now um but uh so the young person can do a day release while they're still at school before moving on so they can be sure that's the route they want to take and so I think there could be greater links there. You know, if that, it might mean that somebody from the College actually goes into the school and teaches in the school for a day a week or something like that, runs a course, so that, you know, they know, I think 2 way benefit then, you've got the College knowing what goes on in school because they tend to be adrift from what happens in school and the expectations and it's a big jump from school to College and whereas if some of the teachers, the secondary school teachers, went in to College to look at and perhaps do, I don't know, a subject lesson at College so they know the expectations of a College as well. So I think, you know, they need greater links, and a bit more interaction between them, and that...</p>
	<p>3. Model of service delivery</p>	<p>P2: Yeah, "I know best"</p> <p>P3: Not thinking "I know best, therefore..." It's that delicate balance isn't it? Because your ethics might be totally different to someone else's ethics and their views and not saying 'we know best' type of thing</p>

## Appendix 16: Complete example of data analysis for SEN Team focus group

Coded transcription

Quote from transcript		Comment	Code
1.	P1: Ooh, um, we have quite a lot. Putting it in a percentage, I suppose on a daily contact...	A lot of contact between SEN Team and EP team	A lot of SEN Team-EP contact
2.	P2: I suppose it's whether you're talking face to face or just that we're reading what they've written	Communicative contact between EPs and SEN Team versus reading EP reports	A lot of SEN Team-EP contact
3.	P1: We have a lot of contact from reading information P2: A lot of contact yeah	A lot of contact between SEN Team and EP team through reading reports	A lot of SEN Team-EP contact
4.	P1: We do attend meetings that they attend, and we do have meetings with the Educational Psychology Service as a separate meeting so sort of 3 aspects so it is quite a lot. I wouldn't really like to put a percentage on it really because it's 3 different lots, isn't it	Quite a lot of contact between EPs and SEN Team through meetings	A lot of SEN Team-EP contact
5.	P3: I suppose it depends what you mean by contact, as you said. Obviously we're getting contact every day through doing draft statements and obviously that's a contact because we're reading your reports, or the EP reports and we do have	A lot of contact between SEN Team and EP team through reading reports	A lot of SEN Team-EP contact
6.	P1 and P2: Phones. Yeah. P3: We have a lot of contact through phones	A lot of communication through phone calls	A lot of SEN Team-EP contact

7.	and obviously through annual reviews and just through general chit chat and obviously we have the EP/AMO meetings termly which are important	Quite a lot of contact between EPs and SEN Team through meetings	A lot of SEN Team-EP contact
8.	It would be hard to specify actual percentage but I think that's an important area isn't it, the contact we do have P2: We could certainly say that your work affects us every day P3: Yeah, in a way	The contact between the SEN Team and EP team is seen as important	A lot of SEN Team-EP contact
9.	P3: Change of placements protocol through Buttonsley so that's an important area isn't it? Making sure we have contact through that and again that would be usually through a review meeting. We might discuss things beforehand and after but largely that contact through that process is actually at the annual review meeting	Quite a lot of contact between the SEN Team and EP team through meetings	A lot of SEN Team-EP contact
10.	I: Right ok, thank you. Ok. How much contact do you currently have with Further Education Colleges and what is the focus of that work? P2: Very little myself P1: On a day to day job yeah it's very little.	Little contact between SEN Team and FE Colleges	Limited SEN Team-College contact
11.	I suppose my job is a little different as I deputise for the Manager, the SEN Manager, and also I do attend transition meetings where there are people from further ed..., like	Limited contact between SEN Team and FE Colleges through transition meetings - Managerial responsibility	Limited SEN Team-College contact

	Buttonsley College, their SEN department, they attend those meetings and so we can have a direct conversation then		
12.	But that's really about it. We have very little day to day contact P3: I don't have any day to day contact P2: Maybe the odd phone call	Little contact between SEN Team and FE Colleges	Limited SEN Team-College contact
13.	P1: what we tend to get more than anything, rather than College, we get the person who's going to attend College or the parent of the person who's going to attend College they might ring us up to ask for another copy of the statement or for something else or could we give advice on this and we do it that way but it's not really direct is it?	Indirect contact between SEN Team and FE College - phone calls from parents or young adults for copies of reports or advice	Limited SEN Team-College contact
14.	P2: No. We offer hear a discussion about the College and the reviews about where they're going to go and what they're going to do P3: We do through Connexions but no direct contact	Indirect contact between SEN Team and FE College - hear about College in annual reviews or through other professionals	Limited SEN Team-College contact
15.	P1: Again, um, for yourselves it's, you know, for an assessment and monitoring officer, it's not a great deal	The SEN Team have a limited role in supporting students with Statements for SEN post-16	Limited SEN Team-post-16 students contact
16.	Again it might be somebody will ring up and ask for some information that has happened in the past.	Sharing previous information on pupils post-16	Limited SEN Team-post-16 students contact
17.	For my role, I go and do a lot of the out of borough um, so it's either working with health or um social care in bringing a	Supporting post-16 out of borough students to bring them back into borough - looking at what is	Limited SEN Team-post-16 students contact

	young person back into the borough uh and looking at what is available post-16 back in borough, um, and it's more to do with the finances really	available	
18.	<p>P2: We used to support Connexions didn't we but we don't do that any more do we? Write reports?</p> <p>P3: What the transition plan used to be?</p> <p>P2: No. If they were applying for these residential Colleges</p> <p>P1: Yeah, we still do but it, it, it's, it's sort of transferred that the Connexions person that got to do the writing we were just giving the information and they were doing the written up work but at one time we had used to do the write-up of what we felt that the young person would need and benefit from um and what provision they'd had while they were at school but now the Connexions person just that and we just do it verbally really</p>	Change in role - less involvement from SEN Team with students post-16	Limited SEN Team- post-16 students contact
19.	<p>P3: But once they've left full time education we don't have any dealings with them even if they've got a statement, but the statement ceases any way doesn't it?</p> <p>P2: Yeah</p> <p>P3: So we don't have any dealings with them at all do we?</p>	No involvement from SEN Team for students post-16 when they have left full-time education; the statement ceases	Limited SEN Team- post-16 students contact
20.	The systematic approach (Reads card). I think, (pause), I think that ought to be a high priority	Systemic approach as a high priority	-

	P2 and P3: Yeah P1: Yeah		
21.	P2: Valuing pupil's views would have to be in a high priority, wouldn't it? P1: Yeah	Valuing pupil's views as a high priority	-
22.	P3: Direct work with students - individual intervention, therapeutic intervention. Possibly would depend on the student P2: Yeah, I was thinking that P3 So it's difficult one where to measure that, um, we have to go for one or the other... P2: Put it in the middle there	Direct work with students - individual intervention as a middle priority	-
23.	P2: Working with supporting parents I think would have to go up there with pupil's views P3: Working with supporting parents that is a high priority	Working with and supporting parents as a high priority	-
24.	P1: Information giving again that's going to be high priority isn't it?	Information giving as a high priority	-
25.	P3: Depends what the information is P2: Would they be the most relevant ones to give information though? You have Connexions you have the College themselves... P3: Would that not come from, depends what your	Information giving not a high priority; other professionals can offer this	- Not unique contribution of EP

	information talks about		
26.	P1: If they're going on to further learning it would, because learning styles and one thing or another would come through the Educational Psychologist wouldn't it?	Information giving as a high priority	-
27.	P3: Again that depends what you mean by information. It could just be whether they've got a copy of the statement there...I guess it depends what is meant by information giving. I'm not too sure I would put it in.	Information giving not as a high priority	-
28.	P1: Maybe putting it in there then? Lowest priority educational psychology functions P2: Other people can give information, can't they? P3: Yeah, yeah	Disagreement between information giving as a high or low priority	- Not unique contribution of EP
29.	P1: Maybe putting it in there then? Lowest priority educational psychology functions P2: Other people can give information, can't they? P3: Yeah, yeah	Information giving as a low priority	-
30.	P3: Familiarity with educational organisations, e.g. school, special schools, FE Colleges. P1: Let's think... P2: There are other people that can do that, aren't there? That wouldn't be a key role... P3: for an EP? Ok?	Familiarity with educational organisations as a low priority; other professionals can offer it	- Not unique contribution of EP

31.	<p>Research and development (reads cards).</p> <p>P1: I wouldn't have thought, that's not relevant</p> <p>P2: Not relevant, no</p>	<p>Research and development seen as not relevant to FE Colleges</p>	-
32.	<p>P3: Direct work with students - individual assessments of learning:</p> <p>P1: I'd say high priority</p> <p>P3: High priority for that one.</p>	<p>Direct work with students - individual assessments seen as a high priority</p>	-
33.	<p>Knowledge of good practice elsewhere...</p> <p>P2: That's a bit like information giving isn't it?</p> <p>P3: Yeah</p> <p>P1: Mmm.hhhmmm</p> <p>P3: Depends what goes on, what good practice is that they put forward so I think a lowest priority. Ok?</p>	<p>Knowledge of good practice elsewhere seen as a low priority</p>	-
34.	<p>P3: Advice giving, providing advice, suggesting strategies to cope, guidance and direction, being given strategies for working with individual children and young people.</p> <p>P2: One of the most important that</p> <p>P3: Yeah, yeah.</p>	<p>Advice giving seen as a high priority</p>	-
35.	<p>Promoting inclusion.</p> <p>P1: Yeah</p> <p>P2: Yeah</p> <p>P3: middling?</p>	<p>Promoting inclusion seen as a middle priority</p>	-

	P2: Yeah		
36.	<p>P3: Training on specific systems and conditions: problem-solving</p> <p>P2: Training for the FE College is it?</p> <p>P1: Yeah</p> <p>P3: Provided by the Educational Psychologist</p> <p>P1: I think if you want continuity from school then that's got to be a high priority</p> <p>P3: Yeah.</p>	Training seen as a high priority; allows continuation from school	-
37.	<p>Multi-agency working.</p> <p>P1: Yeah</p> <p>P3: That's important but I don't think...</p> <p>P1: Yeah, perhaps a lower priority</p>	Multi-agency working as important but a low priority	-
38.	<p>P3: Knowledge of resources and SEN</p> <p>P2: This comes with these 2 doesn't it really? [indicating advice-giving and knowledge of good practice elsewhere]</p> <p>That's a key role for them or whether someone else would be providing that role?</p> <p>P3: -be providing that role? Yeah.</p>	Knowledge of resources and SEN seen as a lower priority; other professionals can offer this	- Not unique contribution of EP
39.	<p>Strategic role in LEA?</p> <p>P2: I wouldn't like to say!</p> <p>P3: (LAUGHS)</p>	Discomfort about discussing the EP's strategic role in the LEA	Uncertainty about strategic role (DELETED)

40.	P1: I personally don't think that's relevant	Strategic role as not relevant to FE College support	-
41.	P2: Ok. Don't you think they'd build up a strategy? Perhaps a better, better, links, better systems for when they're moving on?	Strategic role as relevant; strategy and systems in place	-
42.	P1: I do but I think I think they've got an awful lot to do if independent Colleges have independent EPs they're not going to stop that.	Strategic role as not important to FE College support; role of an independent EP	-
43.	P2: I don't know quite what it means. I took that to mean that they were perhaps had some involvement in the strategy of how the whole thing is managed, the best way for the pupils, which might be quite useful  P3: Mmm  P2: An overview of the whole management of it	Strategic role as important; strategy	-
44.		Disagreement over the importance of the strategic role of the EP in the LEA	Uncertainty about strategic role (DELETED)
45.	P1: Shall we put it in the lowest priority then  P3: Yeah.	Strategic role as a low priority	-
46.	Facilitating collaborating between professionals, young people and families. I think that's a very important one myself, personally.	Facilitating collaboration as a high priority	-

47.	<p>P2: It is important but would it be their role? Or can that be someone else perhaps?</p> <p>P3: Depends what you mean by facilitate, what sort of collaboration you're talking about, isn't it?</p> <p>P1: It's an extremely broad area isn't it, you know?</p> <p>P2: Do you need an Educational Psychologist to facilitate collaboration or can somebody else be doing that?</p> <p>P3: True, true</p> <p>P1: Yeah</p>	Facilitating collaboration is not unique to the EP; other professionals can offer that	Not unique contribution of EP
48.	P3: So put it in the middle-ish? Ok.	Facilitating collaboration as a middle priority	-
49.		Disagreement about importance of facilitating collaboration	-
50.	<p>Consultation (reads card).</p> <p>P2: That's quite important</p> <p>P3: Again it goes back to what you were talking about - what the problem is? Isn't it? Can someone else help? So putting it in the middling are we?</p> <p>P2: Yeah</p>	Consultation as quite important; middle priority	-
51.	<p>P3: Knowledge of psychology</p> <p>P1: It would help!</p> <p>P2: Would it help in this particular scenario though? I suppose it would. They're not much use if they haven't got</p>	Knowledge of psychology and child development as essential; high priority	EP knowledge of child development

	<p>knowledge of psychology!</p> <p>P1: When, if you're looking at students' learning and... yeah, because I mean you start really with the very young and it's knowing that somebody who's perhaps 21 or 18 moving on somewhere else, you know, that their levels might be that of a young child or even a toddler and yet they're in an adult world so psychologically I think,</p> <p>P3: I think it's essential</p>		
52.	<p>Having a named link EP (reads card).</p> <p>P2: Would be useful</p> <p>P1: I think it would be useful, that would be</p> <p>P3: Yeah, very useful.</p>	Having a named link EP seen as a high priority	-
53.	<p>Critical incident work (reads card).</p> <p>P1: I think that I would put that under</p> <p>P3: Low?</p>	Critical incident work seen as a low priority	-
54.	<p>P1: I think that other people could do that</p> <p>P2: Yeah</p> <p>P3: Mmmm</p> <p>P2: Not educational</p> <p>P1: Well, it is educational as it could affect the learning but I think it's the lowest priority</p> <p>P3: Ok. So how...</p>	Critical incident work seen a low priority; other professionals can offer that	- Not unique contribution of EP

	P1: Because other people could step in and support		
55.	P2: I think having a named link EP, we all felt was the most useful P3: Yeah I think so, I was going to say that. That's a consistent one, having that consistent approach isn't it?	Having a named link EP as a highest priority	-
56.	And advice giving and training I would have thought	Advice giving seen as a highest priority	-
57.	And advice giving and training I would have thought	Training as a highest priority	-
58.	For me that's an important one - working with and supporting parents too	Working with and supporting parents as a highest priority	-
59.	You could have put young pupil's views as well? So we're up to 4! P3: I mean in all situations, pupil's views is important isn't it? P3: Yeah, so I would go for those. Do we all agree with valuing pupil's views?	Valuing pupils' views as a highest priority function	-
60.	P2: But then again, why do you need an EP to do that? Is the EP going to make the decision?	Valuing pupil's views not seen as unique to the EP	- Not unique contribution of EP
61.	P2: Training is important too, P1: I think training P3: Yeah	Training as a highest priority	-
62.	I think giving advice. I would think giving advice because you know you've got an Educational Psychologist who's done all	Advice giving as a highest priority; EPs have worked hard to get where they are	- EP knowledge

	this work and got to where they are		
63.	<p>Direct work. Yeah. You can't really give the advice without direct work.</p> <p>P3: And why would you have a named EP if you don't...</p> <p>P2: Don't do direct work? Yeah</p> <p>P1: Ok, go with direct work?</p> <p>P3: Yeah</p>	Direct work - individual assessments seen as a highest priority; informs other functions	-
64.		Having a named link EP chosen as a highest priority	-
65.		Training chosen as a highest priority	-
66.		Direct work - student individual assessments chosen as a highest priority	-
67.	<p>P3: I suppose we all felt the information one could be</p> <p>P2: It's just that other people could do that</p> <p>P3: Yeah could do some of that</p>	Information giving as a lowest priority; not unique to the	- Not unique contribution of EP role
68.	<p>P1: And that critical incident work</p> <p>P2: Yeah</p>	Critical incident work as a lowest priority	-
69.	<p>In a further ed College it might not be knowledge of the resources because somebody else would have, they would know what resources are available</p> <p>P3: Yeah</p> <p>P1: and it's not necessarily always SEN, in terms of you</p>	Knowledge of resources and SEN as a lowest priority; not unique to EP role	- Not unique contribution of EP role

	know, emotional needs aren't SEN as such are they? So..		
70.		Critical incident work chosen as a lowest priority	-
71.		Information giving chosen as a lowest priority	-
72.		Knowledge of resources and SEN chosen as a lowest priority	-
73.	P1: I think um, I think again it's time consuming and bearing in mind, I think, I think it is important but for the Educational Psychologist to keep doing this research and development and that but as for applying it to further education College I think that they could be utilised in better ways and that the research and development should be outside of that box. That's a personal opinion	Research and development as not relevant; time-consuming, better ways to use EP time	Research and development not relevant Limited EP capacity
74.	P2: Connexions would provide a few of those functions wouldn't they? P1: Yeah	Connexions support FE Colleges	Connexions support College students
75.	Social care... I: Social care? P1: They would also find information that can support them	Social care support FE Colleges	Social services support College students
76.	P2: CaMHS I suppose, in some cases P1: Mmm, CaMHS P3: CaMHS, yeah, I suppose	CaMHS support FE Colleges	CaMHS support College students
77.	P2: Medical professionals such as physio	Medical services support FE Colleges	Medical professionals

	<p>P3: Yeah, I suppose those like physio yeah or if they've got physical disabilities yeah. I suppose the services we work there anyway</p> <p>P1: Mobility</p> <p>P2: Mmm. Visually impaired...</p> <p>P3: Sensory teams, things like that yeah.</p>		support College students
78.	<p>P1: I think if you were to have an allocated link person to local Colleges, like Buttonsley College, I think that person could sit on the transition team. In fact, it's just altered again but if it was a monthly meeting, so that the link, you know, that link psychologist as names arose for the people going into Buttonsley College, or even elsewhere, if they haven't been directly involved with that young person, they could go to the EP who has been or who has some awareness of that young person and make that link but I think they need to be in the loop in the first place and by attending a transition meeting on a regular basis, that would support that link</p>	Additional EP function: sit on the transition team to make and support links	EP could support transition
79.	<p>P1: I think um I think from the young person's point of view, if, if they've got the capacity, they might think they're intruding and why are they talking to my parents as well? I am 18 now, you know, I take control of everything myself. No need to talk to mum and dad, especially in light of the fact</p>	Potential challenge: Young person feeling in control, not wanting EP to speak to parents	Student's autonomy

	that they are expected to take on their own finances		
80.	<p>P3: you might feel you can guide them in a certain direction but it's about listening to their feelings as well isn't.</p> <p>P2: Yeah, "I know best"</p> <p>P3: Not thinking "I know best, therefore..." It's that delicate balance isn't it? Because your ethics might be totally different to someone else's ethics and their views and not saying 'we know best' type of thing</p>	Potential challenge: EPs not imposing their views on to the young people or thinking "I know best"	<p>Issue with student's autonomy</p> <p>Model of service delivery</p>
81.	<p>P1: I think also, you know we're talking about further education Colleges or post-16, wherever they go but at some point you know, the new role, or next year it will change from 0-25 but there has to be a cut-off point somewhere and what happens when it comes to 25, you know? What's going to happen then? Is it just, all this support and help and advice and everything that they've been given and that they have had, is that just going to suddenly stop? You know, because for young people who are going to need this help and support of the educational psychologist, in my opinion, are always going to need that help and support. They are going to be in a learning environment for the whole of their lives.</p>	EP support will always stop at some age and perhaps it is needed for the whole life-time	EP could provide life-long support
82.	<p>P2: You know, sometimes perhaps you ought to, I don't know, not support a child in an unrealistic expectation when</p>	Not supporting a child to have unrealistic expectations	Issue with student's autonomy

	they're going to College to do courses that they're probably never going to work in that area, to be honest, you know, do they understand that? And what would be the role of the EP in discussing that with them?		
83.	P3: Because there's some dichotomy between what we would want for that child and what is physically available for that child, isn't there? We might say "oh, this child should have X, Y and Z" in an ideal world but X, Y, and Z may not exist within that authority or those facilities may not be available. So ethically, what do you say to that person, do you go down the line of what is ethically right, IE what is best for that child, in the ideal world or do you go down the line of I know what's available for this child in terms of resources and therefore we've got to fit that child into that resource. So I mean, that's an ethical question isn't it?	Ideal world of what is ethically right balanced against fitting a child into the resources we have available	Resources
84.	P2: It's very difficult isn't it, depending on the individual child and their capacity to understand	Young person's capacity to understand consent	Issue with consent
85.	P1: Well, I think you've got a legal point of view here as well haven't you?	Legal point of view regarding consent	Issue with consent Legality
86.	I think technically it should be the young person if they are able to do it. You know, as soon as they reach 18 they should be giving their own consent	Young person should give consent at aged 18	Issue with consent

87.	If not it needs to be you know, an advocate that they agree to really.	Advocate to give consent when child is unable to	Issue with consent
88.	Um, and if you've got a severely disabled young person that can't make that decision then you know, parents have to seek um, that legality to be able to do that	Parents have to seek legal status to give consent	Issue with consent
89.	P2: I think it's perhaps the young person, unless they're not able to	Young person should give consent if they are able to	Issue with consent
90.	P3: But when do you define when's not able to? P2: Exactly, that's the problem isn't it?	Difficulty in knowing when a young person has capacity to give consent	Issue with consent
91.	P3: I think you might have to make it the young person wouldn't you?	Young person to give consent if they are able to	Issue with consent
92.	P3: it doesn't matter what their learning disabilities lie, when they come to 16 legally, they're allowed to smoke aren't they and we couldn't stop them doing that. At 18, they can go to the pub, you wouldn't say to a person oh legally, you're not allowed in the pub because you've got a learning disability or you're not allowed to make that decision. Could you take that same approach? Legally, if they're the age of consent and so forth, that should be their choice.	Should be the young person's choice, as with other life choices	Issue with consent
93.	P2: I guess there are some pupils, aren't there, who couldn't even understand what was being asked	Young person may not understand what is being asked	Issue with consent
94.	P1: You see, I remember with a young lady that we had here	Legal requirement for parents to have power of	Issue with consent

	whose parents..., she was very very disabled um and almost non-communicative uh in a way, and her parents um had to get an agreement taken out had to ... (pause) what am I looking for? Power of attorney to manage her finances. And they had to prove that she wasn't able to manage them	attorney; anecdote	Legality
95.	P3: I guess that's a sense, it's about educating parents or people who have technically been in charge of those children, well children, young people, you know it's about saying to the parents you know you've got to ease the reins of this a bit, when do they become. And that sort of discussion needs to happen probably at an earlier stage because by the time they get to an FE College, they're more responsible aren't they? So it's maybe talking to the parents a bit about that so they can start to ease off so their consent isn't so important as the child's views and maybe the transition work has started to help that maybe I don't know, that the voice of the child's hear more earlier now than it was maybe 3, 4, 5 years ago that we're saying we want to hear the child's voice, not the adult's suggesting what they do for a child any longer	Educating parents about hearing the child's voice, giving child's views more importance so they can consent	Work with parents Issue with student's autonomy Issue with consent
96.	P1: Um, as I said, I think from a legal point of view we look at the age group we don't look at the, you know, the	Legalities around age and understanding	Legality Issue with consent

	functioning, the levels, and perhaps changes should be looked at functioning level not age, not chronological age		
97.	Then where continuing support is needed that should change so that should be more on the I know you've got to have an age range as well but I think you should be looking at the functioning level it's no good having a 21 year old functioning at you know as a 6 year old and um and being expected to you know just fit in	Need to consider a young person's functioning age rather than their chronological age	Chronological vs. developmental age
98.	There might be other things where an educational psychologist would be needed to give advice and support and help to people around them as well as the young person themselves.	EPs might offer support and advice to people around the young person	Multi agency working
99.	P3: Yeah, because this false sort of cut-off to a certain extent it's still not meeting the child's needs is it, it's taking account of the age isn't it? P1: I mean, if you've got a 6 year old, you take them right the way through don't you because their mental age is still of a 6 year old hopefully if there's no problems and that but if you've got somebody who's got difficulty and they've got the mental age of a 6 year old you come to 16 and that's it finished with, it doesn't make sense, you know - how are they going to progress and move on?	Age of functioning should be more important than chronological age	Chronological vs. development age

100	P3: Our difficulty to some extent is that we don't really know what goes on beyond so it's difficult to make a judgement about how effective some	SEN Team unaware of what happens to young people after school	Lack of post-16 data
101	I mean you hear stories that Buttonsley College has a very good reputation and you have confidence in the fact that although the statement's ending, there's a good link with Connexions and that Buttonsley College gets a good press but is that true of all Colleges  P2: Yes, Yes  P3: If you worked in another authority, passing them over from a school to another College, would you have so much confidence in that?	Confidence in passing young people over from school to College due to good reputation of local College	College reputation
102	P2: You do hear it's often said that they wouldn't put up with that at College, they won't cope at College, so, but we don't really see that we don't really see what goes on do we. We don't really know figures do we about how many progress or succeed do we?	SEN Team unaware of what happens to young people after school	Lack of post-16 data
103	P3: Yeah, yeah, that's right  P1: The drop-out rate is very high  P2: Yeah, yeah  P1: It is high	High drop out rate of young people with SEN from College	Lack of post-16 data
104	P3: I imagine that would be very dispiriting for schools to see	SEN Team unaware of what happens to young	Lack of post-16 data

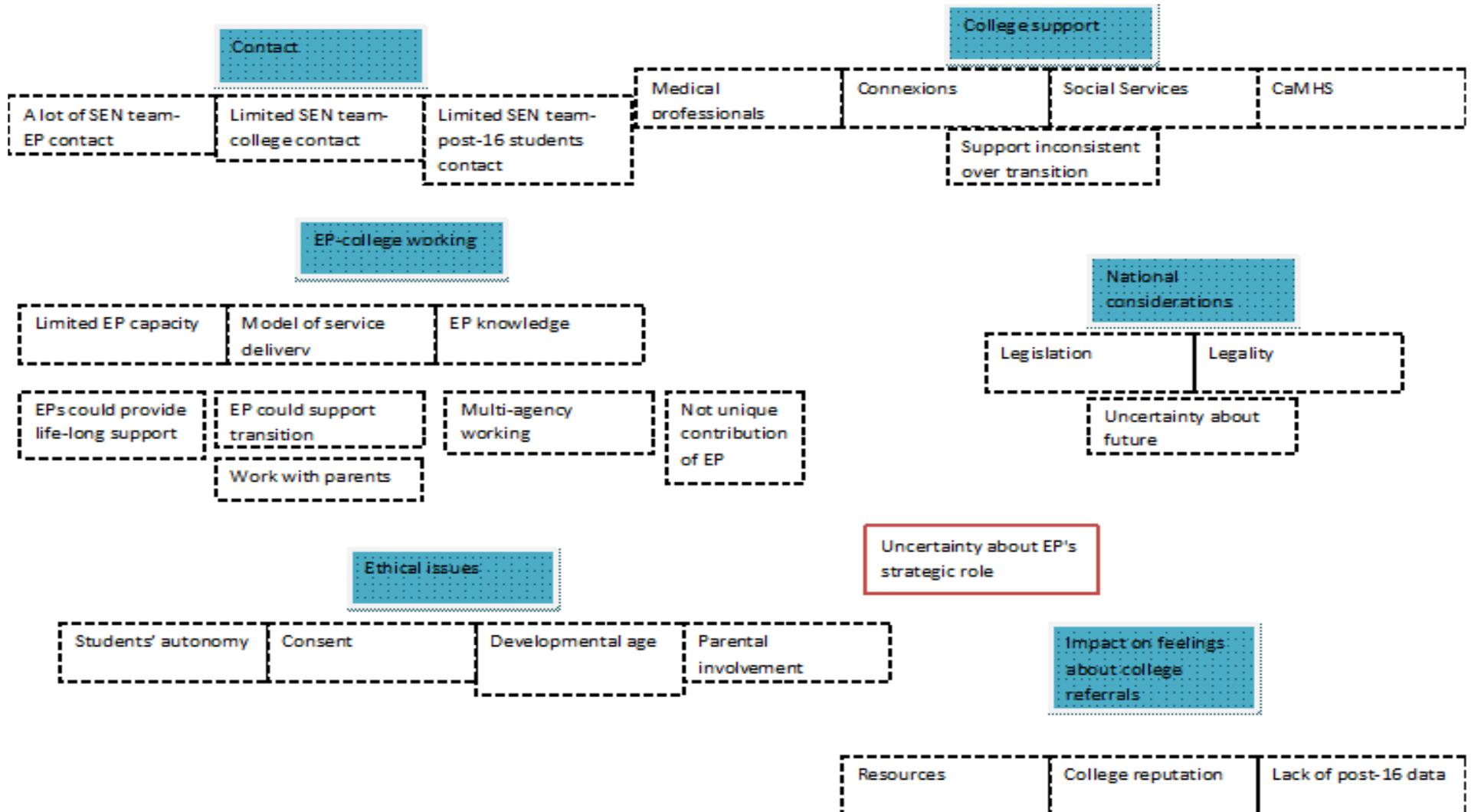
	<p>that but we don't get that feedback do we?</p> <p>P2: No</p> <p>I: Would you like to?</p> <p>P1 and P2: Yeah</p>	<p>people after school and they would like to be informed</p>	
105	<p>P3: Yeah I think it would be useful, I think it would be useful. Because you want to see is that statement having an impact and is the transition work having an impact and, you know, if it isn't having the desired impact and people are dropping out after a year or so then what was the point in spending all that money and...</p> <p>P2: Yeah, I don't know...</p>	<p>SEN Team want to know the impact of the statement and transition work</p>	<p>Lack of post-16 data</p>
106	<p>P1: But that's going to happen isn't it when it goes to 0-25 next year?</p> <p>P2: I guess so, it will still be monitored</p> <p>P1: It will still be monitored yes, but how it will be monitored I don't know</p> <p>I: So you're not yet sure if you will be going into reviews for the Education, Health and Care plans</p> <p>P3: Oh god no, we've no idea at all what will be happening with the Education, Health and Care plans (LAUGHS)</p>	<p>SEN Team unsure of what will happen with EHC plans</p>	<p>Legislation</p> <p>Uncertainty about future</p>
107	<p>P1: one of the things I've heard today from [Manager's name], because she's just been to a meeting, was that the</p>	<p>Adult social care might have charge of EHC plans from age 18</p>	<p>Legislation</p> <p>Uncertainty about future</p>

	<p>adult social care would be taking charge of it and feeding it down rather than the way it has been starting from the bottom and going up so but that's what she's come back from a meeting and said so we'll...</p> <p>P2: So what stage would they be in charge?</p> <p>P1: Next year when we go over to the Education, Health and Care plans</p> <p>P2: What age would they be involved?</p> <p>P1: Um, well, um, they've got to be in employment or education until they're 18</p> <p>P2: Yeah, yeah?</p> <p>P1: Right, so it'll be from 18 when social care adult services naturally take over in any case that they will take over and so this will fit in with further education um, they will take charge of those um, plans that have already been written and it will work down</p>		
108	<p>P1: Well at the moment as it stands, education is the only statutory duty. So if you're going to involve an educational psychologist, the fact that they're an educational psychologist and not a clinical psychologist you're going to have to go, you know, something is going to have to happen if it's going to be a statutory duty to carry on past that and so it will</p>	<p>Adult social care might have charge of EHC plans from age 18</p>	<p>Legislation Uncertainty about future</p>

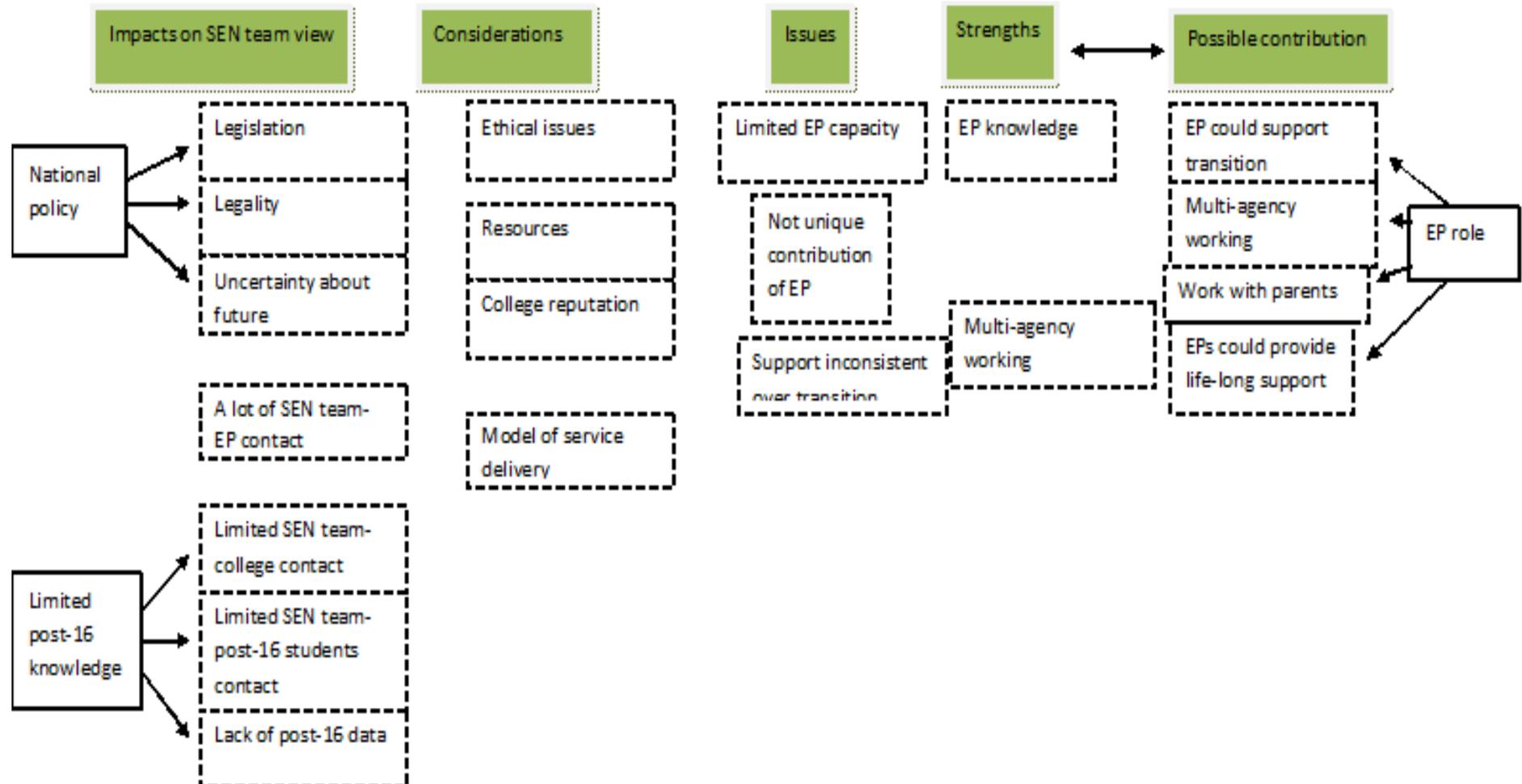
	because they become adults at 18 social care will take over		
109	The education will still be a statutory part of it because it is the only statutory part	Education is the only statutory part of the new EHC plans	Legislation
110	<p>P2: So they will be monitoring the education as well as health and social aspects?</p> <p>P1: I don't know about monitoring it but they will certainly be taking the lead on it</p> <p>P3: ok</p> <p>P1: We have to wait and see I suppose, it might change in the near future</p>	Adults social care might take the lead on EHC plans past 18	<p>Legislation</p> <p>Uncertainty about future</p>
111	<p>P2: This is a question I should know the answer to, but when does it actually start? Do you have a date?</p> <p>P3: The new plans? It's meant to be 2014 isn't it?</p> <p>P2: I know, but do we know a better date than that?</p> <p>P1: I thought it was meant to be working with the financial year but I might be wrong</p> <p>P3: Oh, so from April</p> <p>P2: From April?</p> <p>P1: I might be wrong on that, I don't know</p> <p>P2: That's something we should know isn't it really?</p> <p>P3: Yeah, it's all gone quiet though</p>	SEN Team unaware of what is happening regarding EHC plans	<p>Legislation</p> <p>Uncertainty about future</p>
112	P1: I think there's got to be more, or what I'd like to see, um,	Would like to see greater reciprocal links	Support inconsistent

	<p>is greater links with the schools I think that's emerging now um but uh so the young person can do a day release while they're still at school before moving on so they can be sure that's the route they want to take and so I think there could be greater links there. You know, if that, it might mean that somebody from the College actually goes into the school and teaches in the school for a day a week or something like that, runs a course, so that, you know, they know, I think 2 way benefit then, you've got the College knowing what goes on in school because they tend to be adrift from what happens in school and the expectations and it's a big jump from school to College and whereas if some of the teachers, the secondary school teachers, went in to College to look at and perhaps do, I don't know, a subject lesson at College so they know the expectations of a College as well. So I think, you know, they need greater links, and a bit more interaction between them, and that</p>	<p>between school and College staff</p>	<p>over transition</p>
113	<p>P1: I'm just thinking, what will happen to them? P3: Who knows, [P1]?! </p>	<p>SEN Team unsure about what happens to young people after they leave school</p>	<p>Lack of post-16 data</p>

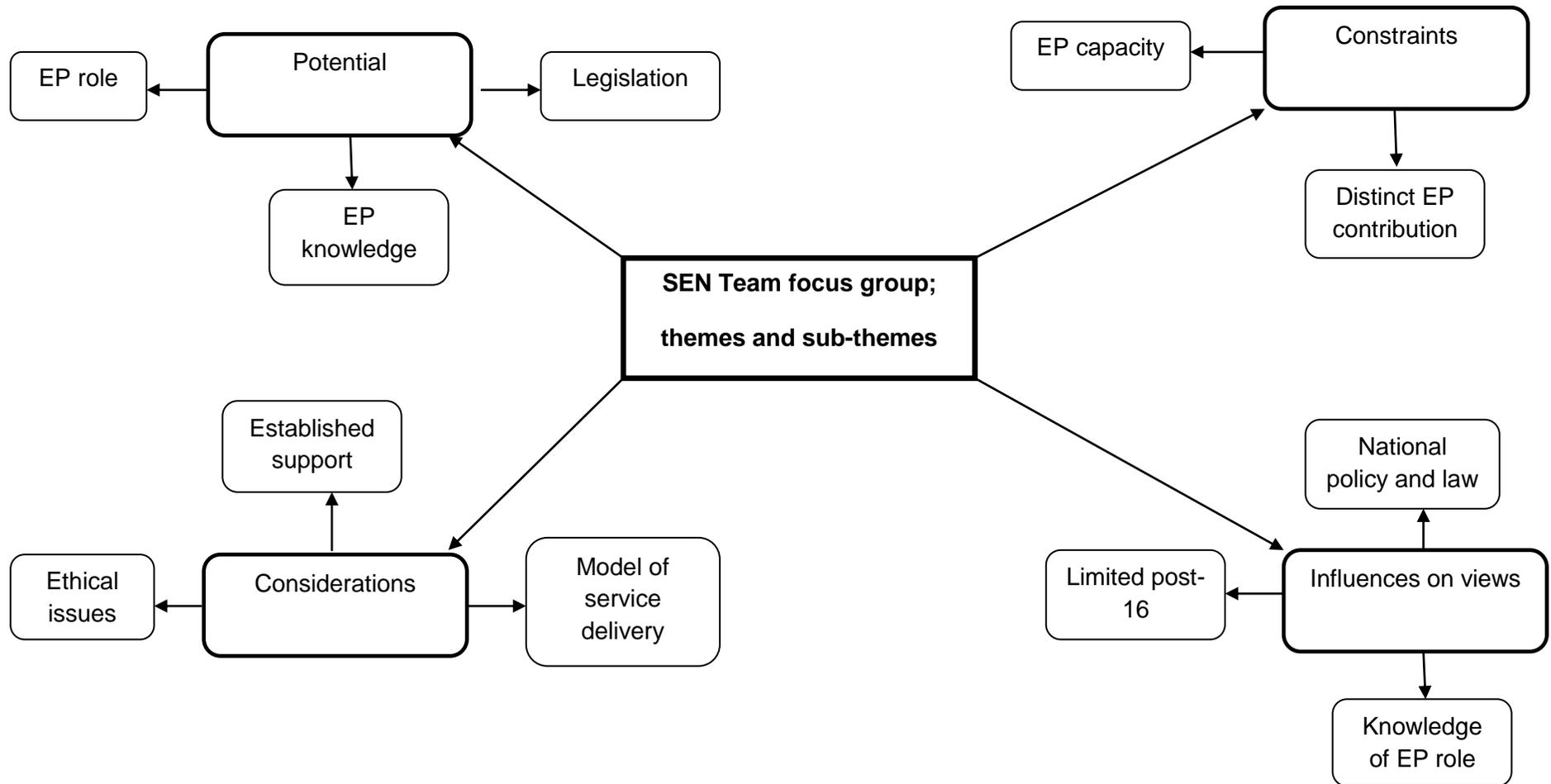
SEN Team focus group - Thematic maps. Map 1: codes arranged in primary groups



SEN Team focus group - Thematic maps. Map 2: codes arranged in secondary groups and sub-themes



SEN Team focus group - Thematic maps. Map 3: codes arranged into themes and sub-themes



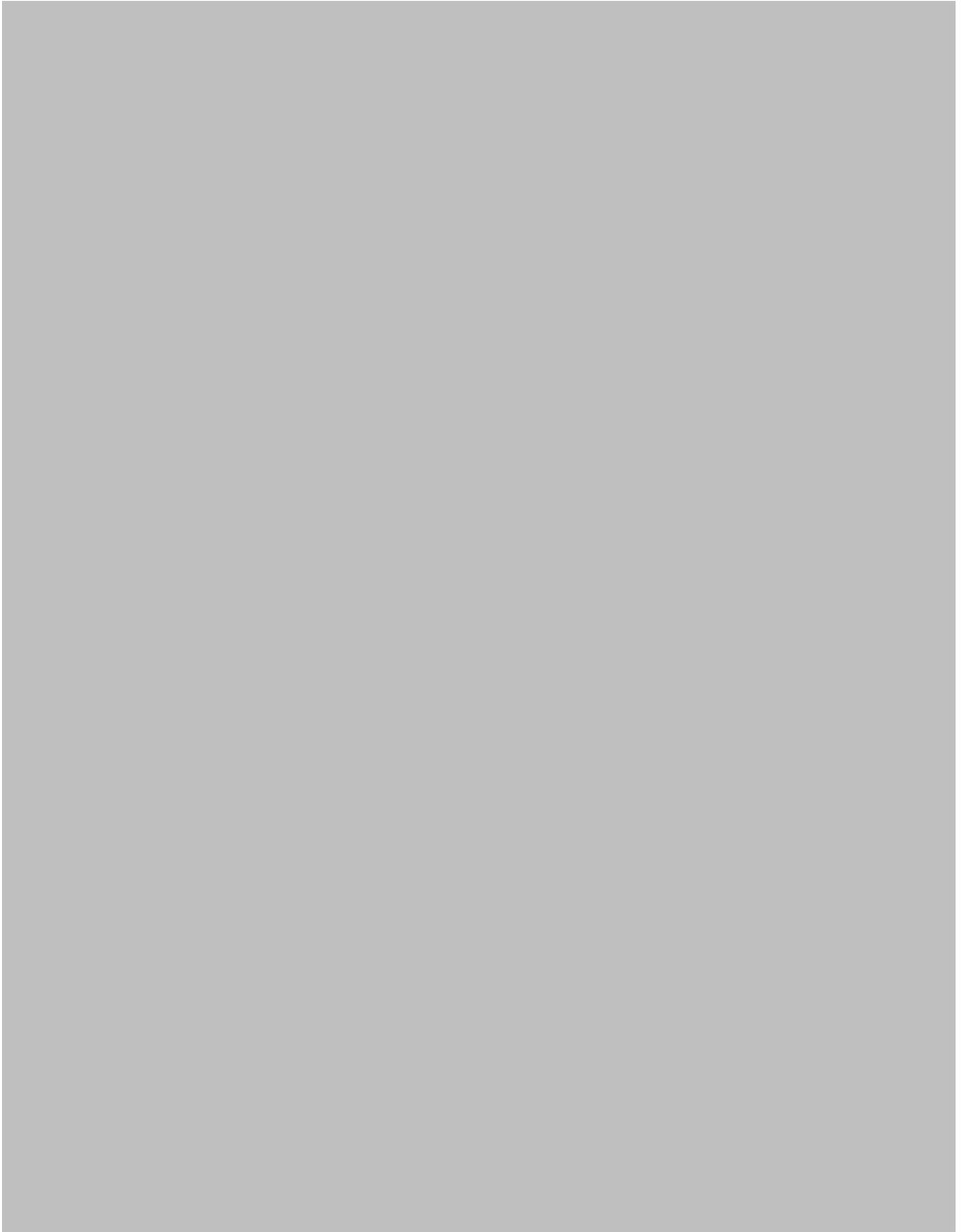
**Appendix seventeen: Table of EP functions with ratings selected in each data set**

EP functions	College Tutors focus group	College Manager interview	Connexions focus group	Connexions Manager interview	EP focus group	EP Manager interview	SEN Team focus group	SEN Team Manager interview	Value	Average (Value / number of responses)
Advice giving	Middle	High	<b>Highest</b>	<b>Highest</b>	High	High	High	High	+9	1.125
Consultation	Middle	High	-	High	<b>Highest</b>	<b>Highest</b>	Middle	<b>Highest</b>	Incomplete (+8)	1.143
Critical incident work	<b>Highest</b>	High	<b>Highest</b>	High	Low	High	<i>Lowest</i>	Middle	+4	0.5
Direct work with students - individual assessments	<b>Highest</b>	High	<b>Highest</b>	<b>Highest</b>	Low	High	<b>Highest</b>	<b>Highest</b>	+11	1.375
Direct work with students - intervention	<b>Highest</b>	Middle	High	<b>Highest</b>	High	Middle	Middle	<b>Highest</b>	+8	1
Facilitating collaboration between young people, professionals and families	<b>Highest</b>	High	High	Low	Low	<b>Highest</b>	Middle	Middle	+4	0.5
Familiarity with educational organisations	Low	High	<i>Lowest</i>	High	<i>Lowest</i>	High	Low	High	-2	-0.25

Having a named link EP	High	High	High	High	<b>Highest</b>	Middle	<b>Highest</b>	High	+9	1.125
Information giving	High	High	-	High	<i>Lowest</i>	<i>Lowest</i>	<i>Lowest</i>	<i>Lowest</i>	Incomplete (-5)	-0.714
Knowledge of good practice elsewhere	High	<i>Lowest</i>	-	<i>Lowest</i>	<i>Lowest</i>	High	Low	<i>Lowest</i>	Incomplete (-7)	-0.875
Knowledge of psychology	High	Middle	High	<i>Lowest</i>	High	<b>Highest</b>	High	High	+5	0.625
Knowledge of resources and SEN	High	<b>Highest</b>	High	High	Low	High	<i>Lowest</i>	High	+4	0.5
Multi-agency work	<i>Lowest</i>	High	High	High	Middle	High	Low	High	+2	0.25
Promoting inclusion	<i>Lowest</i>	<b>Highest</b>	High	High	High	High	Low	High	+4	0.5
Research and development	<i>Lowest</i>	<i>Lowest</i>	<i>Lowest</i>	<i>Lowest</i>	High	High	Not relevant	<b>Highest</b>	-4	-0.75
Strategic role in the LEA	High	High	<i>Lowest</i>	High	Middle	High	Low	Low	+1	0.125
Systemic approach	High	High	Low	Low	<b>Highest</b>	High	High	<b>Highest</b>	+6	0.75
Training	<b>Highest</b>	<i>Lowest</i>	High	High	High	High	<b>Highest</b>	High	+7	0.875
Valuing pupil's views	-	<b>Highest</b>	High	High	High	High	High	High	Incomplete (+8)	1.143
Working with / supporting parents	High	High	High	High	Middle	Middle	High	<i>Lowest</i>	+3	0.375

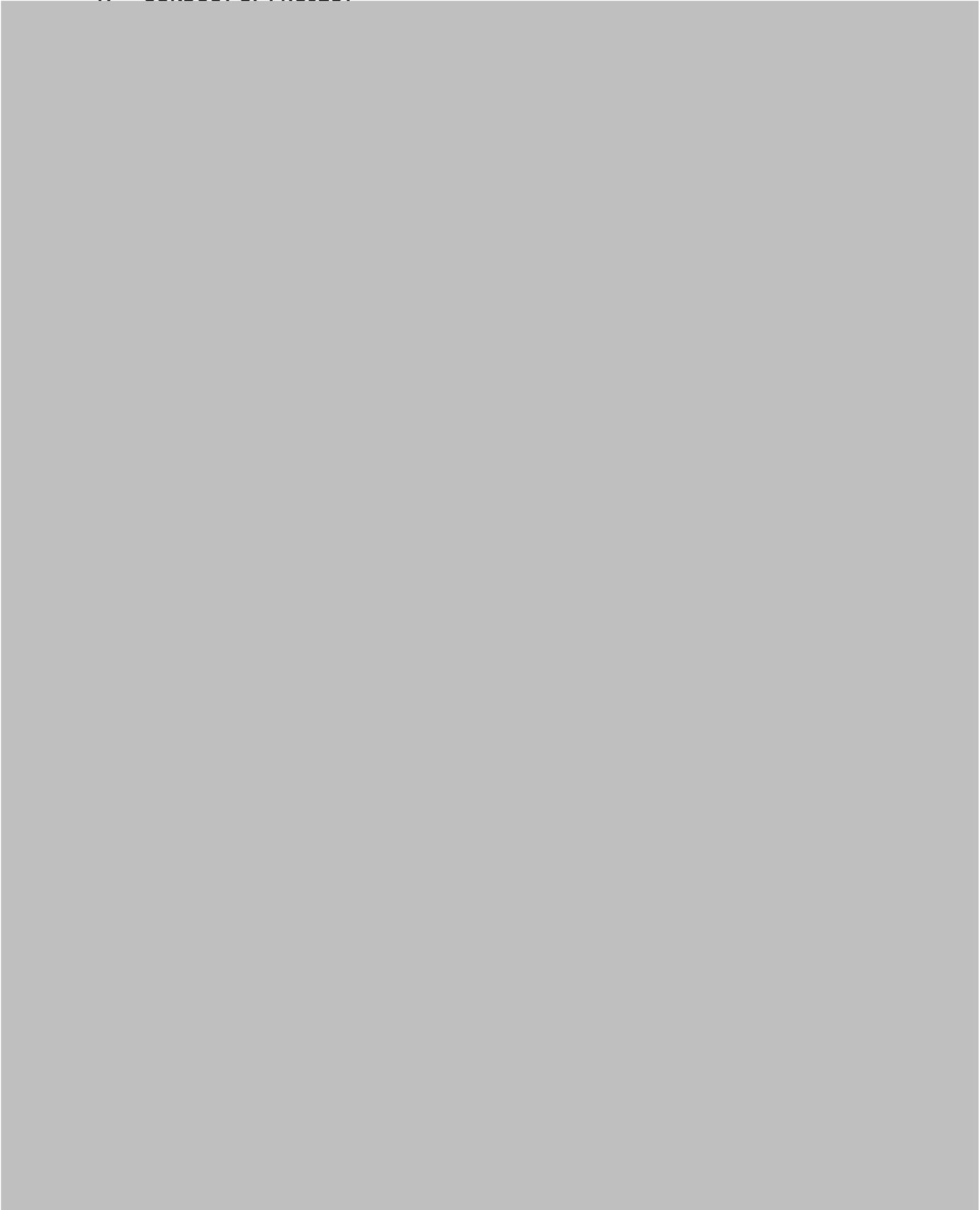
Table 6.2; Priority level given to EP functions as applied to potential work in an FE College

**Appendix 18: Application for ethical review**

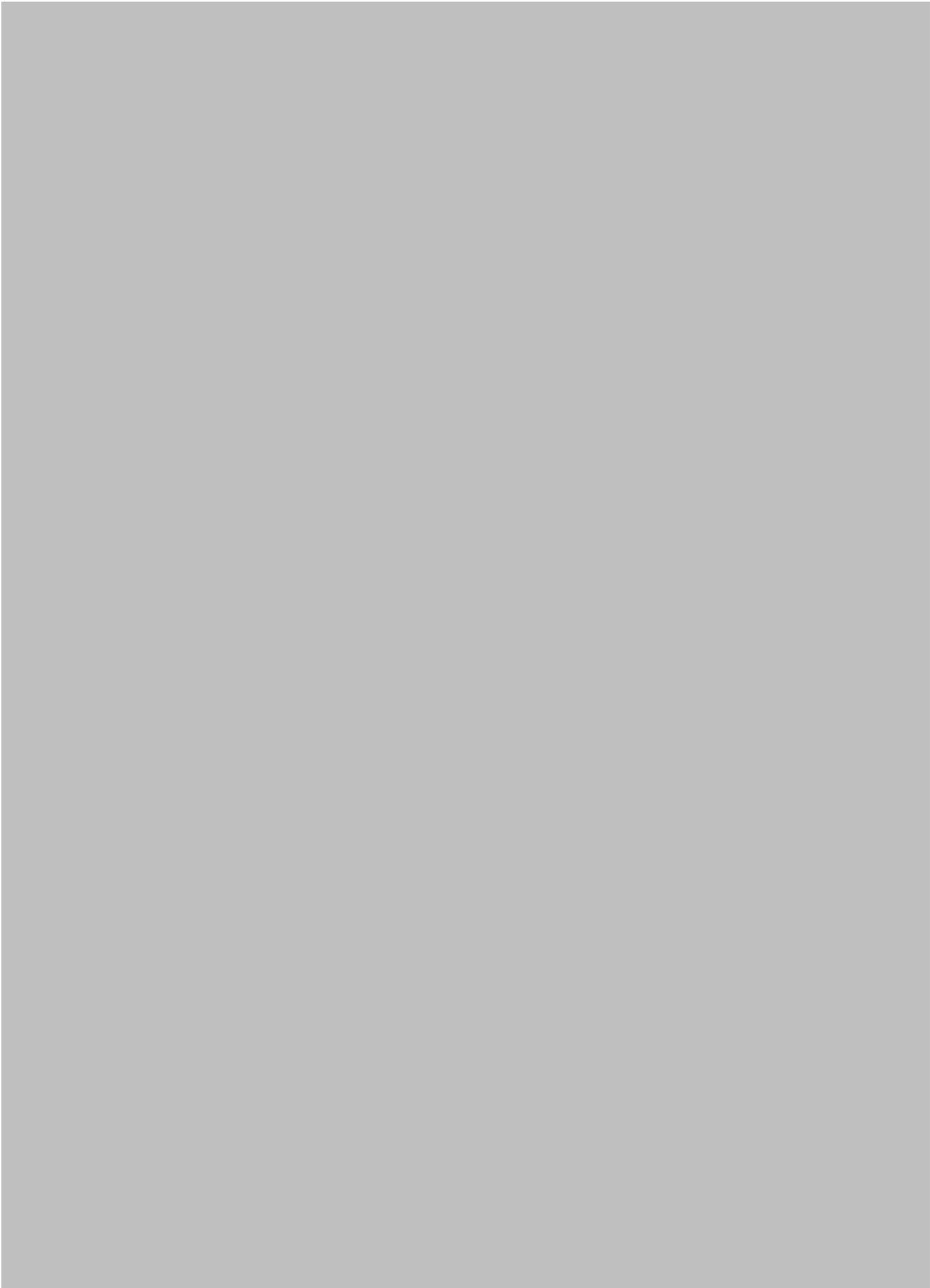


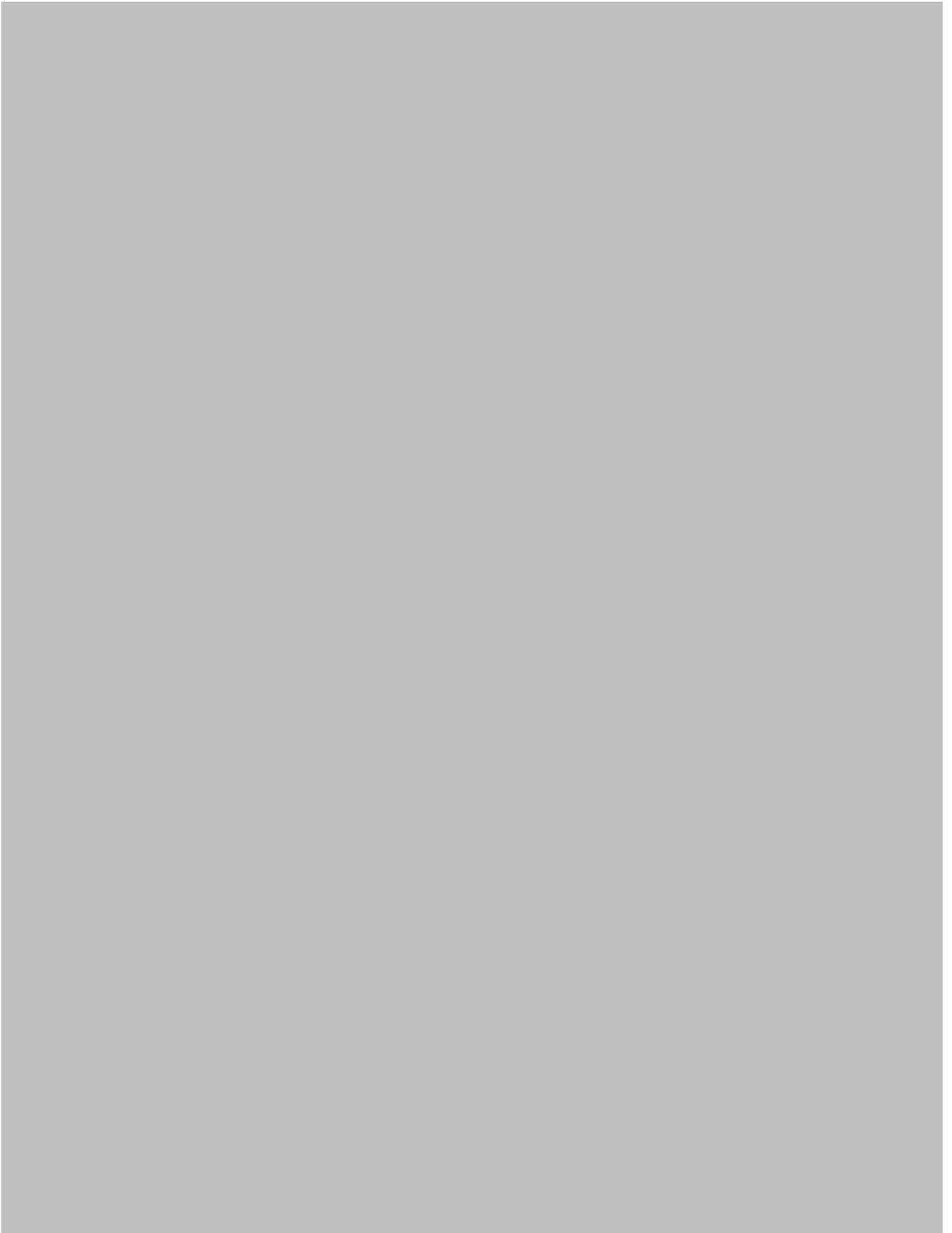


**7. CONDUCT OF PROJECT**

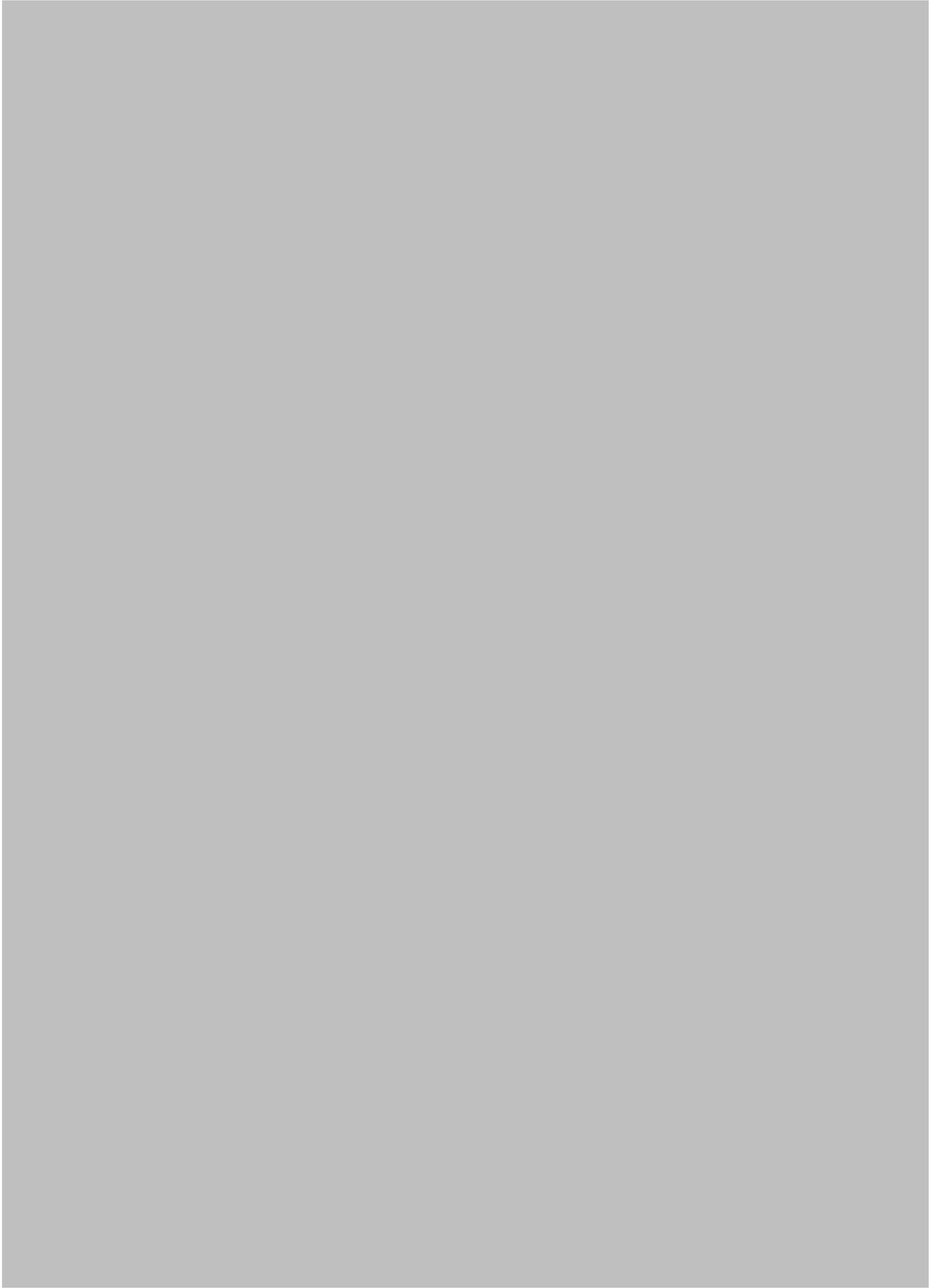










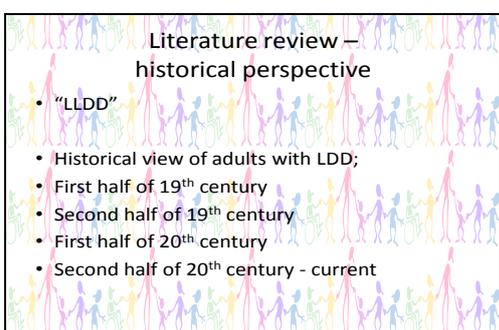
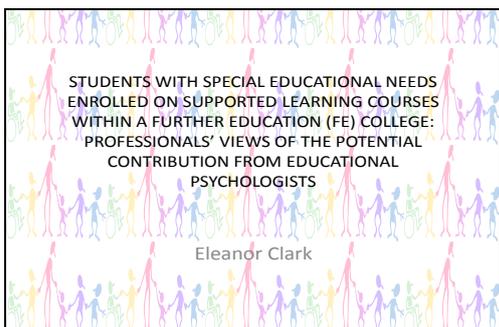








## Appendix 19: PowerPoint slides used for EP team meeting briefing



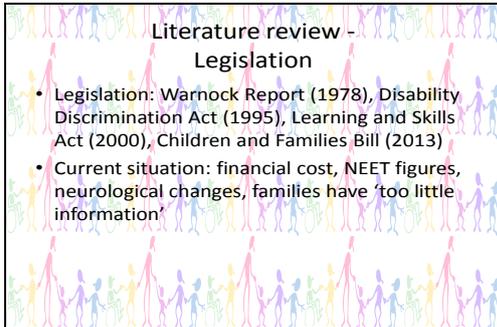
"In post-16 education students with special educational needs (SEN) tend to be referred to as 'learners with learning difficulties or disabilities' or LLDDs" (p. 2, House of Commons note, 2012). For the purpose of clarification, the following definition underpins my understanding of this terminology: "Learning Difficulty and Disability has been defined as 'a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of people of that age, or having a disability which prevents the use of facilities generally provided by post-16 education and training providers'" (Learning and Skills Act, 2000)

19<sup>th</sup> century: 'imbeciles', 'simpletons', 'dull', 'idiots' and 'backwards'.

1870s: Beginning of classifications, indicating a shift in thinking towards psychological underpinnings

1914: Binet and Simon, children with 'mental defects' are ineducable, Goddard (1912) photos of 'mentally ill' people, genetic link, society under threat

2<sup>nd</sup> half of 20<sup>th</sup> century: 'mentally handicapped',



‘severely or moderately subnormal’ or ‘mentally retarded’

Through eugenics movement: ‘moved from being viewed ‘ineducable’ through to being educable (but requiring segregated provision) to being eligible for education alongside their non-disabled peers in mainstream schools’

Warnock Report (1978): introduced phrase of ‘learning difficulties’ to replace ‘educationally sub-normal’. Proposed assessment of LLDDs and stated they should be allowed to continue in further education

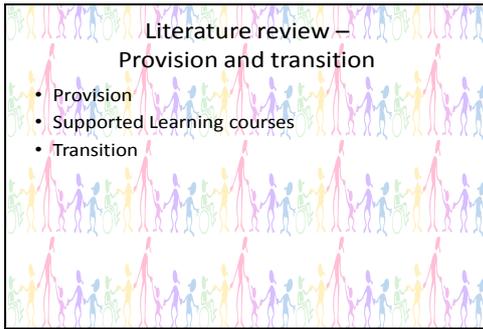
Disability Discrimination Act (1995): no discrimination, Colleges need to state what provision they have

Learning and Skills Act (2000): Section 139a assessment to help transition into Colleges

‘Support and Aspirations: A New Approach to Special Educational Needs and Disability’ (2011) : initial proposals of a single assessment up to 25, supported by the children and families bill (2013) with changes to SEN code of practice expected to be implemented in September 2014

•Currently: NAO (2011) stated that there is an enormous cost to putting LLDDs through education and the aims of College courses should not be on employability alone, although approximately one third of LLDDs 16-25s are NEET.

•In an evaluation of the impact of the local offer, conducted from an evaluation of the 31 ‘pathfinder’ Local Authorities, it was found that considerably fewer families in the pathfinder group reported having too little information regarding the services that were available to them than did those in the comparison group (41% compared to 57%) (DfE, 2013, p. 65). However, 41% of families reported having too little information, reinforcing the importance of having a comprehensive local offer available to them (DfE, 2013).



LLDDs included in mainstream, albeit segregated, provision for the first time

Provision for LLDDs with complex needs it not good enough, has been going round in circles, lack of good quality research

Locally 80% of school leavers from special schools in Buttonsley in 2013 continued in full-time education, with one-third of these doing so at the local College

“Because we believe that education should be available to everyone who can benefit from it, we offer a number of innovative courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, designed specifically to encourage independence and build confidence. Taught within the College, the courses include independent living skills, skills for working life, creative and performing arts” (Buttonsley College prospectus, 2013).

Education and Training Inspectorate (2004) “the problem convincing some parents of the abilities of the young people to access and benefit from employment, training and FE; the social difficulties of many of the young people and the possibility of them becoming marginalised from statutory services”. EPs have role in transition? Should be pre-empted through relationships with EPs (Arnold and Baker, 2012)

Has changed dramatically over 100 years

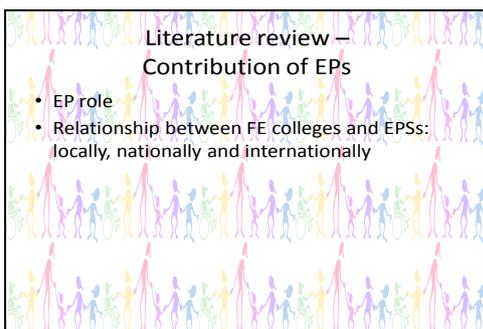
Currently very hard to define, focus has been on ‘restructuring and refocusing’ and looking at the ‘unique contribution

Perhaps the focus needs to be on ‘how’ EPs do what they do, rather than ‘what’ they do

Ashton and Roberts (2006) – list of functions

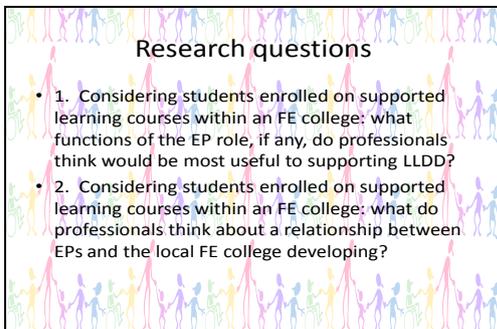
Locally: part-traded model, consultative model of service delivery, no contact with FE College

Nationally – demand for places in College for LLDDs is increasing, no systematic approach for support from EPs, some EPSs have begun to offer support, perhaps through consultation sessions  
Scotland have a Post School Psychology Service (akin to early years)



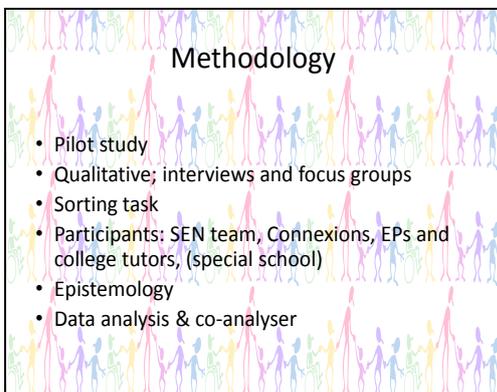
It appears that there has been little progress towards establishing a significant and consistent relationship between EPs and FE Colleges.

MacKay (2006; 2009) proposes that the PSPS has had multiple benefits for LLDDs, due to their unique contribution of being able to work at a variety of levels, from individual work through to systemic support. An evaluation of the PSPS found that it was highly valued by a range of stakeholders, parents and LLDDs, providing compelling support for the extension of EPSs within England, in light of Government proposals, and the high percentage of LLDDs attending FE Colleges post-school suggests this may be a good place for that involvement to begin.



**Research questions**

- 1. Considering students enrolled on supported learning courses within an FE college: what functions of the EP role, if any, do professionals think would be most useful to supporting LLDD?
- 2. Considering students enrolled on supported learning courses within an FE college: what do professionals think about a relationship between EPs and the local FE college developing?



**Methodology**

- Pilot study
- Qualitative; interviews and focus groups
- Sorting task
- Participants: SEN team, Connexions, EPs and college tutors, (special school)
- Epistemology
- Data analysis & co-analyser

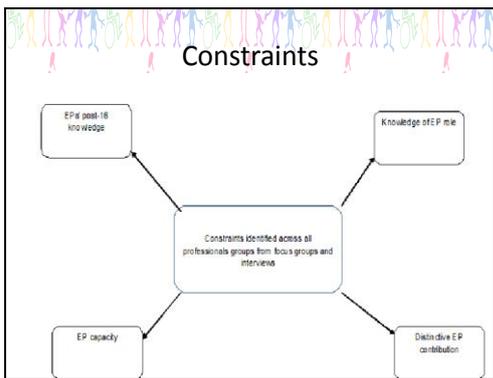
Social constructionism is a term used almost exclusively by psychologists. It is based on four fundamental assumptions;

- that a critical stance should be taken towards 'taken-for-granted' knowledge
- that knowledge is historically and culturally specific
- that knowledge is sustained through social processes
- that knowledge and social action go together

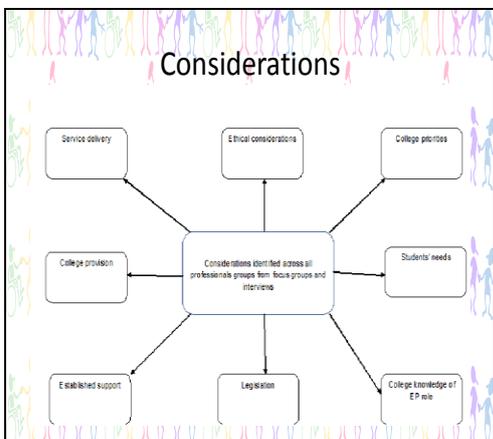
I do not believe that talk is a reflection of stable attitudes and belief but is embedded in the social context that a person belongs to



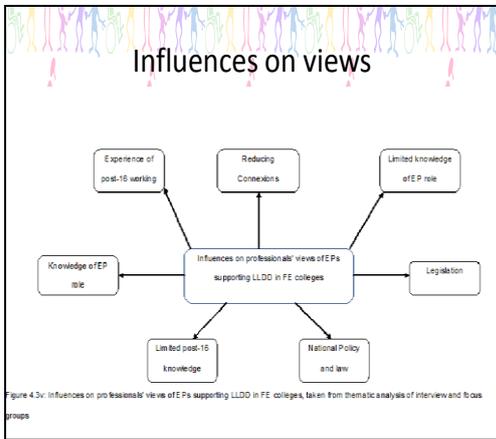
- The upcoming changes in legislation have resonated with the professionals, some of whom have expressed that these changes may be beneficial for offering support to LLDDs post-school
- Acknowledgement that, currently, College Tutors have limited access to training and are not offered support through professionals reviewing the provision for LLDDs after they have started at the College



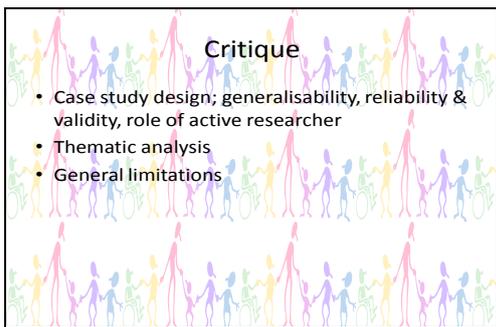
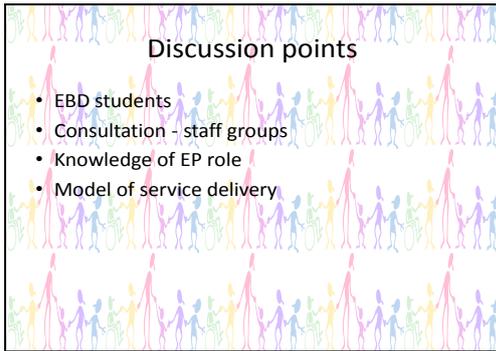
- EPs may have limited knowledge and experience of working with LLDDs past school-age, hence may not have the expertise that is needed to support this group
- Other professionals and LLDDs themselves may not understand the role of the EP, resulting in the inefficient use of the service
- Some of the functions of the EP role may be carried out by other professionals, potentially resulting in a limited role for EPs
- EPs have limited capacity at present and may not be able to meet the needs of LLDDs in Colleges in a time effective manner



- What the model of service delivery might look like in terms of core versus traded, the level of support offered (from systemic to individual) and whether it is consultative or expert model.
- Ethical issues, including how to elicit consent and ensure that it is fully informed. LLDDs may not have the mental capacity to do so, although they are legally allowed to.
- How the needs of LLDDs are currently met in Colleges and what priorities the College has for LLDDs
- The extent of the knowledge that Colleges have about the EP role may be limited currently and time may need to be dedicated to ensuring that they can plan for the involvement that is most beneficial to them
- National legislation is changing and it may take a while for systems to meet the government proposals to become established, whilst also recognising that legislation for the post-school sector might be different to school-based



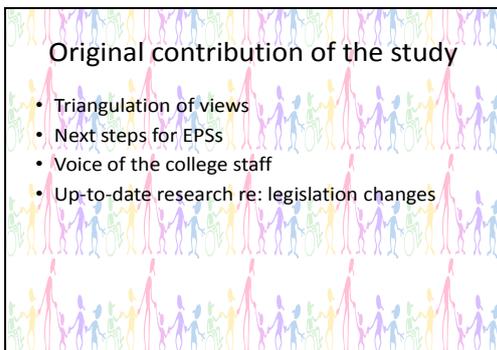
- legislation
- The services which currently offer support to the Colleges and what functions they provide
  - The support that the College provides presently
  - "Social constructionism insists that we take a critical stance toward our taken-for-granted ways of understanding the world, including ourselves. It invites us to be critical of the idea that our observations of the world unproblematically yield its nature to us, to challenge the view that conventional knowledge is based upon objective, unbiased observation of the world." (Burr, 2004, p. 3.)
  - Their involvement with the post-school sector resulting in an awareness of the needs of LLDDs and Colleges
  - Reductions to the Connexions service mean that functions that were previously carried out by them can no longer be done
  - Some professionals recognise that they do not have an extensive understanding of what the role of the EP is
  - Some professionals have been influenced by the upcoming changes to SEN legislation, as well as established national and legal policies
  - The SEN Team, for example, concede that their role typically ends when a young person leaves school, meaning that they do not have knowledge about Colleges and what occurs within the post-school sector
  - The SEN Team state that they have a lot of contact with EPs and this knowledge of the areas of work that overlap between the two teams may have influenced their opinions about what EPs can, or cannot, offer to the post-school sector

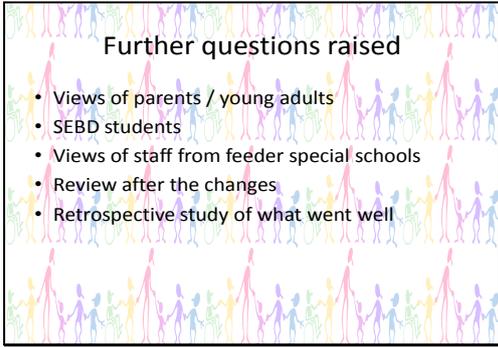


- It has been identified in my research that a role of EPs in beginning work with Colleges could be to offer training and support to College Tutors, and MacNab et al.'s (2008) findings could suggest that this function may be useful College-wide, rather than restrained to the supported learning department.
- Consequently, it could be deduced that the first step towards collaborative working would be increasing the knowledge base of these two services regarding what the other does. This was supported in my research as the College Tutors discussed that they were unaware of what the role of the EP was and of how support from an EP could benefit them or LLDDs. Additionally, the Connexions Manager identified that the EPS needs to market their service more effectively if they are to appeal to LLDDs aged 16-25 who may not be aware of the support EPs could provide.
- Generalisability: EPSs nationally have different service structures and models of service delivery, whilst also recognizing that there are some EPSs that offer support to post-school students or to FE Colleges already. Thus, implications for practice may be more applicable to services that are similar to Buttonsley EPS; that is having a part-traded service, with a consultative model of service delivery and / or with each school having a link EP (for purposes of continuing to support LLDDs upon leaving these schools).
- Reliability and validity: "Social constructionist research is not about identifying objective facts or making truth claims. There can be no final description of the world, and reality may be inaccessible or inseparable from our discourse about it; all knowledge is provisional and contestable, and accounts are local and historically/culturally specific. The concepts of reliability and validity, as they are normally understood, are therefore inappropriate for judging the quality of social constructionist work" (p. 158).
- Role of active researcher: This could have an

impact on the information that was shared, with an awareness of historical relationships between teams, such as the SEN Team who have had ongoing involvement with the EPS and with whom I work on a regular basis. Alternatively, the Connexions Service and the FE College Tutors were unfamiliar with EPs generally and at times asked me specific questions about the role, diminishing my ability to be an objective researcher.

- Thematic analysis: Researcher prior experience and knowledge of research can result in bias (Braun and Clarke, 2006)
- NVivo could have reduced researcher bias but missed important subtle points
- Co-researcher could have limited researcher bias, although time did not permit this, hence a co-researcher was used to clarify themes and sub-themes in an attempt to limit bias
- Multiple sources offers triangulation
- General limitations: Unable to offer participants the opportunity to explore the data analysis - time, quantity of data, generation of new data
- No parents / young people
- Position as the researcher - reflexivity, including application for ethical review to ensure that ethical considerations were at the forefront, pilot study could have been analysed and written as a report to practice the analysis
- Special schools declined to take part





**Further questions raised**

- Views of parents / young adults
- SEBD students
- Views of staff from feeder special schools
- Review after the changes
- Retrospective study of what went well