**Governing ‘New Social Risks’:**

**The Case of Recent Child Policies in European Welfare States**

**Interview Guides**

**Mary Daly and Rachel Bray**

The interview guides prepared for experts, decision-makers and providers respectively reflect the core themes of the research and are tailored to the roles of each group. The following introduction was used across the sample, and the three specific guides are set out below.

**Introduction to the interview**

We thank you for agreeing to participate in the interview. Our goal is to ascertain your views and experiences on a range of matters including the idea of parenting support itself, where it came from and how it operates in an English context. The purpose is not to evaluate work done in this field, rather, to better understand the domain of parenting support as it operates in England.

The interview will last for a maximum of one hour. We would like your permission to record it – for ease of note taking and also to ensure we get everything you have to say. We assure you that the information will remain anonymous and that the information you have given us will be stored in a secure place and deleted once we no longer need to use it.

**Please complete and sign the consent form.**

# Interview Guide for National Experts

## BACKGROUND: FAMILY, CHILD AND PARENT POLICY

1. Looking at state policy in relation to parents how would you characterise it?
2. Do you see a ‘turn towards parenting‘? If so what are the core elements of this in your view?
3. And policy towards children, how would you characterise that?

(prompts if required: Where does current policy lie on the empowering- controlling continuum? And on the patriarchal - rights oriented spectrum?

1. Do you see change in any of these respects in the last decades? If so, how and what specifically?

What do you believe led to these changes?

1. Which time periods (especially over the last 15-20 years) would you identify as key periods of change (in relation to concepts of family policy and child protection)?

What was the nature of the change?

And the key reasons/influences?

Was there an observable paradigm shift?

1. What about when there was a change of government (and especially a change of party in government)? Did that effect changes? If so, what exactly?
2. And what did this replace if anything?
3. What kind of values, do you believe, play a prominent role in discussions about parents/families in England today?
4. Against a background of cut-backs and austerity, are initiatives in family- and child-policies being expanded or cut-back in your view? Why so/when?
5. Do you think developments are a response to changing need among parents? If so, what are the main elements of this change?
6. How do you view, in a more general sense, the parent-child relationship? Do you believe this has changed in the last 20 or 30 years? If so, what specifically? And why?
7. Do you think it is justified for the state to intervene more into families now as compared with the past? Why/why not?

## THE FIELD OF PARENTING SUPPORT IN GENERAL

1. Can you tell me what the term ‘parenting’/’parenting support’ means generally in this country ?

How did the concept emerge here?

And in Europe more widely to your knowledge?

1. Can you explain to me what you see as specific about parenting support policies?
2. Which provisions do you consider core to the field of parenting support in England?
3. Does parenting support mean different things to different people? If so what are the nuances/different interpretations to whom?
4. In your view, what kinds of issues have influenced:
5. the interpretation(s) of parenting support
6. its growing importance?
7. Have legal developments influenced the meaning/evolution of this concept?
8. And what about financial issues?
9. And moral issues?
10. And are there particular individuals who have been influential?
11. And interest groups?
12. And professions/disciplines?
13. In your opinion/experience, what kind of research or disciplinary approach exerts the main influence on the field of parenting support in England? (for example: psychotherapy, family therapy, cognitive psychology, behavioural psychology, social work)?
14. In your view which are the most important organizations/providers in the field of of parenting support?

And of parenting programmes?

1. Are there debates/disputes in the field about parenting support? Do you see or foresee conflicts of authority/ responsibility in the field?
2. How do parenting support policies relate to other domains? And in particular how do they relate to:

Child welfare/child protection,

education, health

anti-poverty,

family policy,

social order/control

1. What in your view are the possible benefits of parenting support policies?

And the risks?

1. What do you identify as the strengths and weaknesses of current provision of parenting support?
2. How would you characterise the current situation with regard to monitoring

the field of parenting support?

And staff competence/training?

And evaluation of provision? How adequate is that?

What in your view are the most important criteria for evaluation of parenting-

related policies and interventions?

1. Can measures for parents and parenting support programmes be conducted in a non-stigmatising way in your opinion? Why/why not?
2. What about the gender dimension? Is it your sense that there are gender elements that are attended to or need to be attended to?
3. What is old in current provision? Are the changes a new way of revisiting old issues/problems? Is there a long historical thread here in your view?

And are there things that are genuinely new?

1. Parents have the *right*, as well as the *duty*, to care for and rear their children. Which of those is more important in current developments in your view? And is this a change from the past?
2. Which paradigms (positive parenting, child well-being, at-risk groups) were most important before and which are dominant now in your view?

## RELEVANT PARENTING PROGRAMMES

1. What is your opinion about parenting programmes such as the Triple P, Incredible Years or Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities?
2. What do you feel about the ethos of positive parenting (i.e., giving praise and rewards, time out from positive reinforcement etc)?
3. Do you think that such parenting programmes have an impact? If so how?
4. Through what kind of mechanisms, if any, are these interventions helpful in assisting parents?
5. In what way do you believe these programmes and measures are a way of stimulating/enhancing the development of children? Why (not)?
6. Do you see them having a future in England? Why/why not?
7. Do you think these parenting support programmes/early interventions respond to a social or a political impetus?
8. Do you think these programmes respond to a parental need or request?
9. Which programmes do you consider most important in England?
10. What are the key goals of these programmes in your view?

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS/IDEAS

1. How do you see parenting support policy developing over time?
2. What do you see as the greatest challenges to parent, child- and youth policies now and in the future?
3. And the greatest opportunities?

Just before we close could I ask a little about your own professional background.

* What is your disciplinary background and main line of work?
* How did you come to this field/organisation?
* What was your main area of training? How long have you been in this line of work?

Thank you very much. You have been most helpful.

# Interview Guide for Service Providers

## ROLE OF INSTITUTION / PROFESSIONAL

1. Can you tell me what kinds of services and activities your organization provides to parents (or to local organisations serving parents)?

1. Can you talk me through the typical procedure when a parent comes first to the service?
2. Thinking about the spectrum of services you offer, what are they each trying to achieve?
3. In what area do they intend to achieve changes? (the child’s behaviour, parent behaviour, their relationship, and/or others?) And how do they set about enabling this change?
4. In your opinion what criteria should be used for rating the success of a programme?
5. What kind of ‘output’ if any is used to rate the success of the programmes? Are these consistent across all programmes offered or do they vary?
6. Are parents and/or children’s judgements of a programme’s success brought into the picture, and if so, how?
7. How do you, as a professional, view the relationship between parents and children?
8. Can you tell me something about your ideas or notions about what ‘good parenting’ entails? How have you come to this opinion?
9. Thinking of your own experience and that of the organisation, what are the main reasons that parents need or seek support?
10. Do you have ideas about how parental behaviour gets changed?
11. Are your services usually welcomed by families/parents or not? If not how do you cope with this?
12. Do you think that you are responding to a need on the part of parents (even if parents do not self-refer)?
13. How do your services relate to the ‘whole family approach’?

## DIRECTION & LEARNING WITHIN ORGANISATION

1. Is there central control or direction of the organisation’s services? Explore the details of this (who monitors? how often? using what measures or standards?)
2. Is there local or regional control? (If so, how does this affect the way you deliver programmes and how effective these are?)
3. Are there any ways in which you can give feedback on, or voice your opinion about, the manner in which policy measures are put into practice within your organization? (e.g. through meetings or consultations)?
4. Are there any ways in which you as a professional can give feedback on policy decisions that are made within your professional field more broadly?
5. How effective do you consider these feedback mechanisms to be?

## HISTORY OF ORGANISATION

1. Could you tell me something about the history of the organisation you work for? and the specific section you work in?
2. Have any changes been made to the services in the last say 5 years? If so, what are new elements? (Prompt: Have you seen an expansion in certain kinds of services and if so which? And/or a reduction in certain kinds of services?)
3. Do you think the services you now offer meet a demand? If so where is that demand coming from? (prompt: parents, politicians, professionals, the police/courts, society at large)
4. Do you think they meet a current need? If so, from where is this need originating?
5. Who are the funders? And what are their priorities?
6. Which professional field or fields is the organisation located, in would you say? (e.g. education, psychology, health care)
7. Within the professional field of [......], could you tell me how your organization positions itself? And is viewed by others?
8. How does your organisation learn towards improving its practice? What are the processes for gathering information and for applying learning?

## PERSONAL GOALS / SATISFACTION /CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

1. How do you view your own role with regard to the assistance of families/parents? What is it that you see yourself doing?
2. What are the most important goals that you want to achieve when working with families/parents?
3. Would you say that you are generally satisfied with the results you achieve? Could you give me some idea of what these are (for example last week, what do you think you achieved)?
4. In what way do you believe parenting-related provision is a way of stimulating or enhancing the development of children? Why (not)?
5. Do you ever encounter any discrepancies or “conflicts of interest” in the work? Could you give me an idea of what these are please and how you resolve them?
   1. One conflict of interest could be between ensuring the rights of parents and ensuring “the best interest” of the child (i.e. ensuring the child’s health and safety for instance)? Have you ever felt this? Could you give me an example?
   2. Another could be between your personal understanding of effective parenting support and that which is being promoted by the organisation upon which you rely for your job. Has this ever come up for you?
6. Is there in your view a relationship of power between the professional and the parent(s)? if so what is the nature of this power relationship and how do you deal with it?
7. Is there anything you would like to add about the way in which services are delivered to parents or families?

## THE PARENTING CONCEPT

1. Do you use the term parenting support in your work? If so, could you give me some examples? If not, what terms do you choose and why?
2. Where do you hear these terms being used and how? Do you find they are always used to mean the same thing, or to refer to a variety of things?
3. Are there different models of parenting support being used across the range of services you provide?
4. Surveying the field, what in your opinion are the most important or useful elements (interventions) to help parents in their parenting practice? Where do you see these happening most successfully?
5. What kinds of parents, in your opinion, are in need of parenting support interventions? Why?
6. How are parenting support programmes and parenting support policy measures related to other policy fields? Where would you see the closest relationship/affinity? (use cut-out circles of different sizes to represent: education, health policy, child welfare/protection, anti-poverty, family policy, social order/control, asking interviewee to show the relationship through size and overlapping of circles)
7. What kind of research or disciplinary approach exerts the main influence in shaping parenting support? (for example: psychotherapy, family therapy, cognitive psychology, behavioural psychology, social work)?
8. Do you think other trends or pressures have influenced parenting support policy and practice? (e.g. financial, legal or moral issues, shifts in public opinion and/or media influence?)
9. What about when there was a change of government (and especially a change of party in government)? Did that effect changes? If so, what exactly?
10. The phrase ‘evidence-based practice’ is prominent in the development and discussion of interventions today. What does this phrase mean to you? How would you define or explain ‘evidence-based practice’? In your experience how seriously is it taken?
11. What, in your opinion, are the important elements of evidence-based practice?
12. And what are the important elements of non-evidence-based practice?
13. How much if any change has there been since you started working in this profession/field? If so, what specifically do you think has changed?
14. For you as a professional how do you see or understand the role of the state towards:

Parents

Children

Families

1. Do you believe this role has changed since you started working in this profession? If so, what exactly? When and why do you believe this has changed?

## LINES OF INFLUENCE

1. What kind of research or disciplinary approach most influences your actions (for example: psychotherapy, family therapy, cognitive psychology, behavioural psychology, social work)?
2. Do you know of provisions/measures available in other countries? What do you know about them? And would you say you are influenced by them?
3. Do you think measures can be transported from one country to another? Why/why not?
4. What role has the media played in focusing attention on ‘parenting’ or promoting positive parenting?

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE & PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

1. Thinking as a member of a profession, are you satisfied with what is provided to parents? What are the strengths and the weaknesses in existing provision?
2. Where are the gaps? Are other forms of support needed for and by parents? If so what types? And for whom in particular? What would you suggest to improve the system of parenting support in general?
3. What in your view are the most effective interventions? What is effective about this/these and what enables them to be effective?
4. How do you see the future of parenting support? And that of this organisation?
5. Where do you think this organisation (and/or other players) should focus their energy towards improving provision for parents?

Just before we close could I ask a little about your own professional background.

1. What is your disciplinary background and main line of work?
2. How did you come to this field/organisation?
3. What was your main area of training? How long have you been in this line of work?

Thank you very much. You have been most helpful.

# Interview Guide for Decision-Makers

A shorter guide was designed for decision-makers in light of their limited time available for interviews.

## POLICY CONTEXT, GOALS AND PROVISION

1. Can you help us understand where parenting support is situated in the landscape of X area? (*For example does it sit within early years education & development, health, child protection, and / or under early intervention?)*

And who or what is driving it?

1. Which provisions does it involve? Of these, which do you consider core in England?
2. How prominent is it in relation to policy and provision around family and children generally?
3. Our impression is of two branches in parenting support, namely family services and health. Is this how it is seen/organised? Which if any is core? And what are the implications of this structuring of parenting support?
4. Against a background of cut-backs and austerity, what initiatives parenting support are being expanded and what is being cut-back in your view? Why so?
5. Where do you think the demand for parenting support is coming from?
6. Is current provision around where it should be or is there more to do/put in place?
7. What kind of values, do you believe, play a prominent role in discussions about parents/families in England today and as we head to the future?

## GOVERNANCE / DECISION-MAKING

1. Who do you see as in charge of parenting support in England? [And what is your role in relation to it?]
2. Is there a clear line of governance in terms of decision-making for provision, spending, monitoring etc?
3. How are decisions made regarding the content and distribution of parenting support? And how is decision-making shared between national-level actors and local government? (*our interest here is to test the supposition that ps is part and parcel of localisation, a changing form of the welfare state that is couched in ideas of local knowledge about residents and issues, meeting local needs and taking responsibility for one’s area)*
4. How is the funding channelled in parenting support, and what are the (actual/relative) sums for each form of parenting support?

Providers who spend on parenting support include Children’s Centres, Early Intervention service, primary schools, voluntary organisations – is it possible to distinguish what proportion of overall budgets are spent on parenting support?

1. Who would we go to in order to find out more about how the funding is channelled into parenting support at a national level, and the sums allocated to each form of parenting support?
2. What information do you rely on to make decisions?
3. What is the situation with regard to the evidence base and monitoring the field of parenting support?
4. What information on outputs or outcomes is collected for accountability purposes? Or for in-house learning and re-direction of spending?
5. Are there any issues in regard to the role of different professionals in the delivery of parenting support?

Or in relation to the role of volunteers?

1. What is the situation in relation to staff competence/training (with respect to different forms of parenting support offered here)?
2. What mechanisms exist for sharing learning or comparing approaches to parenting support between regions in England?
3. In the context of current evolutions in service provision, what role does the voluntary sector play in parenting support?

And the private sector?

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

1. In your opinion/experience, how is the field of parenting support likely to develop in England the future?
2. What will be the main drivers of this? (*for example: government policy, provider or advocacy organisations, research/disciplinary approaches in psychotherapy, family therapy, cognitive psychology, behavioural psychology, social work*)?
3. Is parenting support here to stay? And if so, how do you see parenting support featuring in future agendas or policy landscapes?