Contextual Information for Data from the ‘Educational Pathways and Work Outcomes of Disabled Young People in England’Project

1. **Project outline and intentions:**

The ‘Educational Pathways and Work Outcomes of Disabled Young People in England’project was a longitudinal project which began during March 2021 and involved the collection of qualitative interview-based data from disabled young people and their parents/guardians.

The broader aims of the project focussed on delineating the mechanisms behind the association of childhood disability with educational and occupational disadvantage into adulthood. Data were collected in waves to capture the experiences of the young people who took part in the study throughout their post-16 education transitions into work and further education.

1. **Sampling:**

Autistic, dyslexic and physically disabled participants were recruited in order to match the three broad groups of Special Educational Needs: 1) communication and interactions, 2) cognition and learning and 3) physical difficulties, as defined by the department of education.

Recruitment was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic which was ongoing throughout the project. As a result, the research team pursued several recruitment avenues. These consisted of sending direct invitations to and advertising via UK schools, disabled people’s organisations and charities, local authorities and social media. The researchers also liaised with food banks and organisations which work with marginalised youth, in an attempt to try and recruit a socio-economically diverse sample. Due to recruitment constraints, there were

fewer participants with physical disabilities, from racialised minorities and from lower social class backgrounds (see Table 1 for final demographics).

1. **Research Design and Procedure:**

Initially, 35 disabled young people were enrolled into the study. During wave 1, these participants took part in semi-structured interviews. Wave 1 took place from April-September 2021, during which time all of the participants were 15-16 years old and were completing Year 11 of their education within a mainstream English school. Wave 1 specifically sought to explore the mechanisms that had contributed to disability and disadvantage throughout mainstream education, with a particular focus on secondary education and preparations for post-16 transitions.

Between waves 1 and 2, from October 2021 to January 2022, parents or legal guardians of the young people from wave 1 were invited to take part in semi-structured interviews. The parental interviews focussed on further exploring any structural or interpersonal mechanisms which had contributed to disability or disadvantage for the young people throughout their education. Of the original sample, 26 parents or guardians took part in a parental interview.

Wave 2 of data collection from the young people took place from April to October 2022. These interviews sought to explore their experiences in transitioning from mainstream education into their chosen post-16 pathways. Of the original 35 participants, 33 chose to continue their participation in wave 2.

The research team relied on self-identification of disability amongst participants. The majority of the sample (N=34) reported that they had been formally diagnosed with at least 1 disability when they enrolled onto the project. Of the original 35 participants, 23 reported overlapping conditions/impairments which were then discussed at interview.

Across all waves, semi-structured interviews were conducted online via video call or through a phone call. From wave 2, participants also had the choice to take part in person, at a location of their choosing. For the young person interviews, parental presence was optional.

1. **Archived Data:**

The available transcripts have been transcribed verbatim. Sensitive data and data containing potentially identifiable information have been anonymised or removed from the transcripts. All participants were given the opportunity to edit their verbatim transcripts after interview. Where transcripts were edited by participants, the edited versions have been anonymised and included for data archival.

Table 1 on page 5 of this documents offers sample characteristics of the 35 young people who originally enrolled onto the project.

1. **Nomenclature:**

Within the transcripts and across dissemination from the project, the researchers aimed to use language when describing disability which avoided stigmatised implications about disability and the specific conditions being discussed. Within transcripts, participants were asked about their personal language preferences relating to disability and their specific conditions. These language preferences were then mirrored by the interviewing researcher.

Across dissemination, the researchers have followed published guidelines, where available, for communicating about a particular group (e.g., autistic people) to larger audiences (for example: Bottema-Beutel, Kapp, Lester, Sasson & Hand, 2021; Kenny et al., 2016). Where languages preferences for a condition or minority group were unknown, the researchers have chosen language that aims

to represent socially constructed disadvantages together with the acknowledgement of inherent disability and impairments.

1. **Record of Publications:**
2. Butler-Rees, A., & Chatzitheochari, S. (2022). Giving a socially distanced voice to disabled young people: Insights from the Educational Pathways and Work Outcomes longitudinal study. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 1-14.*
3. Chatzitheochari, S., & Butler-Rees, A. (2022). Disability, Social Class and Stigma: An intersectional analysis of disabled young people’s school experiences. *Sociology,* 00380385221133710.

**Table 1.** Sample Characteristics for Young People

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Participant Characteristics** | **N** |
| *Sex* |  |
| Female | 14 |
| Male | 21 |
| *Disability* |  |
| Autism | 22 |
| Dyslexia | 15 |
| Physical Disability | 7 |
| *Ethnicity* |  |
| White British | 29 |
| Other | 6 |
| *School Type* |  |
| State | 23 |
| State Grammar | 5 |
| Private | 7 |
| *Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP)* |  |
| Yes | 18 |
| No | 17 |
| *Free School Meals* |  |
| Yes | 4 |
| No | 31 |
| *One parent/guardian family* |  |
| Yes | 9 |
| No | 26 |
| *Parental Social Class* |  |
| Low | 9 |
| Middle | 12 |
| High | 14 |
| *Geographical Area* |  |
| Midlands | 9 |
| North | 11 |
| South | 15 |

*Notes:* The total sample was 35 Year 11 students from mainstream schools in England. Sociodemographic information was collected during a pre-interview with parent(s)/guardian(s) and young people. Disability categories are overlapping. Social

class was determined using information on occupation of parents/guardians (highest was considered).

Pseudonymisation: Pseudonyms were assigned to all participants, and were matched to their gender. We also aimed to signify their cultural background, for example, Rahul was chosen to represent the participant’s culture as a British Indian.

Table 2. Participant Identifiers

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Parent Pseudonym\*** | **Primary Disability\*\*** | **Other Disabilities** | **Social Class** | **Ethnicity** | **Secondary School Type** | **EHCP** | **GCSE Attainment**  **5 GCSEs Level 4 or above** | **Further Education Provider** | **Type of course – academic/vocational (qualification)** | **FE Achieved Grades** | **Post-18 pathway** |
| Abigail | Dominika | Mental health | Autism | Low | Mixed (Eastern European and British) | State | No | Yes | Sixth Form (school transfer) | A Levels | Unknown | Unknown |
| Andrew | N/A | Autism | Dyspraxia, mental health | Middle | White British | State | Yes | Yes | State Sixth Form (continuation) | A Levels | Unknown | Unknown |
| Cameron | Ellen | Autism | None | Low | White British | State | Yes | Yes | State Sixth Form (continuation) | A Levels and a BTEC | Distinction, B, C | University |
| Charlotte | Sally | Dyslexia | None | High | White British | State | No | Yes | State Sixth Form (continuation) | A Levels | A\*, A, A | Gap year followed by university |
| Christopher | Laura | Autism | None | High | White British | Private | No | Yes | Private Sixth Form (continuation) | A Levels | A, C, C | Gap year followed by university |
| Daniel\*\*\* | Tracy | Autism | Dyslexia | Low | White British | State | No | No (predicted) | Expected - FE College | Expected - Vocational BTEC course | Unknown | Unknown |
| David | Lindsay | Autism | None | High | White British | State | Yes | Yes | Specialist SEND College | BTEC Level 3 | Pass + Merit | Supported apprenticeship |
| Dylan | Pam | Autism | Dyslexia, mental health | High | White British | Private | Yes | No | Specialist SEN Sixth Form | BTEC Level 2 | Merit | Continuing at college to study Level 2 Diploma and resitting his English GCSE. |
| Edward | Mary | Autism | Dyslexia, dyspraxia, mental health | Middle | White British | State | Yes | Yes | Specialist SEND FE College | A Level | Returned to college the following year – took an A Level and resat GCSE English. | Continuing at college to study an A level, resitting English language and maths GCSE. |
| Eliza | Esther | Dyslexia | None | Middle | White British | State Grammar | No | Yes | FE College | A Levels | B, B, B | Taking a gap year followed by university. |
| Ella | Karen | Dyslexia | None | High | White British | Private | No | Yes | Private Sixth Form (Continuation) | A Levels | A\*, A\*, A | Taking a gap year followed by university.. |
| Emma | Alison | ADHD | Dyslexia, autism, dyspraxia | Middle | White British/Australian | State Grammar | No | Yes | Selective Sixth Form (school transfer) | A Levels | A\*, A\*, A | University (Oxbridge) |
| Fatima | N/A | DLD | Dyslexia | Low | British Pakistani | State | Yes | No | FE College | Vocational course (NVQ/T Level) | Unknown | Unknown |
| Grace | N/A | Dyslexia | None | High | White British | State Grammar | No | Yes | State Grammar Sixth Form (continuation) | A Levels and a BTEC Level 3 | Distinction\*, A\*, A\* | University |
| Henry | N/A | Dyslexia | None | High | White British | State | Yes | Yes | State Sixth Form (continuation) | A Levels and a BTEC Level 3 | Fail (BTEC), D, D (A Levels) | Retaking year 13 |
| Isla | Maeve | Autism | Hearing impairment, dyspraxia, mental health | High | White British | Private | No | Yes | Private Sixth Form (continuation) – tried a state sixth form but withdrew within first week | A Levels | A\*, A\*, A | University |
| Jonathan | Yasmin | Physical disability | Autism, dyscalculia, stuttering, epilepsy | High | Mixed - White British and Asian | Private | Yes | Yes | Private Sixth Form (continuation) | A Levels | B, B, B | University |
| Leo | Robert | Physical disability | Hearing impairment | High | White British | State Grammar | Yes | Yes | State grammar sixth form (continuation) | A Levels | B, C, C | University |
| Liam | Megan | Learning disability | Autism | High | White British | State | Yes | No | Special Unit in an FE College | Independent living course (year 1) and skills for work course (year 2) | N/A – | Continuing at SEN college – independent living course |
| Lucas\*\*\* | N/A | Physical disability | None | Low | White British | State | Yes | Yes | FE College | BTEC Diploma | Merit, merit, merit | Level 3 Apprenticeship |
| Luke | Sasha | Dyslexia | None | High | White British | Private | No | Yes | Private Sixth Form (continuation) | A Levels | B, C, C | University |
| Matthew | N/A | Physical disability | Autism | Middle | White British | State | Yes | Yes | Enrolled in FE College but withdrew during first week - NEET | BTEC Level 3 | N/A | Not in education, employment or training |
| Michael | Rose | Dyspraxia | Dyslexia | Middle | White British | State | No | Yes | FE College | BTEC Level 3 | Distinction\* | Part time hospitality job while retaking his maths GCSE |
| Nathan | Anne | Dyslexia | Dyspraxia | High | White British | State | No | Yes | FE College | BTEC Level 3 Diploma | Distinction\*, Distinction, Distinction | University |
| Oliver | Julian | Autism | None | Middle | White British | State | No | Yes | State Sixth Form (continuation) | A Levels | U, U (dropped one A Level) | Vocational/public services training |
| Philip | Eloise | Dyslexia | Autism | Low | White British | State | Yes | No | State sixth form (continuation) | BTEC Level 3s | Pass, merit | University |
| Poppy | Teresa | Autism | Learning disability | Low | White British | State | Yes | No | SEN Unit at FE College | SEND Foundation course level 1 (year 1) and level 2 (year 2) | N/A | Supported internship |
| Rahul | Shiv | Autism | Dyslexia, physical disability | Low | British Indian | State | Yes | Yes | FE College with ASD unit | NVQ | N/A – still underway | Continuing course at college |
| Ruby | Heather | Autism | Dyslexia, physical disability | Middle | White British | State Grammar | No | Yes | State Grammar (continuation) | A Levels | A, B (did not sit one subject due to poor mental health) | Continuing with A Levels |
| Ryan | Beverly | Autism | Mental health, ADHD | Middle | White British | State | Yes | Yes | FE College | BTEC Level 3 National Extended Diploma | Distinction\*, Distinction, Distinction | Full-time work |
| Sarah | N/A | Autism | None | High | White British | State | Yes | Yes | Selective University Maths School | A Levels | A\* but was unable to take her other A Levels due to poor mental health | Redoing year 13 |
| Scarlett | Maria | Mental health | Autism | Middle | White British/White - Other | State | No | Yes | State Sixth Form (continuation) | A Levels | B, C, C | University |
| Sophia | N/A | Autism | Mental health | High | White British | Private | No | Yes | Private Sixth Form (continuation) | A Levels | A\*, A, A | University (Oxbridge) |
| Thomas | Claire | Autism | Dyslexia | Middle | White British | State | No | Yes | FE College | A Levels and a BTEC | Distinction\*, A, D | Not in education, employment or training |
| Zoe | N/A | Physical disability | Seizures | Low | White British | State | Yes | Yes | FE College | A Levels and BTEC Level 3 Diploma | Unknown | Unknown |

**\*** Pseudonymisation: Pseudonyms were assigned to all participants, and were matched to their gender. We also aimed to signify their cultural background, for example, Rahul was chosen to represent the participant’s culture as a British Indian.

**\*\***Primary disability: As reported by the participant

\*\*\* Did not participate in wave 2 interview

**References**

Bottema-Beutel, K., Kapp, S. K., Lester, J. N., Sasson, N. J., & Hand, B. N. (2021). Avoiding ableist language: Suggestions for autism researchers. *Autism in Adulthood, 3*(1), 18-29. doi:10.1089/aut.2020.0014

Kenny, L., Hattersley, C., Molins, B., Buckley, C., Povey, C., & Pellicano, E. (2016). Which terms should be used to describe autism? Perspectives from the UK autism community. *Autism, 20*(4), 442-462. doi: 10.1177/1362361315588200