

**TOPIC GUIDE for Practitioner Interviews and/or Focus Groups**

**Guidance for researchers**

This topic guide for semi-structured interviews/focus groups with frontline practitioners can be used flexibly, and individually tailored to the practitioner.

*Example topics for exploration include:*

* The assessment of families the practitioner has on their caseload (current or past) and the kind of needs parents and families present with;
* The care planning and management of these families, including decision-making and interdisciplinary/interagency working;
* The guidance, procedures and/or tools that practitioners use when working with families;
* Examples of specific interventions for parents and/or children, including how these are delivered and their impact
* Professional challenges that are encountered on a day-to-day basis and how these are managed.

The discussion should aim to focus on **relations within the field**, whereby practitioners are asked to consider and explore topics such as:

* their relationships with service users, other family members, colleagues and other key actors in the field;
* other relationships that frame their day-to-day work;
* how guidelines, policy, and practice shape these relationships and underpin their understanding of the governance of parental opioid use.

**Methods:** Interviews with practitioners can be conducted either through face-to-face interactions, or via telephone or videoconferencing. It is anticipated that interviews will take approx. 60 minutes. With consent, interviews can be audio-recorded using an encrypted digital voice recorder can transcribed.

**Topics: Key themes and indicative questions**

*Note: These questions provide an indication of themes that each interview will cover and are not intended to be prescriptive.*

**Role and remit**

* Can you start by describing your role and remit in relation to the care of parents who use drugs and their families?
* What are your key responsibilities and goals? Has your role changed over time (e.g. in relation to changing policy landscape)?

**Everyday practice**

* What are the needs of and challenges faced by parents and families you support?
* What approaches do you take to maximise parents’ engagement with you?
* Can you tell me about any policies – national, local, service-based – that shape your everyday practice with parents?
* What do you think is the best approach to the provision of services for parents who use drugs, and families affected by parental opioid use? What do you think are the benefits and challenges of working with parents from a [NHS/statutory service/third sector] position?
* How do you balance issues such as ‘child protection’ and ‘family support’?

**Current/recent work with families on caseload**

* Can you tell me about some of the families you are currently working with?

**Relationships with parents and other family members**

* How would you describe your relationship with the parents/family?
* How do you tailor your approach to meet the needs of the parents/family as a whole?
* What kind of interventions would you use to help parents/families?

**Relationships with other practitioners/multi-agency working**

* Which practitioners (within and beyond your own team/service) do you work with when you are supporting a parent/family members?
* How would you describe your relationship with these other professionals
* What kind of work would you do together? [Raise issues such as drug testing, information sharing, joint decision-making, planning care, coordinating care etc]

**Discourse and language use**

* [Explore concepts used by participants such as ‘risk’, ‘vulnerability’, ‘protective factors’, ‘resilience’, ‘adversity’, ‘addiction’, ‘attachment’ etc] Can you describe what you mean by this term and how you would assess/intervene in practice?

**Policy/good practice guidance, service documentation**

* To what extent is your practice with parents/families, or approach to working with them, informed by policies, procedures and guidelines?
* [Local/team guidance] Is it possible to have a discuss one or two of these in more depth and you talk me through how you would apply these with a parent/family?
* To what extent do parents and families play a role in shaping policies you use?

**Spaces and environments of care and support**

* How would you describe your service environment or the kind of environment you are trying to create for parents/families *[e.g., room in service, waiting room, etc.]*?
* What impact do you think being in *[x space/location]* has on parents/children? On your relationships with parents/families?
* If you see parents at home, how do you approach working with them in their home?
* Are there any initiatives you/your service takes to improve parents’ experience of the spaces you practice in?

**The impact of COVID-19**

* Can you describe how COVID-19 has impacted your work during 2020 and 2021?
* What was the impact of the pandemic on families you support(ed)?
* What, if any, impact does COVID-19 continue to pose for your work and relationships with parents and families, and relations with your team?
* What do you think the long-term impacts of COVID-19 might be on provision and design of support and care for parents who use drugs?

**Consider a finishing up question**… If you were to give advice to a new member of staff about working with parents who use drugs, or the family, what would you say?