

Longitudinal transitions study of young people with visual impairments: methodology summary (November 2015)

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Document Version

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Citation for published version (Harvard):

Hewett, R, Douglas, G & Keil, S 2015, *Longitudinal transitions study of young people with visual impairments: methodology summary (November 2015)*. VICTAR. <<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-social-sciences/education/victar/methodology-report-autumn-2015.pdf>>

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BIRMINGHAM

Longitudinal Transitions Study of Young People with Visual Impairments: Methodology Summary (November 2015)

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Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the many people who have supported this project.

Firstly, we would like to recognise the contribution given by the Visual Impairment Support Services, Resource Bases and Special School who assisted in the recruitment of the participants in this project, by identifying suitable young people to take part in the research and sending out recruitment packs to them.

We would also like to thank the participants who have agreed to take part in this longitudinal study, and for continually giving up their time to complete questionnaires and take part in telephone interviews.

We are very grateful to the Nuffield Foundation for funding this research and for their continued support of the study. In particular we would like to thank Josh Hillman and Kim Woodruff for their advice and feedback throughout Phase 2 of the study.

We are also very thankful to Elizabeth Clery, Rory Cobb, Andrea Cooper, Miranda Creed-Miles, Nicola Crews, Sophie Dymont, Pat Dyson, Liz Ellis, John Harris, Kat Hogg, Lesley Inganni, Jane Leadbetter, Sean Owen, Callum Russell, Philippa Simkiss, Louise Stimpson, Rebecca Szekely, Lynn Watson, Andy White, Dan Williams, Huw Williams and Sue Wright for their guidance through the project steering group.

A special thank you to RNIB for their continued support of this project.

The Nuffield Foundation

The Nuffield Foundation is an endowed charitable trust that aims to improve social well-being in the widest sense. It funds research and innovation in education and social policy and also works to build capacity in education, science and social science research. The Nuffield Foundation has funded this project, but the views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Foundation. More information is available at www.nuffieldfoundation.org



1 Summary and introduction

This report presents a summary of the methods used in the 2014-2015 rounds of data collection in the research project: “A longitudinal study of blind and partially sighted young people in the UK” [the ‘Longitudinal Transitions Study’]. The project has surveyed a sample of young people about their circumstances and views since 2010 when they were aged between 14 and 16 years old.

The Longitudinal Transition Study was designed in 2009 by a team from RNIB and VICTAR (Visual Impairment Centre for Teaching and Research) at the University of Birmingham in response to the Research Brief prepared by RNIB. The key objectives of the project were:

1. To track the process of transition for blind and partially sighted young people from age 14 into the labour market
2. To identify the roles of professionals involved
3. To identify the factors that improve or reduce a young person’s chance of gaining employment

The project was designed to include the following key stages of research:

1. Recruit and survey visual impairment services
2. Through these services, recruit and survey a sample of Year 9 and 11 students with visual impairment
3. Follow-up surveys of the sample of students with visual impairment

Phase 1 of the study took place between autumn 2009 and spring 2012, and was funded by RNIB. This phase of work involved the recruitment of the sample young people and initial postal and telephone surveying of them. This resulted in a number of written reports and papers (e.g. Hewett, Douglas and Williams, 2011; Hewett and Douglas, 2011, Hewett, Douglas, Ramli, and Keil, 2012).

Phase 2 of the study was funded by the Nuffield Foundation took place between spring 2012 and autumn 2015. This phase of work centred on follow-up surveys of the sample of young people with visual impairment (stage 3 described above), as well as some more detailed case study work. Again, this phase of work has resulted in a number of written reports and papers, and has culminated in five technical reports which this methodology summary accompanies and provides the details of the methods adopted in this phase of work.

This methodology summary provides an overview of the data collected across several periods of data collection, the findings of which are presented in a series of technical reports published in November 2015:

- The transition experiences of young people with visual impairments aged 17-21 (Hewett et al, 2015b)
- Wellbeing of young people with visual impairments (Hewett et al, 2015c)
- Support and information received by young people with visual impairments (Hewett et al, 2015d)
- Young people, visual impairment and preparing to live independently (Hewett et al, 2015e)
- Experiences of blind and partially sighted young people as they make the transition into Higher Education (Hewett et al, 2015f)

This methodology summary also presents the following:

- Project background and recruitment
- Overview of data collection 2010-2015
- Detailed description of the methods used in Phase 2:
 - Autumn 2014 interview
 - End of first year HE transition interviews
 - Summer 2015 HE follow-up interviews
 - Case studies
- Analysis and reporting

2 Project background and recruitment

2.1 Recruitment

In Phase One, participants were recruited in school years 9 and 11 across the English Midlands regions and Wales, to take part in the longitudinal study. Specifically, the young people were initially recruited into the project through the 18 local authorities, 2 resource bases and 1 special school. At the time the schools and services were asked to identify all the Year 9 and Year 11 students with a visual impairment that they were supporting. Each service provider was asked to complete a short questionnaire identifying the students:

- initials
- gender
- ethnic group
- preferred reading format
- whether they had additional disabilities
- whether the student could independently complete a questionnaire
- details of anything else which could affect the student's potential involvement

Being able to 'independently complete a questionnaire' was used as the project inclusion criteria for the study. All those students who met the criteria were invited to take part through pre-prepared information packs. Those who consented to take part joined the project (with the freedom to request to withdrawal at any time).

By June 2011, 81 young people had been recruited into the project. Due to loss of contact with some participants, and others choosing to withdraw from the project, this number had reduced to 75 by Easter 2012. The decision was made at this stage to go back to the services from which the original cohorts were recruited and 'top-up' the sample from those who would have been in Year 10 at the time of initial recruitment and now moving into Year 13. This resulted in an additional seven participants joining the project. By autumn 2014/spring 2015 there were 73 participants still actively involved in the research and 61 participants who were available for interview at that time. None of the participants have requested to withdraw in the past year, but there have been difficulties in making contact with some of them, which is inevitable with a study such as this one. We still hope to re-establish contact with these participants.

In summary, we have received consent forms from 88 young people, although not all have taken part in every stage of the data collection process.

2.2 Sample demographics and representativeness

A detailed analysis of the sample demographics and representativeness was provided in Hewett, Douglas and Williams (2011). At the time, the following key points were noted in the sample:

1. There is an underrepresentation of Asian or Asian British young people
2. There is an overrepresentation of those with additional special needs, Statements of Special Educational Needs, Braille users and young people from Wales

The small sample size must be taken into account when assessing the representativeness of our sample to the population. However, overall the sample recruited appeared to offer a good representation of young people in the population.

3 Overview of data collection 2010-2015

There have been eleven stages of data collection over the course of the longitudinal study:

- Summer 2010 - questionnaires either on paper, online or via telephone interviews. Topics included: You and your family; your visual impairment and the support you receive at school; transition planning; work experience; connexions; decisions for the future; the future; locus of control
- Autumn 2010 - telephone interviews of the Year 11 group, ascertaining how they had done in their GCSE examinations and what they had gone on to do next
- Spring 2011- telephone interviews with both the Year 9 and Year 11 cohorts to review their recent transition experiences (Year 9 cohort moving onto GCSEs and Year 11 cohort moving into further education, and apprenticeships) and plans for the future
- Summer 2011 – telephone interviews with both the Year 9 and Year 11 cohorts, focusing on their use of social networking sites and mobile phones
- Easter 2012 – short follow up interviews with Year 9 and Year 11 cohorts to see if participants were still happy to take part in the

project, and to see what their plans were for the next academic year

- Autumn 2012 – longer interviews with Year 9, 11 cohorts and the new Year 10 cohort, which focused on independence and the additional curriculum
- Summer 2013 – short follow up interview with Year 9, 10 and 11 cohorts, with the interviews being focused towards the participant's current pathway
- Autumn 2013 – longer interviews with Year 9, 10 and 11 cohorts, which focused on the young persons' visual impairment, as well as investigating further the equipment they would use and adjustments they would make to access information. Questions were also asked on the young people's experience of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP)
- Summer 2014 – interviews with participants who had transitioned into HE in the academic year 2013-2014 to find out how this transition had gone
- Autumn 2014 – longer interviews with Year 9, 10 and 11 cohorts which focused on wellbeing, friendships, independent living and support and information about their eye condition
- Summer 2015 – end of year interviews with participants who had transitioned into HE that academic year and follow-up interviews with all participants who had been in HE

Table 1: Participant Levels of each cohort during each data collection period

	Year 11	Year 10	Year 9	Total
Summer 2010	47	N/A	31	78
Autumn 2010	46	N/A	N/A	46
Spring 2011	47	N/A	28	75
Summer 2011	41	N/A	27	68
Easter 2012	40	N/A	28	68
Autumn 2012	39	6	25	70
Summer 2013	36	6	26	68
Autumn 2013	34	6	24	64
Summer 2014 (Participants in HE only)	1	5	0	6
Autumn 2014	33	6	22	61
Summer 2015 (Participants in HE only)	15	5	4	24

4 Detailed description of the methods used in Phase 2

This technical report provides an overview of the methodology used in the longitudinal study as a whole, and also more specifically, in rounds of data collection in Phase 2. This includes:

- data collected as part of the longitudinal tracking interviews in summer 2014 and in autumn 2014
- data collected as part of case study work that took place between October 2013 and March 2015
- data collected from participants in Higher Education between autumn 2012 and summer 2015

As will be noted, participation levels in our study have fallen gradually over time. This is due to a number of factors including:

- participants being unavailable during the time period in question (e.g. due to being away on a gap year or due to long-term illness)
- participants changing their contact details so we have been unable to make contact with them
- participants withdrawing from the study (we are pleased to note that this is only relevant to a small number of the participants, and remain encouraged by the participants' continued commitment to the research)

However, it should also be noted that there have been some challenges in collecting data from the participants.

- Firstly, some of the participants have reached very challenging and busy times in their lives as they are moving into adulthood. This is particularly the case for students in Higher Education who have a lot of pressures on their time. Consequently, not all questions in the interview schedules were asked to all the participants. This decision was made because we did not wish to overburden those who were struggling with time, and affect their participation in future interviews. Instead where appropriate the researcher prioritised the questions which were asked according to the amount of time that was available, ensuring that at least the data related to the longitudinal aspect of the respect was collected.
- Secondly, some of the participants have had particularly difficult times in relation to their visual impairment. In two cases a substantial amount of time was spent in talking through the difficulties that the young person was having, and in both cases it

resulted in them being referred to support services. Due to the particularly personal content of these conversations it was felt inappropriate to continue with the rest of the interview.

4.1 Autumn 2014 interviews

The autumn 2014 survey was completed with all cohorts through a semi structured telephone interview. Due to the length of the interview schedule, and the more open nature of the questions, all interviews were audio recorded using an Olympus Dictaphone which connected to the researcher's telephone and these were then later transcribed. The interview schedule (which is available for reference in the appendix) covered the following topics:

4.1.1 Section A: Longitudinal Pathways

An overview of what the participants are doing, and what has happened to them since they last took part in a research interview, including a summary of what they were doing before, what they are doing now and what they want to do next. Their experiences were then investigated more comprehensively through several short interview segments, which were tailored to what the young person was doing (or had been doing). These various segments included questions for:

- Those who had been in apprenticeships
- Those who had been in employment
- Those who had been in higher education
- Those who had been NEET
- Those who had been unemployed for more than 3 months
- Those who had applied to HE since the time of last interview
- Those who were looking to transition into employment
- Those who were looking to transition into an apprenticeship
- Those who were looking to transition into a different course in FE/Sixth Form

4.1.2 Section B: Wellbeing, friendships, and independent living

1. Well-being scale; locus of control; self-image profile
2. Friendship
3. Independent living

4.1.3 Section C: Support and information in relation to their visual impairment

1. Ongoing medical support in relation to eye condition

2. Emotional support relating to eye condition
3. General health

4.2 End of first year HE transition interviews

The end of first year HE transition interviews were conducted with participants who had made the transition to Higher Education that academic year. The same interview schedule was used for academic years 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2014-15. It explored a number of topics including:

- the young people's experiences of Disabled Student Allowance
- the interactions and experiences that the young people had had with their universities' Disability Support Office
- how the young people accessed learning material and reference material
- access to examinations
- general life in HE (accommodation and social)

4.3 Summer 2015 Follow-Up interviews

In summer 2015 follow-up interviews were conducted with those participants who had transitioned into Higher Education to investigate some emerging findings from the previous HE interviews. These covered:

- Disabled Student Allowance
- support provided by HE institutions
- mobility support
- independent living
- adult services

4.4 Case studies

In addition to the regular interviews with our participants, we have also carried out case study work with a selection of the young people. These participants were selected to be as representative of our group as possible, including:

- A range of visual impairments
- A range of pathways being followed
- A range of educational backgrounds

We also looked to identify participants who had shown to be particularly engaged in the research to date, as we did not want to overburden the

case study participants and cause people to withdraw from the research unnecessarily.

Four pathways were identified to be explored further through the case study research. These were:

1. Higher education
2. Transition from FE/Sixth form
3. Employment/Apprenticeships
4. Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) or in a vulnerable position.

4.4.1 Pathway 1: Higher Education (HE)

In pathway 1 we have been exploring the young peoples' experiences of making the transition into HE. This has included:

- the application process for Disabled Students Allowance
- support provided by Disabled Student Allowance
- partnerships with the disability support office to set up access arrangements
- communication with departments and access arrangements that have been made
- experiences of accessing information
- experiences of accessing examinations
- getting to know people
- how they are adapting to living independently (if applicable)

Six participants have been recruited from pathway 1 – one of whom entered in 2012-13, and 5 who entered in 2013-14. Additionally we have recruited a number of 'associates' - people who have had a significant role in helping the young person make the transition to HE. Examples of associates include parents/carers, disability support officers, tutors/welfare tutors, and mobility officers.

The project researcher spent a day shadowing each participant through a typical day in HE, providing the opportunity to make observations of various important factors in relation to the young person's experience, such as:

- how they were accessing information
- how they were able to get around their learning environment
- what equipment they were using and what they were using it for
- how they interacted with staff

- how they interacted with their support assistants
- how they interacted with their peers.

Although only a single day, these days proved very fruitful, particularly in developing the trust between the researcher and the participant which in turn proved beneficial for subsequent interviews. The researcher took the opportunity to ask questions throughout the course of the day. Any additional questions that had not been covered were asked shortly afterwards, in the form of a follow-up interview. Finally, the pathway 1 participants also took part in extended interviews towards the end of their first year. These were telephone interviews which were audio-recorded and later transcribed. The interviews covered the following topics:

- Preparedness for transition to HE (academic side; social side; living independently)
- Expectations and actualities of support in relation to study (support provided by the Disability Support Office; support provided by department; access to exams)
- Details of specific issues (DSA; use of specialist equipment; accessing the library and other resources)
- Long term expectations (career ambitions; access to work; specialist advice through careers service)

Interviews were also conducted with the participants' associates. These again took place in the form of semi-structured telephone interviews which were audio recorded and transcribed (apart from the case of three interviews which were conducted in person). These interviews covered the following topics:

- Background information of interviewee
- Preparedness of young people before going into HE
- Expectations and actualities of support received
- Specific issues relating to HE
- Son/daughters future plans (for parents/carers)
- DSA (for Disability Support Officers)

4.4.2 Pathway 2: Preparing to leave FE/College

Case studies were conducted with three participants who were in their final year in sixth form/college and were preparing to make their next transition. The purpose of these case studies was:

- to investigate the plans that the young people had

- to look at the advice and guidance that they received in making and navigating their decision
- to follow the reality of this transition as it happened

Two of the participants were planning to go into HE. One was applying for a foundation level course in a vocational subject, whilst the other was applying for an academic course. The third participant had decided not to continue into Higher Education and instead was looking for either employment or an apprenticeship in a particular field.

Regular interviews were conducted with these participants during their final year in sixth form/college. This was felt most appropriate as it is a very high paced year, and by speaking to them more regularly, but for shorter duration, it would help get better accuracy in terms of the guidance that they had received and the associated timings of this.

We also recruited ‘associates’ of the young people to learn more about how they were supporting them during this time. These included the young people’s parents/carers, tutors and the qualified teacher of children and young people with vision impairment (QTVI) who was working alongside them (if applicable). These associates were interviewed once each, through semi-structured telephone interviews that were recorded and transcribed.

4.4.3 Pathway 3: Employment/Apprenticeships

Pathway 3 covered those who were in employment or an apprenticeship. This group proved particularly difficult to recruit into for a number of reasons. Firstly, only a few of the participants at this stage had made the transition into employment, meaning that we had less participants to approach. Secondly, those in employment tended to be those with less severe visual impairments, and often those who were not so engaged in the research. For this reason many of those we approached declined to take part in the case study work, although we were able to recruit one participant. As part of the case study work, this participant completed a model diary which was designed to capture the different tasks that he undertook during a typical day at work. As well as recording tasks, he also recorded details of the equipment that he used, and any adjustments which were made in light of his visual impairment. This included his commute to and from work, and any breaks that he would have. Upon receiving his diary, the researcher conducted a short interview with the participant to clarify any points and address any

questions that had resulted. At a later date an extended semi-structured interview was conducted with the participant to ask further questions about his transition into employment and his experiences in the workplace as a young person with a visual impairment.

The young person did not give permission for us to speak to his employer to find more about the employer's attitudes to accommodating the young person's visual impairment in the workplace. It is anticipated that more participants will be recruited for case study work in this pathway, once they make the transition into the labour market. This will particularly be the case for our participants in HE as they make the transition into graduate roles.

4.4.4 Pathway 4: NEET/In vulnerable position

The final pathway explored the views of 5 young people who had experienced challenges during their respective transition journeys from compulsory education into further education, training, employment and unemployment. Purposive sampling was employed to recruit participants.

The case study work in this pathway had two main aims:

- To explore the process of transition from compulsory education to other destinations with a group of young people with visual impairment.
- To obtain the views of individuals who have experienced transition, encourage them to consider their own perceptions of the development of their independence and identity as a result of the transition and to identify enablers and barriers to success in this process.

Semi structured interviews were conducted face-to-face, audio recorded and transcribed.

5 Analysis and Reporting

5.1 Data management

All interviews were audio-recorded using an Olympus Dictaphone by the researcher. They were then transcribed verbatim into Microsoft Word, before being entered into the project database, an IBM Statistics SPSS 20 programme. Open responses to questions were imported into the qualitative analysis tool NVivo 10.

5.2 Analysis of questions and reporting style

The responses to closed questions were analysed through simple summary statistics using IBM Statistics SPSS 20. These are presented in table format with both counts and percentages (where appropriate). Shorter open questions were themed and coded into IBM Statistics SPSS 20, whilst longer responses were analysed in NVivo 10. The results from this analysis are either presented in tables, or described, in accordance to what was most appropriate. Any themes are illustrated using quotes.

5.3 Use of comparator questions and secondary data

It is important to note that many young people have difficulties in making the transition from compulsory education into adulthood and employment, and therefore the experiences which have been identified in this project are not necessarily unique to young people with visual impairments. Therefore caution needs to be made in attributing the experiences of our young people directly to their visual impairment. Due to resource constraints over the previous five years, it has not been possible to recruit a comparator group. Instead we have drawn on other data sets which contain relevant data on young people at a similar stage of life as our participants. By comparing the responses given by our young people to the responses given by participants of the same age from the general population we are able to make direct comparisons between the two.

Data sources and sources of comparator questions which have been drawn upon include:

- UK Labour Force Survey
- National Pupil Database
- Higher Education Statistics Authority

- Association of Graduate Careers Analysis Services
- Longitudinal Study of Young People in England
- Futuretrack
- RNIB FOI request to Local Authority Vision Impairment Education Service Providers
- Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale
- The Self-Image Profile for Adults
- Understanding Society survey

An overview of the relevant data which has been extracted is presented in relevant reports, along with a comparison of the data collected as part of the Longitudinal Transition Study.

5.4 Overview of technical reports

The findings of the data collected, as has been described in sections 1.2-1.6, are presented in a series of reports which were published in November 2015. These are:

- The Transition Experiences of Young People with Visual Impairments aged 17-21 – this report provides an overview of the participant's transition journeys between autumn 2013 and autumn 2014. See Hewett et al (2015b).
- Wellbeing of Young People with Visual Impairments – this report looks at the participant's wellbeing, investigates their locus of control and looks at their friendships. See Hewett et al (2015c).
- Support and Information received by Young People with Visual Impairments – this report looks at the participant's ongoing medical support relating to their eye condition, their initial diagnosis and understanding of their visual impairment, their general health and details of emotional support or counselling that they have received. See Hewett et al (2015d).
- Young people, visual impairment and preparing to live independently – this report looks at where the participants are currently living, their aspirations for living independently, how prepared they feel for living independently, and their knowledge of services which might assist them in living independently. See Hewett et al (2015e).
- Experiences of blind and partially sighted young people as they make the transition into Higher Education – this report looks at the experiences of those students who made the transition into Higher Education, including their experiences of making applications for

HE, drawing on Disabled Student Allowance, accessing their courses, accessing reading material, accessing exams and living independently. See Hewett et al (2015f).

These reports are all available on the project website at:

<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/education/victar/research/transitions-study.aspx>

6 References

Hewett, R., Douglas, G., Williams, H (2011) Post-14 transitions support – a survey of the transition experience of visually impaired young people Technical report of findings to summer 2011. Report for RNIB.

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Hewett, R., Douglas, G., Ramli, A., and Keil, S. (2012) Post-14 transitions – A survey of the social activity and social networking of blind and partially sighted young people: Technical Report, February 2012. *Visual Impairment Centre for Teaching and Research, University of Birmingham.*

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Hewett, R., Douglas, G., Keil, S. and Williams, H. (2015b) The Transition Experiences of Young People with Visual Impairments aged 17-21. *Visual Impairment Centre for Teaching and Research, University of Birmingham*

Hewett, R., Douglas, G., and Keil, S. (2015c) Wellbeing of Young People with Visual Impairments. *Visual Impairment Centre for Teaching and Research, University of Birmingham*

Hewett, R., Douglas, G., and Keil, S. (2015d) Support and Information received by Young People with Visual Impairments. *Visual Impairment Centre for Teaching and Research, University of Birmingham*

Hewett, R., Douglas, G., and Keil, S. (2015e) Young people, visual impairment and preparing to live independently. *Visual Impairment Centre for Teaching and Research, University of Birmingham*

Hewett, R., Keil, S. and Douglas, G. (2015f) Experiences of blind and partially sighted people as they make the transition into higher

education. *Visual Impairment Centre for Teaching and Research,
University of Birmingham*

7 Appendix

Autumn 2014 Longitudinal Transitions Study Interview

Name:

I am phoning from University of Birmingham in relation to the Transitions Project that you agreed to take part in. Are you still happy to take part in the project?

Yes []

No []

If no reason for withdrawal:

We have an interview that we would like to conduct with you looking at what you are doing at the moment, what your plans are next and some questions around the areas of well-being and support. It will take approximately 30-45 minutes. Is this a suitable time?

If not, alternative time?

Contact details

Before we start, can I just double check that we have your most up to date contact details?

Are you a member of our Facebook page? [Give details if not]

This interview has five main sections:

1. What you are currently doing and your future plans (pp2-24)
2. Wellbeing (pp25-27)
3. Friendships (pp28-29)
4. Support and information about your eye condition (pp30-34)
5. Independent living (pp35-38)

I would like to remind you that any information that you give during this interview will remain confidential. If there are any questions that you do not wish to answer, please say so and we can move onto the next one.

Section 1: What you are currently doing and your future plans – Part a

In this first section I would like to ask you some questions about what you have been doing since I last spoke with you. Last time I spoke with you, you said that you were [...]. Can you tell me a bit about what has happened in your life since then?

--

[For those who have completed courses]. Would you be happy sharing with me how you got on in your examinations/qualification?

--

What are you planning on doing next? [If not answered above]

--

Summary

Past year/last time we spoke	Now	Plan/Intended

Plans for this academic year

(Intended/likely) Destination for this year (researcher to code)

University []

Employment []

Continue in Education []

Apprenticeship []

Other []

NEET []

Unsure []

Follow up questions routing

	Tick if applicable
Those who have been in apprenticeships	
Those who have been in employment	
Those who have been in higher education	
Those who have been NEET	
Those who have been unemployed > 3 months	
Those who have applied to university since time of last interview	
Those who have looked/are looking to transition into employment	
Those who have looked/are looking to transition into an apprenticeship	
Those who have looked/are looking to transition into a different course in FE/school	

Section 1: What you are currently doing and your future plans – Individual Pathways

For those who have been in apprenticeships

I would now like to ask you some questions about your experience in your apprenticeship last year.

Would you be able to tell me a bit more about your apprenticeship and the type of responsibilities that you had?

How do/did you travel to your workplace? (Prompts: mobility aids; mobility training, taxi under Access to Work)

Did you face any challenges in your role in relation to your visual impairment? How did you overcome these? Prompts: adjustments by employer; adjustments by them; access to work.

Did you make contact with Access to Work at any point with regards to any assistance that you could receive in the workplace? Prompts: if not reasons; application process; support received; overall experience

Could you tell me more about the course of study that you received as part of the apprenticeship? [Where did they go? Teaching method? Adjustments/access to course? How were access arrangements negotiated?]

Was there/is there any possibility of you being offered employment with your employer at the end of your apprenticeship? Could you tell me more about this?

--

Do you think the apprenticeship you completed has enabled you to do any of the following things?

	Yes	No
Get a better paid job		
Get paid more in your current job		
Get a promotion		
Start a new career		

If participant has started apprenticeship since last interview, ensure to get an overview of transition route

For those who have been in employment

I would now like to ask you some questions about your experience in your employment last year.

Would you be able to tell me a bit more about your role and the type of responsibilities that you have/had?

--

How did/do you travel to your workplace? (Prompts: mobility aids; mobility training, taxi via Access to Work??)

--

Did/do you face any challenges in your role in relation to your visual impairment? How did/would you overcome these? Prompts: adjustments by employer; adjustments by them; access to work.

--

Did you make contact with Access to Work at any point with regards to any assistance that you could receive in the workplace? Prompts: if not reasons; application process; support received; overall experience

Have you looked at the possibility of promotion within your current company? Could you tell me more about this?

If participant has started job since last interview, ensure to get an overview of transition route

For those who have been in higher education

I would now like to ask you some questions about your experience at university last year.

For those who left university prior to the completion of their course
Could you just explain to me what led you to this decision?

Are you considering going back to university or any other form of education at a later date?

Move onto appropriate transition pathway/NEET questions

For those who are still at university/have graduated (remembering to change tense)

Could you confirm which year of university you are now in, and how many years your course lasts for?

What are your plans for after you have completed university?

Have you made contact with the careers service at your university yet?
Do they offer any guidance specifically for students with disabilities?

Have you applied yet for any graduate roles? Could you tell me a bit more about this? [Accessibility of the application process; Adjustments offered to applicants with disabilities]

Have you had the opportunity to take part in any activities to enhance your CV since being at university? [Internships; Paid work; Voluntary Work; Work experience]

We have spoken previously at length about your experiences as a young person with visual impairments in higher education. Is there anything that you would like to add based on your experiences last year?
[Prompts: access to lecture material; access to learning material; online resources; access to exams; social side of university]

For those who have been NEET

Approximately how long has it been that you have been not working, or not in education/training?

Could you tell me more about what you have been doing to fill your time?

(Prompts: voluntary work; work experience; enhancing skills)

Have you received careers guidance from anyone in the past year? Could you tell me more about this? Any advice specific to visual impairment? If so, who from? Would you know where to go to get this type of advice?

Have you registered with your local job centre? Would you be happy to share your experience in working with them so far? Have you declared your visual impairment to them? Have they offered any support/advice specifically related to your visual impairment?

For those who have been unemployed > 3 months

I note that you have been looking for work now for a while. I was wondering what you think would help you get a job? [Do not prompt, but code as below]

1	Nothing would help me
2	Nothing – I already have plans to change the situation
3	Visual impairment
5	Mobility
6	General health / other disability
8	Lack of jobs in the area
9	Lack of jobs relevant to VI and qualifications
10	Need appropriate training

11	Cannot travel there (to work place)
12	Lack of public transport
13	Timing of the transport
14	Transport inaccessible (e.g. bus numbers clearer, destination boards clearer)
15	Attitudes of employer
16	Difficult finding out about jobs
17	Pay / salary related
18	Hours too long / inflexible relative to VI
20	Hours too long / inflexible relative to non-VI issues (e.g. family commitments, child care)
21	Don't know
22	No response despite probing
23	Other: Within person factor SPECIFY
24	Other: Beyond person factor/barriers SPECIFY

Put another way, what stops you from getting a job?

1	Nothing in particular
3	Visual impairment
5	Mobility
6	General health / other disability
8	Lack of jobs in the area
9	Lack of jobs relevant to VI and qualifications
10	Lack of appropriate training
11	Cannot travel there (to work place)
12	Lack of public transport
13	Timing of the transport
14	Transport inaccessible (e.g. bus numbers clearer, destination boards clearer)
15	Attitudes of employer
16	Difficult finding out about jobs
17	Pay / salary related
18	Hours too long / inflexible relative to VI
20	Hours too long / inflexible relative to non-VI issues (e.g. family commitments, child care)
21	Don't know
22	No response despite probing

23	Other: Within person factor SPECIFY
24	Other: Beyond person factor / barriers SPECIFY

Why do you say that?

1	I don't need to work
2	I already have plans to change the situation
3	Nothing would help me get a job
4	Visual impairment
6	Mobility
7	General health / other disability
9	Because there aren't enough jobs in the area
10	Because the jobs are not appropriate for me (relative to visual impairment and qualifications)
11	Had wrong training / lack of training
12	Can't travel to work
13	Not enough public transport
14	The timing of the transport is wrong
15	Because the transport is inaccessible (e.g. bus numbers clearer, destination boards clearer)
16	Attitudes of the employer are not helpful
17	I don't know where to find out about jobs
18	Because the pay is not enough
19	Because the hours are too long / inflexible relative to VI
20	The hours are inflexible (in relation to non-VI issues, e.g. family commitments)
22	Don't know
23	No response despite probing
24	Other: Within person factor SPECIFY
25	Other: Beyond person factor / barriers - SPECIFY

How likely do you think it is that you will begin paid work in the next twelve months? Do you think it is very likely, likely, unlikely, or very unlikely?

1	Very likely
2	Likely
3	Unlikely
4	Very unlikely
5	Don't know

Those who are/were looking to make a transition:

For those who started this academic year at university

Which university are you studying at?

What course are you studying?

Why did you decide to apply to this universities and courses? Was it your first choice, or was it your reserve?

I'd now like to ask some questions about your experience in applying for university.

How accessible, in relation to your visual impairment, did you find the application process?

Did you 'declare' your visual impairment when you applied to the university? ['declare' here means that you formally stated you had a visual impairment/disability on the university application form]

Yes [☐]

No [☐]

Unsure [☐]

Did any of the universities make any provision in the application and visiting process in relation to your visual impairment?

Yes [☐]

No [☐]

Unsure [☐]

Details [this might include participant feeling additional provision is not necessary]:

Did you have any support in applying for university? If yes, who from?

School/college [☐]

Family [☐]

Other [☐]

VTS [☐]

I'd now like to ask you some questions about disabled student allowance.

[If relevant] Have you applied for disabled student allowance yet?

Yes [☐]

No [☐]

Do you know if you are eligible for disabled student allowance?

Eligible [☐]

Not eligible [☐]

Unknown

Did you have any support in applying for disabled student allowance? If yes, who from?

School/college [☐]

Family [☐]

Other [☐]

VTS

Could you tell me more about your experience of applying for DSA?

Finally, I'd like to ask you some questions about any contact you have received from the university so far.

Did you speak to anyone from the disability support office about your visual impairment and the support that would be made available to you prior to starting?

Yes [☐]

No [☐]

Details [this might include participant feeling additional support is not necessary]

Did you speak to anyone from your chosen department about your visual impairment and the support that would be made available to you prior to starting?

Yes [☐]

No [☐]

Details [this might include participant feeling additional support is not necessary]

For those planning to go into work:

Have you decided what kind of job you would like to work in?

Yes [☐]

No [☐]

Details:

Have you started to look for employment opportunities?

Yes [☐]

No [☐]

Details of any jobs applied for; interviews; where they are looking for jobs to apply for

Are you aware of any support that may be available to you once in work, in relation to your visual impairment? Are you aware of the Access to Work scheme?

Yes [☐]

No [☐]

Have you received any support from your Visiting Teacher Service/School/College in applying for jobs?

Yes [☐]

No [☐]

Details:

Have you received any other support in applying for jobs?

Yes [☐]

No [☐]

Details:

If participant has been successful in finding a job, also complete section for 'those who are in employment'

If participant is NEET move to section for those who are likely to be NEET

For those planning to go onto apprenticeships

Have you decided what kind of apprenticeship you would like to work in?

Yes [☐]

No [☐]

Details

Details of any jobs applied for; interviews; where they are looking for jobs to apply for

Are you aware of any support that may be available to you once in work, in relation to your visual impairment? Are you aware of the Access to Work scheme?

Yes [☐]

No [☐]

Details:

Have you received any support from your Visiting Teacher Service/School/College in applying for apprenticeships?

Yes [☐]

No [☐]

Details:

If participant has been successful in finding an apprenticeship, also complete section for 'those who are in an apprenticeship'. If participant is NEET move to section for those who are likely to be NEET

For those looking to take further courses (including continuing with current courses)

What course are you intending to take? (Including level and duration)

--

Whereabouts will you study for this?

--

Have you already applied/been accepted for this?

Yes [☐]

No [☐]

Not applicable as already on course [☐]

--

Did you receive any guidance in deciding which course you wanted to take? What prompted you to choose this particular course, and at that particular school/college?

--

Has there been any discussion regarding support in relation to your visual impairment? Who has conducted this? Who with? What has been decided? Happy with this?

--

Section 2: Well being

Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale

1. The following are some statements about your feelings and thoughts. Please give the response which best describes your experience of each over the last two weeks.

Statements	None of the time	Rarely	Some of the time	Often	All of the time
I've been feeling optimistic about the future					
I've been feeling useful					
I've been feeling relaxed					
I've been dealing with problems well					
I've been thinking clearly					
I've been feeling close to other people					
I've been able to make up my own mind about things					

Locus of Control

2. How much do you agree or disagree that: "If someone is not a success in life, it is usually their own fault"?

Strongly agree []

Agree []

Disagree []

Strongly disagree []

Don't know []

Don't want to answer []

3. How much do you agree or disagree that: "I can pretty much decide what will happen in my life"?

Strongly agree []

Agree []
Disagree []
Strongly disagree []
Don't know []
Don't want to answer []

4. How much do you agree or disagree that: How well you get on in this world is mostly a matter of luck”?

Strongly agree []
Agree []
Disagree []
Strongly disagree []
Don't know []
Don't want to answer []

5. How much do you agree or disagree that: If you work hard at something you'll usually succeed”?

Strongly agree []
Agree []
Disagree []
Strongly disagree []
Don't know []
Don't want to answer []

6. How dissatisfied or satisfied are you about the way your life has turned out so far?

Very satisfied []
Fairly satisfied []
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied []
Fairly dissatisfied []
Very dissatisfied []
Don't know []
Don't want to answer []

The Self Image Profile for Adults

7. I am going to read to you a number of descriptive words. Using a scale of 0-6, where 0 means 'not at all' like the description and 6 means 'very much' like the description, for each word or phrase I would like you to:

Give the number which is closest to *how you think you are*

Give the number which is closest to *how you would like to be*

Do you have any questions before we start?

No.		Not at all					Very much		Discrep
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
1	Enthusiastic								
2	Happy								
3	Optimistic								
4	Easy going								
5	Patient								
6	Caring								
7	Good listener								
8	Thoughtful								
9	Helpful								
10	Generous								
11	Sensitive								
12	Kind								
13	Friendly								
14	Sociable								
15	Fun								
16	Outgoing								
17	Sense of humour								
18	Fit								
19	Active								
20	Thin/slim								
21	Creative								
22	Organised								
23	Determined								
24	Intelligent								
25	Confident								

26	Hard working								
27	Loyal								
28	Trustworthy								
29	Reliable								
30	Honest								
Column totals									

If responses indicate that participant is struggling emotionally, see notes at the end of the questionnaire re. putting them in touch with someone.

Section 3: Friendships

I would now like to ask some questions about your friends, and the social network that you have around you.

1. What proportion of your friends are of a similar age as you?

All similar	
More than half	
About half	
Less than half	
Don't have any friends (spontaneous)	

2. What proportion of your friends live in your local area?

All are in the local area	
More than half	
About half	
Less than half	
None	

3. How many close friends would you say you have?

--

4. Do you belong to any social networking web-sites?

Yes []

No []

5. How many hours do you spend chatting or interacting with friends through social web-sites on a normal week day that is Monday to Friday?

None	
Less than an hour	
1-3 hours	
4-6 hours	
7 or more hours	

6. Do you go out socially or visit friends when you feel like it?

Yes [☐]

No [☐]

[If no] Why don't you go out socially?

Too busy/not enough time	
Financial reasons	
A health condition, illness or impairment, or disability	
No public transport available	
Public transport is infrequent or unreliable	
Can't access the public transport that is available	
No access to a car as a driver or passenger	
Nowhere to go in the area	
No-one to go with	
Attitudes of other people	
Fear of crowds	
Fear of crime	
Anxiety/lack of confidence	
Caring responsibilities	
Other reasons	

--

7. Are you friends with any other people with visual impairments?

Yes [☐]

No [☐]

[If yes] Would you ever talk with these friends/this friend in relation to any challenges you may face with your visual impairment, or share positive experiences together in relation to your visual impairment? If yes, could you tell me more about this?

Section 4: Support and information about your eye condition

Ongoing medical support relating to eye condition

1. Are you visiting an eye clinic at the moment? This might be an appointment you have had in the last six months, or an arrangement appointment you have in the future?

Yes [☐]

No [☐]

Don't know [☐]

2. What are the visits to the eye clinic for? Are they:

To see the eye doctor/ophthalmologist	<input type="checkbox"/>
For a check up	<input type="checkbox"/>
Low vision clinic e.g. to get advice about Low Vision Aids, to see optometrist or orthoptist	<input type="checkbox"/>
For treatment relating to your eye condition	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Have you visited a low vision clinic in the past? A low vision clinic is a clinic for people who have visual impairment when medical treatment is no longer suitable or is unable to retrieve vision.

Yes [☐]

No [☐]

Don't know [☐]

4. Have you ever been presented with different options of low vision aids at a low vision clinic?

Yes [☐]

No [☐]

Don't know [☐]

Could you tell me more about this?

Emotional support relating to eye condition

5. How old were you when your sight problem was first diagnosed?

6. When you were younger, did anyone sit down with you to explain your visual impairment to you? Could you tell me more about this?

7. On a scale of 1 to 6, where 1 is 'very well', and 6 is 'very poor', how would you rate your understand of your visual impairment?

[☐]

8. We are aware that some young people with a visual impairment, may at times wish to make use of external support to help them on more of an emotional level. Have you ever made use of support like this in the past?

Yes [☐]

No [☐]

Don't know [☐]

Would you be happy to tell us more about this? Prompts: who from, when it took place, how it was set up.

[If not received support] Do you think that this is something that you might have benefited from? Were you ever offered support like this before and declined it? Would you know where to go to get support like this?

9. Thinking about this type of support, are you satisfied with the support that you have been provided with in the past?

Yes [☐]

No [☐]

Don't know

If yes, what was particularly good about it?

If no, how could this have been improved?

10. Would you know where to go and get support like this, if you felt that you needed it?

11. Is there anything else that you would like to say about this?



General health

12. Do you have any long term health problems or disabilities (other than your visual impairment)?

Yes [☐]

No [☐]

Could you briefly describe the health problem/disability?

Section 5: Independent Living

The purpose of this research has been to establish how well prepared you feel as a young person with a visual impairment for the transition into adulthood. One key aspect of this for many will be moving away from home and looking to set up home independently on your own, or at least away from family and close friends. We are interested to find out more from you at this stage about how prepared you would be for this type of transition.

1. Could you share with me your current living circumstances? [For those at university] What about when you are at university?

1b. [If not already living independently] Do you have any plans or aspirations to start living independently in the next few years?

Yes [☐]

No [☐]

1c. [If no] Could you share with me the main reasons why you think this is unlikely?

2. Do you think that your visual impairment would impact you at all if you were to look to live independently?

Yes []
No (hesitant no)
No (definite no)

3. Imagine that you are in a situation where you are due to move to a new town or city to start a new job, and will be looking to move into accommodation on your own. Could you please share with me your initial thoughts on how well prepared you think you would be for a move like this?

4. I would now like you to think about some specific aspects of independently living. How prepared do you feel for:

a) Cooking and housework (including strategies you would propose adopting):

(b) Using public transport (including strategies you would propose adopting):

(c) Getting to know the local area (shopping; entertainment) (including strategies you would propose adopting):

(d) Getting to know people within the community (including strategies you would propose adopting):

(e) Bills/Banking (including strategies you would propose adopting):

5. Are you aware of any particular services that you could draw upon to help you make the transition to living independently?

Would you like us to forward you further information about the services that you may be able to draw upon?

6. Is there anything else you would like to share on this subject?

Conclusion

That was the last question. Is there anything else that you would like to share that you think may be relevant to this research project?

If responses demonstrate that participant is struggling with certain things:

“From your responses to this interview it appears that you may benefit from speaking with someone further about some of the challenges that you have faced. Would you like me to provide you with some further information of who you could contact, or for me to set this up for you?”