



## Participant interview/ focus group guide

**Research Project Title:** Higher education choices of care leavers and estranged students.

Participation involves taking part in either a focus group or an interview. Which you prefer is up to you. Participation in this project involves the opportunity to engage in creative methods, representing your decision-making processes regarding higher education through drawing or writing.

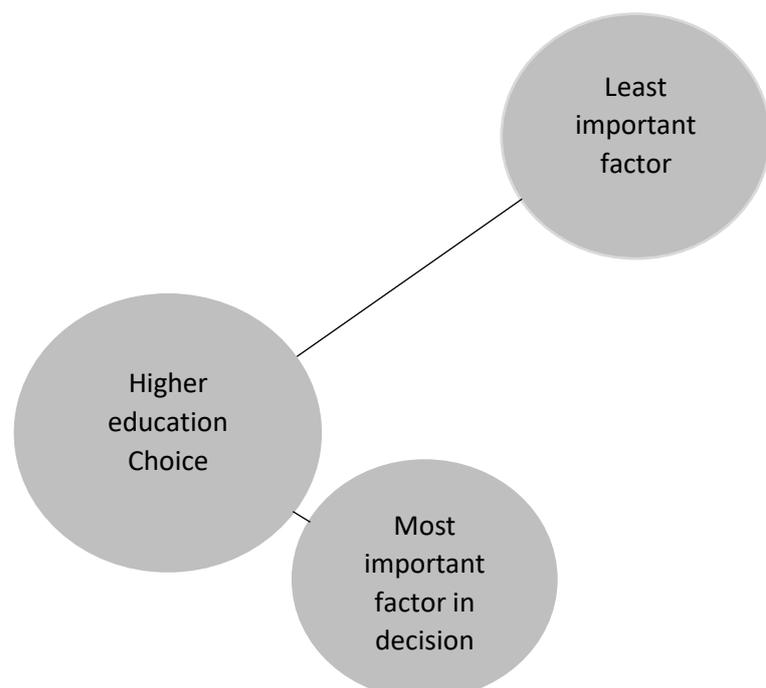
The images can then be used to help inform discussion. This will involve sharing your thoughts on the process of creating your image (how you decided what to produce) and reflecting on the image itself (discussing its content). If you wish to participate in a focus group, there will be an opportunity to share with the group on the process of creating your image and to reflect on the content of the images collectively.

### Instructions

The following instructions are designed to be open in order to allow for your own interpretation and visualization. I will provide stationery (including A3 paper, paper of various colours, coloured pens and pencils, sticky notes, scissors and glue) but please also feel free to bring extra materials or objects for discussion if you wish.

#### Activity 1: Mapping influential factors

1. For this activity, the aim is to identify the factors that influenced your higher education choices, and the relative importance of them.
2. A suggested approach for this activity is to place your higher education choice in the centre of the page (this could be your choice to attend higher education generally, your choice of university, or course - whatever you feel is most important to you).
3. Then draw links to the factors which influenced this decision. Draw the most important factors closest to the centre, and the least important factors furthest from the centre. Please see the diagram below which demonstrates this. The factors can be visualised as pictures, or you can use words.



## Activity 2: Timelines

1. This activity aims to identify your decision-making process regarding higher education by producing a timeline of how your decision developed.
2. Please feel free to begin and end the timeline whenever you wish and draw it however you wish.
3. Please draw or write on the timeline any important events and changes in your lives that you believe influenced your decision-making process regarding higher education.
4. Please include any events that happened in the wider world that may have influenced your decisions regarding higher education.
5. Please also consider any expectations and aspirations about your future that influenced your decision-making process. This could be how you imagine or imagined yourself or your life in the future and its effect on your decision making process. This could also include hopes and ambitions for the future.

### **Data Confidentiality**

All the information that we collect during the project will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be identified or identifiable in any of the material associated to this project as your name will not be used. Fake names (pseudonyms) will be used in transcripts, the dissertation and any resulting publications. Data will be stored securely and will be password protected.

**Thank you for considering taking part in my project. This guide is yours to keep. If you wish to take part, you will also be given a copy of the information sheet and a copy of your signed consent form to keep.**

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