

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing to invite you to take part in a research project entitled “The views of parents/carers about their child’s experience of the Special Educational Needs process in mainstream schools in Northern Ireland”. The aim of the research is to obtain the views of parents/carers about their and their children’s experience of accessing or attempting to access services and support for a SEN or suspected SEN in mainstream schools.

This project has been funded by the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) and is being conducted by a research team from Stranmillis University College, Belfast. The project consists of an online survey, focus group interviews and a small number of individual interviews.

The first stage of the project is an online survey and we would invite all parents/carers of children with special educational needs (SEN) attending a mainstream nursery, primary or post-primary school to complete the survey by clicking on this [link to the online survey](#).

We are interested in your views if your child’s special educational needs have already been identified i.e. if they are already on the SEN register and receiving additional services and support. We are however also interested in your views if you are still attempting to access services and support for a suspected SEN.

The survey comprises a series of questions which explore your experiences of the SEN process. We would ask you to complete the survey as soon as possible - the deadline for responses is noon on Friday 31st May 2019. We estimate that the survey will take around 20-25 minutes to complete.

All data will be anonymised and will remain confidential to this project. No pupils, parents/carers, teachers, principals, educational or health professionals (or any other individual) or schools will be named in the final report or any other subsequent publications. Data will be held securely on a password protected network and any paperwork stored in a locked filing cabinet in Stranmillis University College, accessible only to the research team. Full ethical approval has been granted by the Research and Scholarship Committee of Stranmillis University College.

At the end of the survey you will have an opportunity to provide your contact details only if you are willing to take part in follow-up group interviews. These interviews will be organised in locations across Northern Ireland during May/June 2019.

If you have any questions relating to the project, please do not hesitate to contact me in advance by phone or email (my contact details are below).

Yours sincerely,

Dr Noel Purdy (Principal Investigator)

on behalf of the Research Team: Gillian Beck, Lois Totton, Diane McClelland, Celia O’ Hagan

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