Using Sensemaker software to understand parent population as part of complex adaptive systems.

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EAST RIDING
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INTRODUCTION

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment in the East Riding of Yorkshire has consistently found Parenting to be the top priority across the region. As part of developing a Parenting Strategy, the council are keen to elicit the experiences of parents themselves to help understand where they personally perceive areas of need to be.

In Public Health and the NHS, the need to support the population to change health behaviours continues to be a prime focus. A comprehensive piece of work by the Centre for Public Health Excellence at NICE, commissioned by the World Health Organisation (2009) recognised the importance of working across whole health systems as live, evolving complex systems in order to achieve behaviour change. It also found that this is often not the case and may go some way to explaining why sustained behaviour change often eludes us.
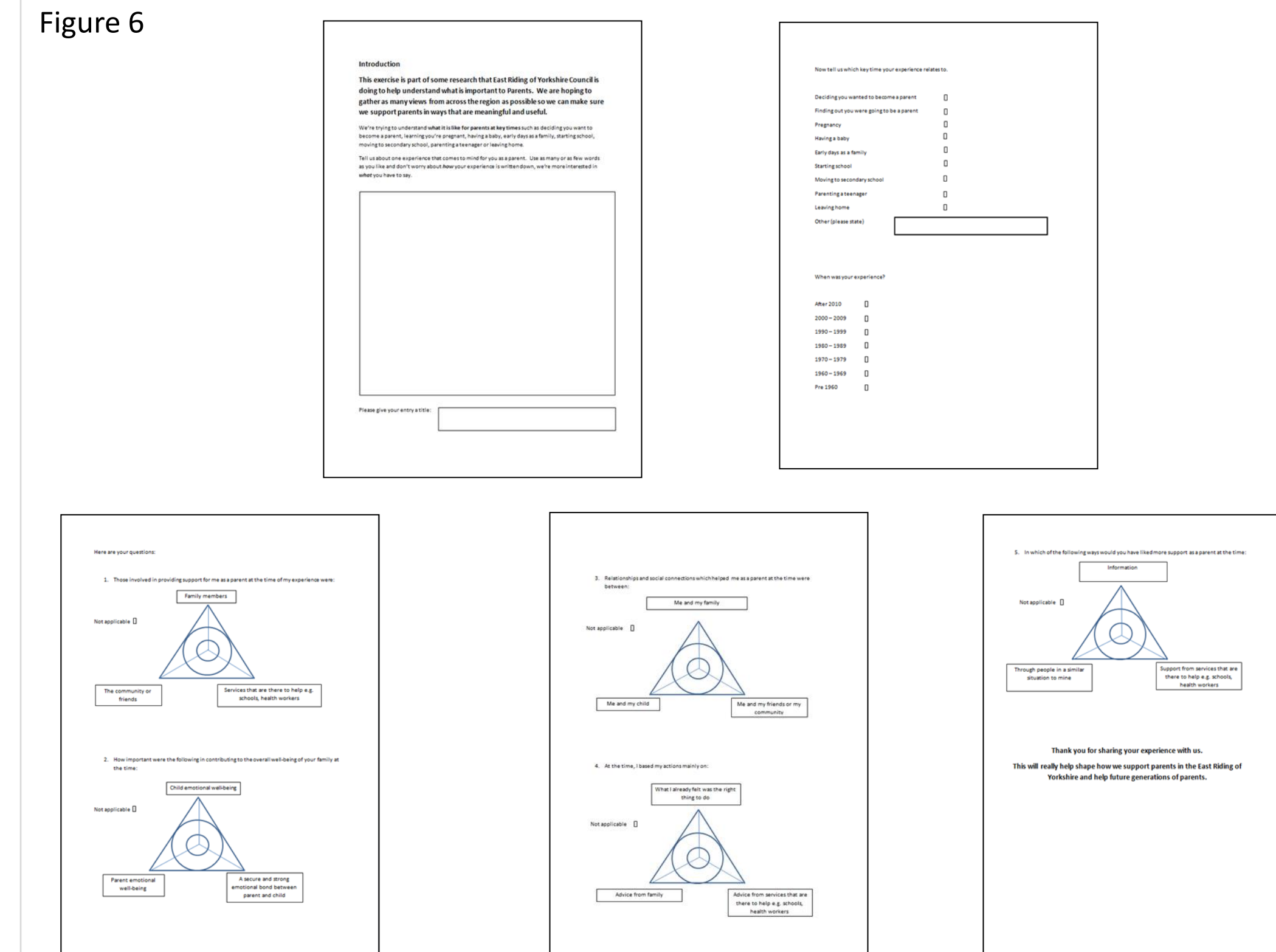
AIM

1. To use what we know about complex systems to understand and work with them better, to support behaviour change in parents.

2. To work from an a posteriori perspective rather than a priori. To establish the extent to which we know what these parents' systems think or are likely to do/not do will put us in a much stronger position to affect their behaviour.

3. To see where smaller parent systems (e.g. by post code) within the whole parent system (the East Riding of Yorkshire as a whole) can be discerned, where they might be disposed to move to, where the areas of early movement of a minority can be seen and might indicate space for project development.
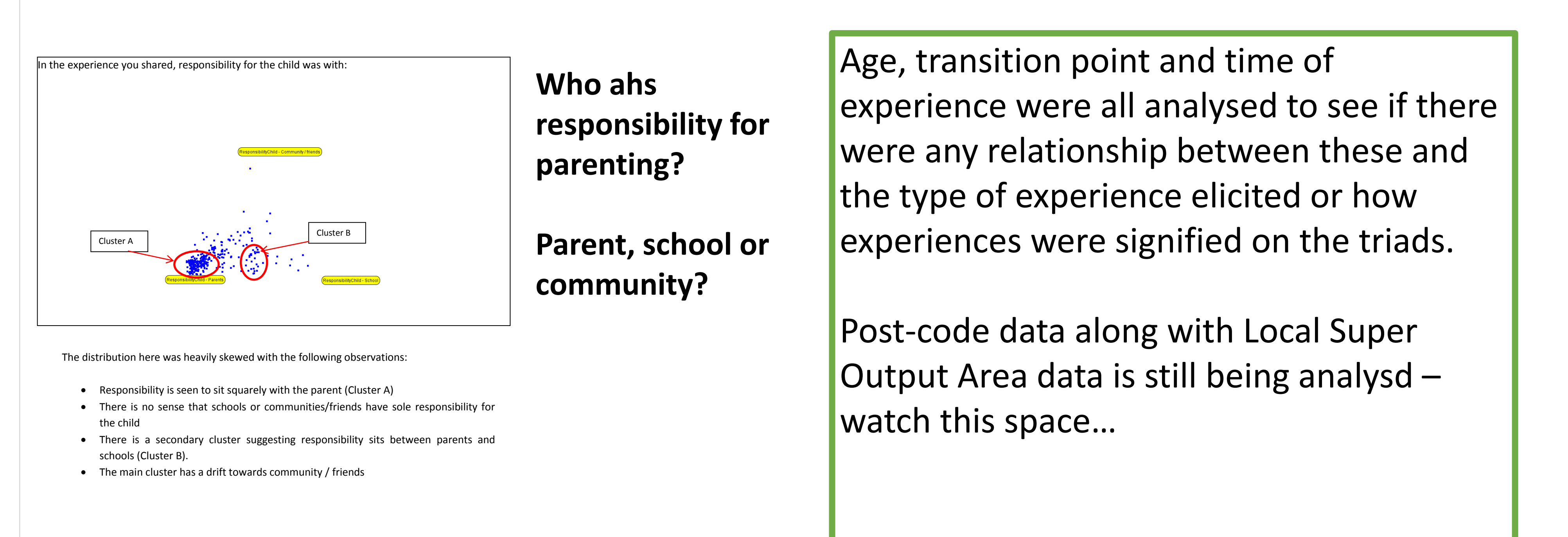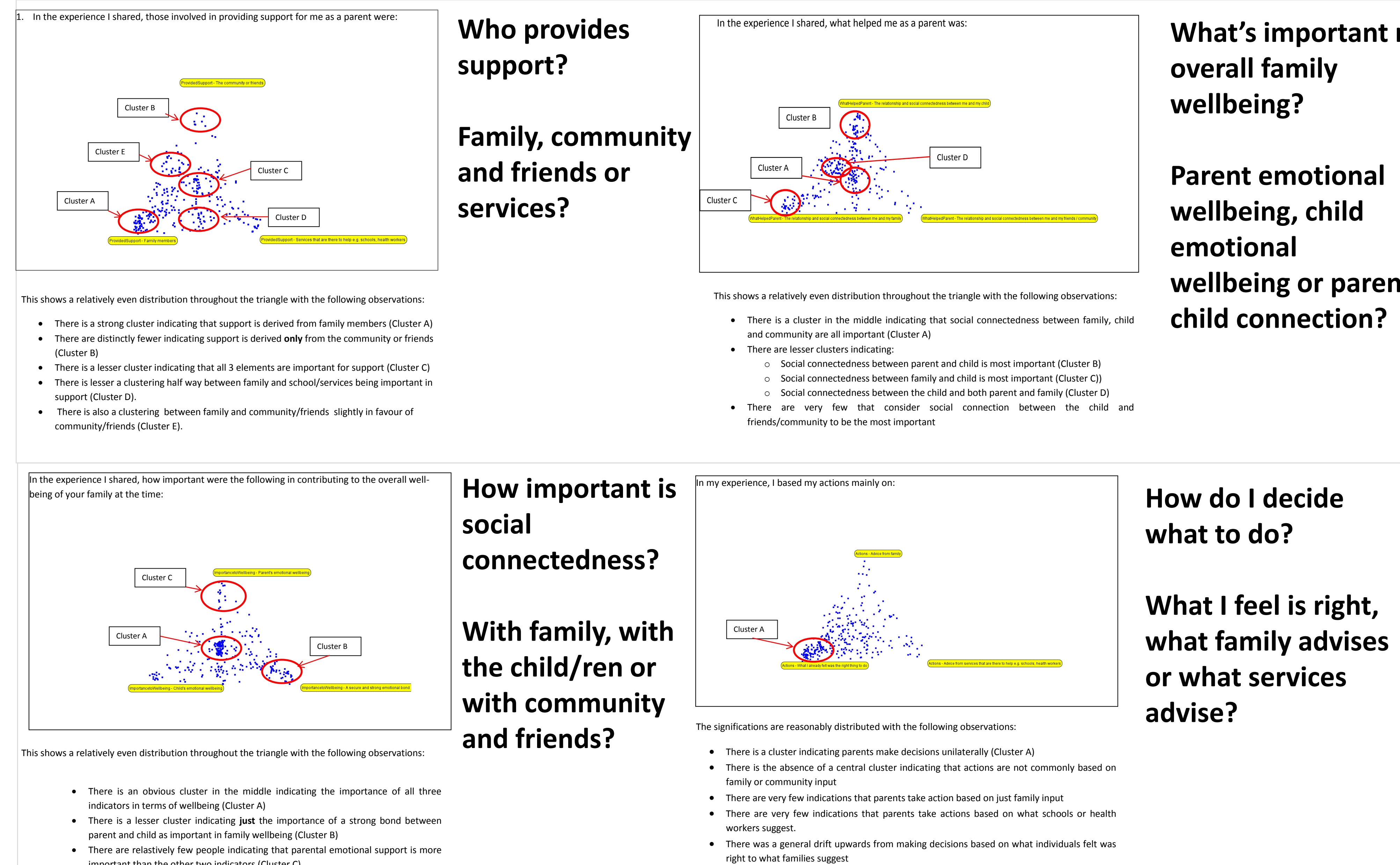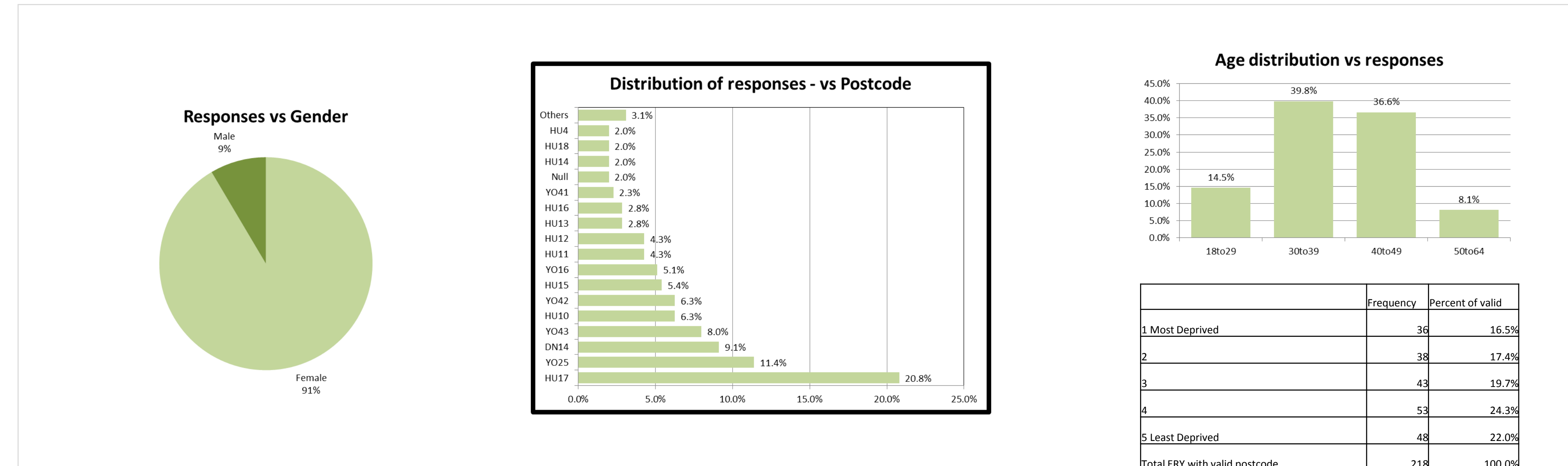
MATERIAL & METHODS

We are using a new software package called Sensemaker to elicit, from a purposive sample, people's experiences of transition points in child/ren's development as "micro-narratives". They were then asked to signify these using the triads (see figure 6 below).

Figure 6

RESULTS

Responses vs Gender
Male 9%
Female 91%

Distribution of responses - vs Postcode

	%
Others	3.1%
HU4	2.0%
HU18	2.0%
HU14	2.0%
Null	2.0%
YO41	2.3%
HU16	2.8%
HU13	2.8%
HU12	4.3%
HU11	4.3%
YO16	5.1%
HU15	5.4%
YO42	6.3%
HU10	6.3%
YO43	8.0%
DN14	9.1%
YO25	11.4%
HU17	20.8%

Age distribution vs responses

18to29	30to39	40to49	50to64
14.5%	39.8%	36.6%	8.1%

	Frequency	Percent of valid
1 Most Deprived	36	16.5%
2	38	17.4%
3	43	19.7%
4	53	24.3%
5 Least Deprived	48	22.0%
Total ERY with valid postcode	218	100.0%

1. In the experience I shared, those involved in providing support for me as a parent were:

Who provides support?

Family, community and friends or services?

This shows a relatively even distribution throughout the triangle with the following observations:

- There is a strong cluster indicating that support is derived from family members (Cluster A)
- There are distinctly fewer indicating support is derived **only** from the community or friends (Cluster B)
- There is a lesser cluster indicating that all 3 elements are important for support (Cluster C)
- There is lesser a clustering half way between family and school/services being important in support (Cluster D).
- There is also a clustering between family and community/friends slightly in favour of community/friends (Cluster E).

In the experience I shared, what helped me as a parent was:

What's important n overall family wellbeing?

Parent emotional wellbeing, child emotional wellbeing or parent child connection?

This shows a relatively even distribution throughout the triangle with the following observations:

- There is a cluster in the middle indicating that social connectedness between family, child and community are all important (Cluster A)
- There are lesser clusters indicating:
  - Social connectedness between parent and child is most important (Cluster B)
  - Social connectedness between family and child is most important (Cluster C)
  - Social connectedness between the child and both parent and family (Cluster D)
- There are very few that consider social connection between the child and friends/community to be the most important

In the experience I shared, how important were the following in contributing to the overall well-being of your family at the time:

How important is social connectedness?

With family, with the child/ren or with community and friends?

This shows a relatively even distribution throughout the triangle with the following observations:

- There is an obvious cluster in the middle indicating the importance of all three indicators in terms of wellbeing (Cluster A)
- There is a lesser cluster indicating **just** the importance of a strong bond between parent and child as important in family wellbeing (Cluster B)
- There are relatively few people indicating that parental emotional support is more important than the other two indicators (Cluster C)

In my experience, I based my actions mainly on:

How do I decide what to do?

What I feel is right, what family advises or what services advise?

The significations are reasonably distributed with the following observations:

- There is a cluster indicating parents make decisions unilaterally (Cluster A)
- There is the absence of a central cluster indicating that actions are not commonly based on family or community input
- There are very few indications that parents take action based on just family input
- There are very few indications that parents take actions based on what schools or health workers suggest.
- There was a general drift upwards from making decisions based on what individuals felt was right to what families suggest

In the experience you shared, responsibility for the child was with:

Who ahs responsibility for parenting?

Parent, school or community?

The distribution here was heavily skewed with the following observations:

- Responsibility is seen to sit squarely with the parent (Cluster A)
- There is no sense that schools or communities/friends have sole responsibility for the child
- There is a secondary cluster suggesting responsibility sits between parents and schools (Cluster B).
- The main cluster has a drift towards community / friends

Age, transition point and time of experience were all analysed to see if there were any relationship between these and the type of experience elicited or how experiences were signified on the triads.

Post-code data along with Local Super Output Area data is still being analysd – watch this space…

SUMMARY / CONCLUSION

There are many points of interest in terms of what has been collected and the Parenting Needs Assessment document. Some key observations are:

- The key themes that have determined the triad labels have shown themselves to be relevant to parents
- Early points of transition are the most important
- Parenting a teenager is commonly cited as difficult by fathers
- Accessing support and consulting with friends/community is not common but has become more common since 2010
- Men are increasingly likely to consult more with family members than women
- Young parents are less likely to seek help and support than other age groups
- Relationship building, including with fathers and communities/schools, throughout the lifecourse of the child can embed helpful emotional and social precursors of positivity when parenting teenagers

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