**Checklist**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study identification: Include author, title, reference, year of publication</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guidance topic:</td>
<td>Key research question/aim:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checklist completed by:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Theoretical approach**

1. **Is a qualitative approach appropriate?**
   For example:
   - Does the research question seek to understand processes or structures, or illuminate subjective experiences or meanings?
   - Could a quantitative approach better have addressed the research question?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appropriate</th>
<th>Inappropriate</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Comments:</th>
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</table>

2. **Is the study clear in what it seeks to do?**
   For example:
   - Is the purpose of the study discussed – aims/objectives/research question(s)?
   - Is there adequate/appropriate reference to the literature?
   - Are underpinning values/assumptions/theory discussed?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clear</th>
<th>Unclear</th>
<th>Mixed</th>
<th>Comments:</th>
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</table>

**Study design**
3. How defensible/rigorous is the research design/methodology?
For example:
- Is the design appropriate to the research question?
- Is a rationale given for using a qualitative approach?
- Are there clear accounts of the rationale/justification for the sampling, data collection and data analysis techniques used?
- Is the selection of cases/sampling strategy theoretically justified?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defensible</th>
<th>Indefensible</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Comments:</th>
</tr>
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</table>

**Data collection**

4. How well was the data collection carried out?
For example:
- Are the data collection methods clearly described?
- Were the appropriate data collected to address the research question?
- Was the data collection and record keeping systematic?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appropriately</th>
<th>Inappropriately</th>
<th>Not sure/ inadequately reported</th>
<th>Comments:</th>
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</thead>
</table>

**Trustworthiness**

5. Is the role of the researcher clearly described?
For example:
- Has the relationship between the researcher and the participants been adequately considered?
- Does the paper describe how the research was explained and presented to the participants?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clearly described</th>
<th>Unclear</th>
<th>Not described</th>
<th>Comments:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. Is the context clearly described?</td>
<td>Clear</td>
<td>Comments:</td>
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<tr>
<td>For example:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Are the characteristics of the participants and settings clearly defined?</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Were observations made in a sufficient variety of circumstances</td>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Was context bias considered</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7. Were the methods reliable?</th>
<th>Reliable</th>
<th>Comments:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For example:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Was data collected by more than 1 method?</td>
<td>Unreliable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is there justification for triangulation, or for not triangulating?</td>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Do the methods investigate what they claim to?</td>
<td></td>
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| Analysis                           |          |           |
| 8. Is the data analysis sufficiently rigorous? | Rigorous | Comments: |
| For example:                       |          |           |
| • Is the procedure explicit – i.e. is it clear how the data was analysed to arrive at the results? | Not rigorous |           |
| • How systematic is the analysis, is the procedure reliable/dependable? | Not sure/not reported |           |
| • Is it clear how the themes and concepts were derived from the data? | }
9. Is the data 'rich'?
For example:
- How well are the contexts of the data described?
- Has the diversity of perspective and content been explored?
- How well has the detail and depth been demonstrated?
- Are responses compared and contrasted across groups/sites?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rich</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Not sure/not reported</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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10. Is the analysis reliable?
For example:
- Did more than 1 researcher theme and code transcripts/data?
- If so, how were differences resolved?
- Did participants feed back on the transcripts/data if possible and relevant?
- Were negative/discrepant results addressed or ignored?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reliable</th>
<th>Unreliable</th>
<th>Not sure/not reported</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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</table>

11. Are the findings convincing?
For example:
- Are the findings clearly presented?
- Are the findings internally coherent?
- Are extracts from the original data included?
- Are the data appropriately referenced?
- Is the reporting clear and coherent?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Convincing</th>
<th>Not convincing</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

12. Are the findings relevant to the aims of the study?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relevant</th>
<th>Irrelevant</th>
<th>Partially relevant</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
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</table>
13. Conclusions

For example:

- How clear are the links between data, interpretation and conclusions?
- Are the conclusions plausible and coherent?
- Have alternative explanations been explored and discounted?
- Does this enhance understanding of the research topic?
- Are the implications of the research clearly defined?

Is there adequate discussion of any limitations encountered?

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<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Inadequate</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Comments:</th>
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Ethics

14. How clear and coherent is the reporting of ethics?

For example:

- Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?
- Are they adequately discussed e.g. do they address consent and anonymity?
- Have the consequences of the research been considered i.e. raising expectations, changing behaviour?
- Was the study approved by an ethics committee?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Appropriate</th>
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</table>

Overall assessment

As far as can be ascertained from the paper, how well was the study conducted? (see guidance notes)

| ++ | + | - | Comments: |

Notes on the use of the qualitative studies checklist

Section 1: theoretical approach

This section deals with the underlying theory and principles applied to the research.