

Exploring the Role of Designated Teachers in Supporting Children and Young People in Care: An Ecosystemic Perspective

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Abstract

Designated teachers are responsible for promoting the educational achievement and wellbeing of children and young people in care (Department for Education, 2018b). This study explored designated teachers' perceptions around their role and the systemic factors that help and hinder their support. An ecosystemic perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1995) was adopted throughout the data collection and analysis to examine the wider contextual factors and, in turn, provide insight into ways of strengthening their role and support for children and young people in care.

This thesis drew upon qualitative methods to gain rich perspectives. Eight semi-structured interviews were conducted with designated teachers from a range of mainstream primary and secondary schools in one local authority. Data was analysed using thematic analysis in an inductive and deductive manner to allow for the integration of the Bioecological Model across themes (Bronfenbrenner, 1995).

Designated teachers perceived a range of factors that supported and hindered their role across all ecosystemic levels. It is argued that the designated teacher role is strengthened by an inclusive culture, supportive ethos and shared understanding of children and young people in care across the school community, which is promoted by senior leadership. These, in turn, impacted the quality of relationships with the designated teacher. These findings are discussed with links to the previous literature base and theoretical underpinnings.

The study indicates a range of possible implications for practice across the systemic levels and highlights how schools, educational psychologists and local authority services can strengthen the designated teacher role. Furthermore, the research hopes to enhance the limited research base and promote the recognition of this valuable statutory role for children and young people in care.

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Table of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
BPS	British Psychological Society
CYPiC	Children and Young People in Care
CIN	Children in Need
CLA	Children Looked After
DfE	Department for Education
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
DoH	Department of Health
DT	Designated Teacher
EHCP	Education Health and Care Plan
ESO	Education Support Officer
EP	Educational Psychologist
LA	Local Authority
LAC	Looked After Children
NICE	National Institute for Health and Care Excellence
PEP	Personal Education Plan
PLAC	Previously looked after children
PPCT	Process Person Context Time
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
TA	Thematic Analysis
TEP	Trainee Educational Psychologist
VS	Virtual School
VSH	Virtual School Head

Chapter 1: Introduction

This research study explores the role of Designated teachers (DTs) in supporting children and young people in care (CYPiC). This topic is of interest, as by increasing understanding around the DT role, considerations can be made to ways of supporting DTs further within a broader context, which is likely to lead to more positive outcomes for CYPiC. This understanding can have implications for EPs creating positive change through their work at a range of systemic levels around the CYPiC. This research is of great importance as CYPiC continue to be associated with poor educational and mental health outcomes, despite their priority within UK government legislations (Department of Education, 2020).

This chapter begins with narration around my own personal and professional interests in this topic. A description is given around the terminology related to CYPiC before introducing the current national context. Key UK policies and legislations linked to CYPiC are presented to provide a background around the study and demonstrate the changes in the priorities given to CYPiC over time.

1.1 Personal and Professional Interest

Within a previous job role, I had experience of being a key worker for CYPiC within a mainstream secondary school. This role highlighted some of the difficulties CYPiC can face and the importance of schools having a good understanding of CYPiCs' needs. During my time within this role, I began to reflect upon the factors across the school system that supported and hindered the positive outcomes of CYPiC. The work with CYPiC inspired me to seek out further opportunities to promote positive outcomes with these children and their families.

Since being a trainee educational psychologist (TEP) within the local authority (LA), I have had the opportunity to work within Virtual Schools (VS). This role has involved casework opportunities with CYPiC and systemic support and training for the VS team. This work has increased my understanding of the services and support systems around CYPiC and how valuable and important the DT role is. This experience inspired me to seek to further understand how to help CYPiC to reach their full potential.

Initially, I planned to undertake training for the VS team on how to deliver a social development programme for CYPiC across the LA. It, therefore, felt valuable to

undertake a piece of thesis research on this social development programme due to my knowledge around the limited research base with CYPiC. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, this could not go ahead. Instead, considerations were made to what further research could be of value to the current research base whilst still promoting positive outcomes for CYPiC in the LA. My work with DTs in VS led to an interest in understanding how to strengthen their statutory role with CYPiC.

1.2 Definition of Children and Young People in Care

Society uses different terms interchangeably to describe children and young people who are cared for by the LA (See Glossary). For this research project, the term 'Children and Young People in Care' (CYPiC) will be used. This term has been used within government documents (Department for Education and Skills, 2006) and will be adopted within this research as it is the most frequent term used in the LA. Whilst this term groups these individuals together, it is important that they are not seen as a homogenous group. CYPiC will have a range of different life experiences and needs that contribute to who they are as individuals.

Looked after Children (LAC) as a term was introduced in the Children's Act (HM Government, 1989) and is defined as:

> *"a child who is – (a) in their (local authority) care; or (b) provided with accommodation by the authority in the exercise of any functions (in particular those under this Act) (p. 17)."*

This definition describes children and young people accommodated by the LA for over twenty-four hours, either through a care placement or through voluntary parent agreement or police protection accommodation (DfE, 2018a).

The LA assumes parental responsibility when a child is placed under a care order. Through a voluntary agreement, the LA will undertake the daily role of the parent, on behalf of the parent or guardian who retains that responsibility. The LA offer varying placements dependent upon the care order and suitability of foster carers. CYPiC can be placed in varying placements such as with another parent, foster placements with extended family or foster carers, secure units and children's homes or living independently (DfE, 2019b).

1.3 National Context

The number of CYPiC was at 80,080 between 31st March 2019-2020, as reported by 152 LAs within England (DfE, 2020a). This number has gradually increased by 2% in the last 12 months, reflecting the overall increase in the previous 12 years. 57% of CYPIC were between the ages of five to fifteen years old. Data indicates there is an increased probability of being in care as males (56%) compared to females (44%). It further showed that black and mixed ethnicity minority groups were overrepresented in the care system. Research suggests that this could result from various factors, including lack of access to support services and uncertainty of professionals in knowing how to respond to the cultural needs of other ethnicities (Owen & Statham, 2009).

The number of adopted children was down 4% of the prior year at 3,440 and has been decreasing since 2015. Within the population of CYPiC in 2019-2020, 72% were in foster placements, with 13% placed in residential settings or secure units (DfE, 2020). Nationally, some CYPiC had unstable placements, with 11% of CYPiC having three or more placements between 31st March 2019-2020. The children who were more likely to have this high level of instability were CYPiC with a primary need of social, emotional and mental health, CYPiC who were placed into a residential setting in the first instance and CYPiC who were older and new to care (Children's Commissioner's Office, 2020).

Many children and young people who are placed in the care of the LA have experienced previous abuse, neglect, disadvantage and disruption to their lives. In 2020, 65% of CYPiC were placed in care as a result of abuse or neglect. The second most common reason for 14% of children was 'family dysfunction', which refers to families where parenting is described as chronically inadequate (DfE, 2020a).

Nationally, CYPiC continue to have poorer educational and mental health outcomes in comparison to the general population (Bazalgette, Rahilly, & Trevelyan, 2015; DfE, 2020). The attainment of CYPiC continues to be much lower than non-looked after children across all subjects at key stage two and key stage four (DfE, 2019b). Of the whole population of CYPiC 27.2% had an education, health and care plan (EHCP), which compares to 3.3% of children with an EHCP in all pupil comparison (DfE, 2020b). 28.1% of CYPiC had special educational needs (SEN)

support which can be defined as provision given to that child that is above or different to that given to children of the same age (DfE, 2020b). For most of the CYPiC who have plans and SEN support, the primary area of need was social, emotional and mental health. The statistics around educational attainment will be explored further within the literature review.

While these national statistics highlight the vulnerability of CYPiC regarding educational attainment and social-emotional needs, it is important to note that this is a snapshot of their attainment at this period of time and does not reflect the individual strengths that each CYPiC may have.

1.4 Key Policies and Legislations

The awareness of the vulnerability of CYPiC has increased over time, which can be seen within government policies and legislation (Whitehouse, 2014). The gaps in educational attainment, concerns around exclusion, and mental health needs indicated through research has led to the Government trying to support the inclusion of CYPiC through policies and legislation (DfES, 2006).

One of the first reports highlighting the poorer outcomes for CYPiC was the *'People Like Us'* Report (Utting, Baines, & Stuart, 1997), which the Government commissioned to support inequalities and social exclusion for people living away from home. Following this, the HM Government introduced additional funding for CYPiC to support educational interventions (HM Government, 1998). Since this time, there have been key legislative frameworks for CYPiC. The Children's Act (HM Government, 2004) provides the legal framework for all services such as foster care, residential care, early years provision and child protection. The Children's Act (1989) was revised in 2004 to include section 52, which made it a statutory responsibility for LAs to promote CYPiCs' educational outcomes (HM Government, 1989, 2004). The Children and Young Persons Act (HM Government, 2004) was amended in 2008 (HM Government, 2008) to provide high quality care for CYPIC and included some of the following changes:

- Improving the stability and continuity of placements
- Providing high aspirations to CYPiC
- Ensuring pupil voice is included within decision making

- Placing the role of the DT as a statutory requirement in schools so that there is a greater capacity to support CYPiC

The amended Children and Young Persons Act (HM Government, 2008) further placed duties on the governing bodies to ensure that DTs have appropriate training, qualifications and experience in order to fulfil the role.

The more recent Children and Families Act (DfE, 2014) was developed in response to the Government's coalition and overall commitment to supporting families and vulnerable children and young people. The Act in 2014, indicated that CYPiCs' educational attainment was not improving to the levels expected and placed a statutory role on the Virtual School Head (VSH) to champion the progress of CYPiC (DfE, 2014). The VSH role was further outlined within the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice (DfE, 2015), emphasising the importance of close joint up working with VSH and all professionals around CYPiC to support planning. CYPiC are highlighted as a priority group for the Government for inclusion within the Code of Practice document (DfE, 2015).

The recent document *'Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children'* provides statutory guidance for LAs (DfE, 2018). This guidance included the statutory role for DTs in supporting the achievements of previously looked after (PLAC) children due to their vulnerability. The continuous changing of policies and legislation can indicate that previous approaches may have been substandard. Documents and policies will continue to require reviews to ensure that CYPiC needs are being best met within the changing social and belief systems and that recommendations continue to be evidence based (DfE, 2009). Figure 1 below shows a visual representation of these key policies for CYPiC.

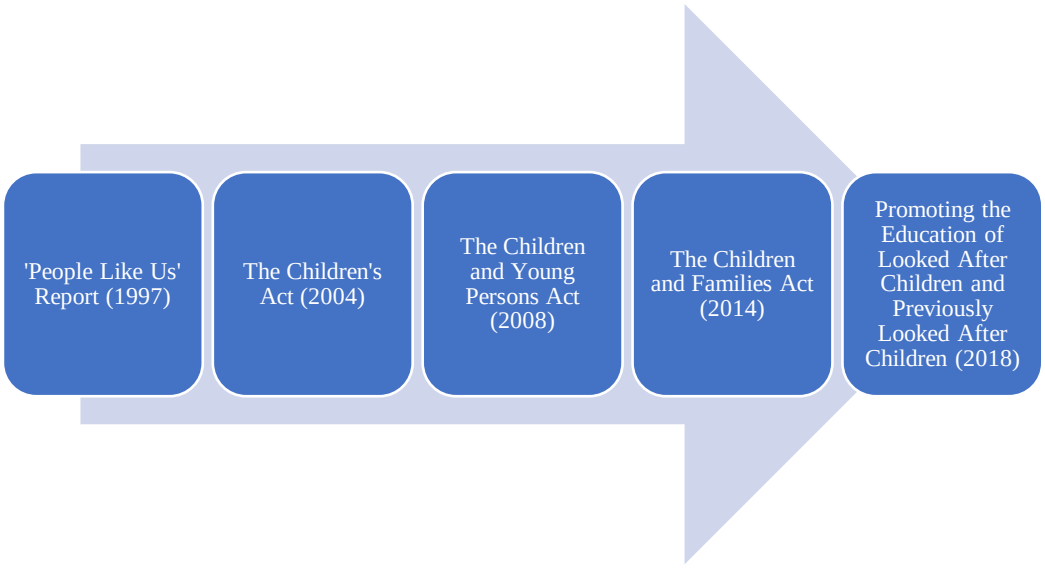


Figure 1: A visual representation of the changing policies for CYPiC over time

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter explores the pertinent literature around children and young people in care (CYPiC) to increase understanding of the importance of the role of the designated teacher (DT) in schools. I will begin with a discussion around the outcomes of CYPiC, and links will be made to government initiatives put in place to promote these. One of these initiatives is the statutory role of the DT, and the responsibilities will be described with exploration around the current research base.

A range of evaluation methods may be needed to understand the best ways of promoting positive outcomes in CYPiC. A systematic literature review (SLR) can support this understanding by exploring the factors that are perceived by educators to support CYPiC in school. This chapter provides a detailed description of the process of the SLR to support future replicability. Consideration will be given to the quality of the research, and critical findings and theoretical underpinnings will be presented. Finally, the rationale and research question will be outlined for this thesis.

2.1 Outcomes for Children and Young People in Care

CYPiC can display variations in their development across a range of areas, which can link to barriers in accessing learning (Bazalgette et al., 2015). As previously described, CYPiC will frequently have disrupted childhoods which have resulted in them being taken into care. This experience is suggested to be linked to the poorer outcomes associated with CYPiC (Bazalgette et al., 2015). Despite this association, it is important to recognise each child as an individual with a diverse set of abilities and needs. Each child or young person has had very individual experiences and may respond differently to opportunities provided to them within education. CYPiC can inspire the adults around them and demonstrate high resilience and prosperity (Honey, Rees, & Griffey, 2011; Martindale, 2020). Resilience is defined as the ability for children and young people to cope and even thrive in spite of the challenges and disadvantages faced in life (Dent & Cameron, 2003).

2.11 Educational and Mental Health Outcomes

Some CYPiC make positive achievements with regards to their education, and it has been reported that good care, stable placements and positive relationships can be linked to this success (Harker et al, 2003). Despite these findings, there is a breadth of research to indicate that CYPiC frequently experience a lack of educational

achievements, which can be a barrier to them reaching their overall potential (NICE, 2019). The attainment of CYPiC is reported to be overall lower than the general population across all key stages, with a widening gap at GCSE level (DfE, 2020). In the *'Outcomes for children looked after by local authorities in England'* (DfE, 2020), 7.2% of CYPiC achieved a grade five or over in their maths and English GCSE, in comparison to 9.7% of children in need (CIN) and 40.1% of the general population. CYPiC are between three to four times more likely to have a special educational need at the time of their GCSEs than all children (DfE, 2020b). It is important to note that this data does not consider the starting point of the child and relative progress made. It does, however, highlight the need for additional support with learning due to the increased observed level of need, especially as success in school can be seen as a protective factor for CYPiCs' resilience (Boorn, 2008).

While government data indicates overall poorer outcomes educationally for CYPiC, Berridge (2007) argues that data surrounding CYPiC can oversimplify. Berridge (2007) suggests that greater acknowledgement should be given to the wider social factors and influences in order to understand the official statistics. Meanings behind the data and statistics can be misinterpreted and mislead readers around the achievement of CYPiC (Berridge, 2007). Despite this critique, the statistics provided highlight the outcomes of CYPiC and increase the awareness of these individuals within the educational system.

CYPiCs' educational attainment and ability to engage in learning opportunities in school can be directly and indirectly linked to their mental health and social outcomes (Drew & Banerjee, 2019). Research indicates a greater probability that CYPiC will experience mental health problems (such as depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, behavioural disorders) than their peers within the general population (Bazalgette et al., 2015; Tarren-Sweeney & Vetere, 2014). Ford et al (2007) explored the mental health outcomes in CYPiC in a large study across Britain. Mental health disorders were defined using the *'Development and Wellbeing Assessment'* (Ford et al., 2007). In this study, 1,453 CYPiC were compared with 10,428 deprived and non-deprived households. CYPiC were five times more likely to have a mental health disorder than those from non-deprived households and three times more likely than those from deprived households. The CYPiC in residential care had significantly more mental health disorders than those in foster placements (Ford et al., 2007).

Considerations should therefore be made to the individual differences in mental health outcomes which varying life experiences such as pre-care experiences, care placements and school support could impact.

2.12 Factors Influencing Outcomes for CYPiC

There are multiple explanations and factors that can be considered to influence the differences in education and mental health outcomes. Whilst these factors can be described as complex and multi-faceted (Fletcher-Campbell, Archer, & Tomlinson, 2003), some of the key possible factors will be discussed.

As previously reported, CYPiC often have experienced abuse, neglect and disadvantage within their lifetime, which can impact their cognitive, social and emotional development and lead to increased barriers to accessing learning opportunities (Bazalgette et al., 2015; DfE, 2020). Common themes emerging in research show a link between CYPiC mental health and pre-existing mental health needs, exposure to maltreatment, length of exposure and biological risk (Bazalgette et al., 2015). These links highlight the complexity in understanding the factors associated with these outcomes. Selwyn, Frazer and Quinton (2006) stated that children and young people's length and intensity of abuse is inversely related to their ability to recover from this adversity. Whilst this argues that pre-care experience is a key factor in CYPiCs' outcomes, it cannot fully account for these. Research has suggested that CYPiC can still be at risk of being exposed to adverse experiences during their time in care (Ward, 2009), with further reference made to the instability of these placements and breakdown of relationships (Rock et al , 2015).

There is a breadth of research to indicate that frequent disruptions to the stability of school and care placements can have negative impacts on the outcomes of CYPiC (Cameron, 2007; Fletcher-Campbell et al., 2003). Cameron (2007) explored the education of care leavers and found that care leavers with more long-term placements and more stability across school had better qualifications. This was compared with care leavers with increased placements across various settings. In addition to this, mental health needs were highlighted in Ford et al's (2007) study as being more prominent in CYPiC who were in residential settings. These findings raise questions about whether the increased changes to placements could be linked to adverse mental health.

Other factors that impact educational attainment could be the rate of exclusions for CYPiC. The rates of fixed-term exclusions between 2019-2020 were far higher for CYPiC, with CYPiC being five times more likely to have a fixed term exclusion than all children and one and a half times more than CIN (DfE, 2020). These increased exclusions could reinforce possible feelings of isolation and uncertainty due to increased time away from education (Martindale, 2020). Interestingly, in the more recent statistics around outcomes for CYPiC, it showed that permanent exclusions were less than the general population (DfE, 2020). The reduction in permanent exclusions could be attributed partly to the revised guidance around exclusions, emphasising the importance of supporting this vulnerable group at early stages (DfE, 2017).

The underachievement of some CYPiC can further be attributed to social and structural factors within the educational system and broader networks (Woollam, 2010). Reports have indicated that this may include inadequate levels of individualised support, low expectations and poor understanding from supporting adults and teachers (NICE, 2019). Sebba et al (2015) further identified concerns that there is insufficient funding to resource teachers in giving the correct individualised support for CYPiC and some DTs perceived this as a barrier to CYPIC education.

Other research has explored the supporting factors that influence more positive mental health and educational outcomes. Leslie and Mohammed (2015) investigated the supportive factors for CYPiC using activity theory within one Scottish LA with a high proportion of exclusions of CYPiC. Views were triangulated from CYPiC, parents/carers, school staff and social workers to understand what supported the inclusion of CYPiC. Some of the key findings from this were the importance of school staff understanding the individual needs of CYPiC and the importance of positive nurturing relationships. The importance of these relationships between school staff and CYPiC was reflected in Sugden's (2013) study. Children between the ages of eight and nine were interviewed and it was perceived that positive relationships between staff and CYPiC were fundamental to their sense of belonging in school.

Positive relationships with school staff have also been found to promote educational outcomes. Research has found that having a network of supporting adults in school can support increased engagement within education (Woolley & Bowen,

2007). Unfortunately, as previously described, the frequent instability of placements can lead to breakdowns in these secure and positive relationships and attachments (Dent & Cameron, 2003). Moreover, adults may not feel a sense of long-term investment in these relationships with CYPiC due to the possibilities of changes (Leslie & Mohammed, 2015).

Additionally, Leslie and Mohammed (2015) found that the role of the community was influential in the child's engagement in school. Sugden (2013) suggested that the sense of being included both in school and in their wider community can help a child's sense of belonging and promote their education and learning. Limitations should be considered Leslie and Mohammed's (2015) study being undertaken in a Scottish LA, where there are different priorities and policies around CYPiC, which could impact CYPiC educational outcomes within schools.

Overall, the breadth of literature highlights the vulnerability of this population and the multi-factored nature of their needs. As indicated by a headteacher in Rose et al's (2016) *'Impact Report'*, these vulnerable children can increase demands within the school system, which can often outweigh the need to understand how to manage and support them. This suggestion emphasises the importance of having statutory roles in school to ensure that CYPiC are understood and supported within schools to access learning opportunities to their best ability.

2.2 Government Initiatives to Support Children and Young People in Care

2.21 The Role of the Designated Teacher

The role of the DT was initially introduced in the Government guidance *'Education of Children and Young People in Public Care'* which stated that a teacher within the school should be designated to *"resource and advocate"* for CYPiC (Department for Education and Employment & Department of Health, 2000, p. 33).

A large-scale study was undertaken by Fletcher-Campbell, Archer, & Tomlinson (2003) to explore best practice for CYPiC in schools. Interviews were conducted with CYPiC, carers and professionals across eight LAs. The views of DTs were included as part of this research. It was concluded that the DT role was valuable in supporting CYPiC with their main responsibilities, including multi-agency working, advocating for the pupil and monitoring progress carefully (Fletcher-Campbell et al., 2003). Half of the 20 interviewed DTs indicated they had received no training around

supporting CYPiC, and there was little evidence to suggest any support provided within DT networking. The study further highlighted the variability within the DT role across schools and settings, which appeared dependent upon the support received from senior leadership and other school staff (Fletcher-Campbell et al., 2003).

The DfES (2006) acknowledged some of these limitations shown within the DT role and shared their wishes to strengthen the role to ensure CYPiC had greater understanding, oversight, and challenge. The Government decided that the role should be statutory in schools to ensure DTs had the influence to support CYPiC to reach their potential (DfES, 2006). The Children and Young Persons Act (HM Government, 2008) placed a statutory duty on school governing bodies to ensure that they provide essential support through the DT role. The regulations (HM Government, 2009) stated that the person chosen for the DT role was required to be either a qualified teacher or a head or acting headteacher at the school.

The most recent guidance, *'The designated teacher for looked after and previously looked-after children'* (DfE, 2018b), reports that DTs should be responsible for promoting the educational achievement of CYPiC. Martindale (2020) reports that the DT is likely to be the single most important person to support CYPiC in schools.

The promotion of positive outcomes for CYPiC is to be achieved through some of the following responsibilities described in the table below.

Table 1: Summary of responsibilities DTs have in school at varying levels (Taken from 'The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities' (DfE, 2018b)).

Activity	**Responsibilities**
Work at the individual level	Understand the difficulties CYPiC may experience. Work directly with CYPiC to gain their views and support their aspirations and consistently support.

	Have lead responsibility of delivering the personal education plan (PEP) and ensure pupil voice is gathered.
Work with adults around the CYPiC	Communicate understanding of CYPiC's needs with school staff. Create positive home-school links with carers/guardians. Ensure multi-agency working with a range of professionals and social workers. Proactively seek support from professionals including VS and VSH. Work with the governing body, providing data on CYPiC attainment and needs. Contribute to discussions with Virtual School around how pupil premium can be used effectively with CYPiC.
Work at the systemic level	Promote a positive whole school culture to support CYPiC. Support the development of whole-school policies and procedures to support the inclusion of CYPiC.

2.22 Personal Education Plan (PEP)

As described above, DTs have a key role in personal education plans (PEPs). PEPs were introduced in 2000 as a statutory requirement for all CYPiC by the DfEE/DoH as previous care plans were not perceived to be sufficient in promoting the education of CYPiC (Sanders, Rowley, & Jeff, 2000).

PEPs should be integral to the planning process for CYPiC and should record the pupil's education or training (DfE, 2018b; Hayden, 2005). The PEP should describe the educational history of the CYPiC and should reflect other plans such as EHCPs in ensuring that outcomes are achieved (DfE, 2018b). Social workers are responsible for organising the PEP, but DTs have lead responsibility in school to set targets, monitor these, and use the PEP to promote positive outcomes for CYPiC with other staff members (DfE, 2018b). Martindale (2020) emphasises the importance of gathering pupil voice within the PEP and ensuring that this is collected purposively, so CYPiC views are captured and considered in planning.

Research has indicated that DTs can have varying views on the value of PEPs. Hayden (2005) completed research exploring educators and social workers views of PEPs. As part of this research, she interviewed 10 DTs and concluded that whilst the process around the PEP helped information sharing, it could sometimes be viewed as very time consuming, and difficulties were raised in completing them to a high standard with DTs having other roles. The range of perceptions around the PEP value has also been gathered directly from CYPiC, where some indicated it felt invaluable and time-consuming. Others felt the process was helpful in everyone having an awareness of the current situation (Sebba et al, 2015).

2.23 Virtual School

Guidance produced by the Government in 2009 introduced the fundamental role of the Virtual School's Head (VSH) in supporting the outcomes of CYPiC (DfE, 2009). This role was mandatory in all LAs and placed emphasis on the VSH in promoting and monitoring the education of CYPiC whilst coordinating support under a 'Virtual School' (Berridge et al, 2009). As part of the responsibilities of a VSH, they must support DTs within their role to ensure that they develop their understanding of how best to promote outcomes for CYPiC.

Previous research by Ofsted (2012) explored the views of VS by interviewing multiple CYPiC and professionals, including DTs from nine LAs. DTs were generally very positive about VS support and perceived them as central to the multi-agency working and relationships around CYPiC. They further highlighted good practice among DTs becoming included in core groups with VS staff and other professionals. Whilst DTs perceived the links from VS to be very effective communication channels; they still indicated barriers in communication with other professionals such as social workers (Ofsted, 2012).

Drew and Banerjee (2019) further explored the role of VS in supporting the education and wellbeing of CYPiC. A survey was conducted with 147 VSH across nine LAs. Some of the key roles of the VSH role identified through thematic analysis (TA) were, raising awareness around CYPiC, enhancing learning for adults around the CYPiC and supporting relationships. One of the main aspects of the role was the relationship with DTs in school and VS' training in increasing their awareness around CYPiC needs (Drew & Banerjee, 2019). Despite this relationship being mentioned as key by 27 VSH, it was highlighted in the research that there is still limited research around the working relationship between DTs and VS.

2.3 Research around the Designated Teacher Role

It can be argued that DTs have a significant role in schools in supporting CYPiC across systemic levels in school. Despite emphasis being placed on the importance of the DT role in government documents, the research base is still growing around the role of DTs and what supports DT responsibilities.

More recent thesis research has attempted to strengthen the understanding of the role of DTs. Goodall (2014) explored the experiences of DTs in supporting CYPiC. Six semi-structured interviews were conducted with DTs across a rural LA, and salient themes emerged through interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). Whitehouse (2014) further explored the role of DTs but focused on perceptions around the EP role. This thesis used a mixed-method analysis with questionnaires and nine DT interviews.

A table has been included in Appendix 1 to summarise the information from Goodall's (2014) and Whitehouse's (2014) research studies and to understand further the evidence base of these key studies. The salient findings have been described below.

It is important to consider that both theses were conducted with a small sample size in one LA and can only show a snapshot of DT perceptions from the time period.

Within both studies, DTs perceived their collaborative work with others to be of value to their support for CYPiC (Goodall, 2014; Whitehouse, 2014). Whitehouse (2014) described the importance of collaborative meetings to support understanding around the CYPiC needs. DTs felt the holistic view of needs helped to inform practice (Goodall, 2014). This finding suggests DTs are fulfilling their statutory responsibilities of multi-agency working (DfE, 2020), which can promote positive outcomes (Ofsted, 2012) and inclusion for CYPiC (Leslie & Mohammed, 2015).

Goodall (2014) and Whitehouse (2014) emphasised the knowledge DTs have around the difficult journeys of CYPiC. DTs appeared to show a high level of emotional connection to these journeys and CYPiCs' vulnerability, which seemed to motivate them within their support for CYPiC (Goodall, 2014). However, in contrast to the positive emotions, DTs experienced negative emotions through managing the challenging needs of CYPiC in their schools (Goodall, 2014; Whitehouse, 2014). In Goodall's (2014) study, DTs perceived balancing other commitments in school and lack of time to be a barrier to their DT role. However, contrastingly, Whitehouse's (2014) DTs perceived the additional roles as a benefit in supporting their knowledge around CYPiC.

The challenges placed on DTs were previously indicated by Fletcher-Campbell et al (2003) before the role became statutory. Despite demands placed on DTs, Goodall (2014) found that DTs were receiving minimal support to overcome these challenges, and there were no opportunities to network and share experiences with other DTs. DTs were, however, receiving training support to increase their knowledge around CYPiC. DTs in both studies recognised the need for training in their role and valued the training provided to them through the LA (Goodall, 2014; Whitehouse, 2014), but it became apparent that DTs wished for more individualised training rather than a 'one size fits all' approach.

Despite the role being statutory since 2008 (HM Government, 2008), one of the key themes in Goodall's (2014) study was 'working on the margins' and the sense of isolation DTs could feel from feeling unrecognised. DTs perceived their role as misunderstood by school staff and social workers, which was reflected in Fletcher-

Campbell et al (2003) study. Additionally, in both studies, DTs felt a lack of autonomy in supporting school systems and policies, despite this being a key responsibility for their role (DfE, 2018b; Goodall, 2014; Whitehouse, 2014).

Whilst both of these studies focus upon the perceptions of DTs, it felt important to explore this in greater depth within the broader context of the LA and society. Goodall (2014) identified that DTs still continue to feel unrecognised for their role, which raises concerns due to the important and statutory position they hold. Both studies highlighted the need for further research across LAs to strengthen the understanding of this role (Goodall, 2014; Whitehouse, 2014).

2.31 Designated Teachers and the Educational Psychologist's Role

Whitehouse's (2014) main focus of the research was to explore the perceptions DTs had of EPs. They concluded that DTs perceived the EP role as valuable but shared the minimal connections they had with EPs in school. DTs identified direct work as the EPs' primary role and showed limited understanding of the breadth of support that EPs could offer. The limited working between EPs and DTs was previously highlighted by Norwich, Richards and Nash (2010), who examined EPs' views around supporting CYPiC in their role through surveys and interviews. EPs perceived there to be a lack of certainty by schools about what responsibilities a DT should have. However, it should be noted that this research was conducted before the Government made the role statutory (DfEE & DoH, 2000).

Despite this, Whitehouse (2014) concluded that EPs could have a vital role at varying levels such as training, organisational development in schools, multi-agency meetings and support for DTs' professional development. The value of EP work with CYPiC has been reflected across other research, with EPs perceiving themselves to have a valuable role in using their consultation skills (Norwich et al, 2010) and supervision knowledge to support the DT role (Boorn, 2008).

2.4 Systematic Literature Review

A systematic review allows for vast amounts of research to be identified, evaluated and synthesised in a methodical scientific manner in order to answer a specific question (Andrews, 2005; Petticrew & Roberts, 2006). This current systematic literature review aims to follow the stages outlined by Petticrew and Roberts (2006) and will therefore seek to reduce bias through systematic searches. The synthesis aims

to explore what is known in current research in relation to the chosen question and appraise the overall quality of this research (Gough, 2007).

As previously mentioned, there is a limited research base gaining the views of DTs. It was therefore not possible to synthesise a breath of papers using criteria solely focusing on DT views. Alternatively, it was perceived pertinent to explore educational staffs' perceptions to understand further what they perceive to support CYPiC in schools. This information could indicate consistent themes within previous literature and help further to guide the decision-making process within this research project. It was hoped by asking the question *'What is known about the factors that support CYPiC in schools, through the perceptions of educational staff?*' it could provide further updated literature around this topic.

2.41 Literature Search

An initial search was completed on 01.09.20 and further searches on 07.09.20 and 14.09.20. The online databases PsychINFO, (Ovid), SCOPUS (Elsevier) and Web of Science. In order to find literature of interest key terms were used and searches within the title and/or abstract. To ensure articles including CYPiC were found, the terms: '*Looked after children'* or *'Children looked after'* or '*Children and young people in care' 'Children in care'* or *'Young people in care'* or *'Foster child'* were used. To ensure that articles including school were included the terms *'Teachers'* or *'School staff'* or *'School'* or *'Education'* or *'Classroom'* were used. To ensure that articles focused upon the supporting factors the terms *'Support'* or '*Help'* were used. Minor modifications to the search terms were made to appropriately match the individual database, as shown in Appendix 2.

2.42 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

A range of criterion were used to identify relevant characteristics within included studies. These are described in the table below.

Table 2: Inclusion and exclusion criteria for SLR

	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Language	Articles written in English	Not written in English
Dates	Published in last 10 years (after 2010)	Not published before 2010
Location	Articles written within the UK Education System	Articles not written within the UK Educational System
Participants	Age of CYPiC in focus of research is between 0-18 Perceptions are gained from educational staff that work within school.	Age of CYPiC is above the age of 18 No perceptions are gained from educational staff that do not work in schools.
Design	Empirical research of quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods studies	Literature reviews and book sections.
Topic	Reference made to how school can support/help promote the outcomes of CYPiC. Studies included that gather views from teachers, staff or other professionals that work within a school setting.	No reference made to the role of school or teaching staff. Only reference made to residential support and not school.
Publications	Peer reviewed journals	Not peer reviewed

On completion of the title and abstract screening using the described inclusion and exclusion criteria, 26 papers were chosen (See Flow Chart Appendix 3). Each of these papers was read in order to assess for quality and relevance to the research question. One study, *'The Education of Children in Care: Agency and Resilience'* (Berridge, 2017), was screened at full text. This paper focused primarily on CYPiC views and provided only a brief summary of teachers' perceptions. The paper stated that further details of the qualitative research with school staff could be read in the *'Technical Report 3'* (Berridge et al., 2015) and this was found through the links from

this report. Therefore, it was deemed that this study would be included, and the summary paper by Berridge (2017) would not. Six out of 26 papers were selected (See Table 3 below). The reasons for the exclusion of 21 papers have been described in Appendix 4.

The six articles included were analysed initially on the methodology's quality with further reference to the Critical Appraisal and Skills Programme (CASP) checklist (CASP, 2018). This tool can support researchers to evaluate the robustness of each study and make some comparisons between selected qualitative papers. A summary of findings from the articles is then presented with discussion around key theoretical perspectives and links to the current study.

Table 3: Summary table of included papers in the SLR.

Author (and date)	Title	Type of Study	Sample	Procedure	Findings
Kelly, Watt and Giddens (2020)	*An Attachment aware schools programme: a safe space, a nurturing learning community*	A mixed-methods evaluation	17 schools (infant, junior, primary, secondary, special and pupil referral units). In each school 2 teachers and the Attachment Awareness school (AAS) leads took part.	Pre and post questionnaires (qualitative and quantitative questions). 6 months post semi-structured interview.	- The study focused on the evaluation of the AAS programme in schools with CYPiC and children with attachment needs. - Thematic analysis of interviews showed key themes of environmental changes, trusted key adults and adapted pedagogy whole school practice. - Positive impacts were seen in pupil's positive relationships, mental health and behaviour in school, as perceived by staff.
Greenwood & Kelly (2019)	*Using appreciative inquiry to support the development of a sense of belonging for children in care who are experiencing an atypical*	Action research-qualitative focus groups	6 CYPiC aged between 12-15 and 6 teaching members of staff within a VS and 1 VSH.	A 5D appreciative inquiry cycle. Separate focus groups for CYPiC and VS with 1 joint focus group.	- The study indicated the importance of YP having a key adult in school, having support to make friends, having a key adult to support visits into school and having a personalised induction. - The importance of training, sharing among professionals and support for DTs

	in-year transition to a new school				was highlighted as actions to support in-year transition.
Berridge, Bell, Sebba & Luke (2015)	*The educational progress of looked after children in England. Technical report 3: Perspectives of young people, social workers, carers and teachers*	Qualitative study	26 young people in care, 20 DTs, 18 carers and 17 Social workers and six VSHs	Semi-structured interviews with participants.	- Key themes identified in supporting CYPiC were high aspirations, consistent, caring and competent relationships, caring. - Other themes included the perceived importance of emotional support and provided well planned individualised educational support.
Driscoll (2013)	*Supporting the educational transitions of looked after children at Key Stage 4: The role of virtual schools and designated teachers*	Qualitative study	12 DTs and 4 VSHs	Semi-structured interviews with participants.	- Participants perceived challenges in the transition for young people in Year 11. - The stability of placement changes in KS4 and the role of the VH within this was seen as important in supporting educational attainment of CYPiC. - VS indicated how school's sensitivity to the need of CYPiC had supported educational progress.

					- The author discussed the importance in communication between VSH, DT and social workers when support pupils within KS4.
Brewin and Statham (2011)	*Supporting the transition from primary school to secondary school for children who are Looked After*	Qualitative study	14 Year 6- Year 7 pupils, 22 foster carers, 19 teachers, 3 looked after children education support officers and social workers. focus group.	Stage 1 semi-structured interviews with participants prior to transition and social worker focus group. Stage 2 interview with participants following year 6 transition.	- The study found that key factors included stakeholders building relationships with key adults in CYPiC life and CYPiC ability to form peer and staff relationships. - No single factor was highlighted as key in supporting transition which indicated the importance of a holistic approach from stakeholders to consider factors a wide range of levels.
Edwards (2016)	*Looking after the teachers: exploring the emotional labour experienced by teachers of looked after children*	Qualitative study	14 KS2 teachers.	Semi-structured interviews with participants.	- The study found that teachers experience emotional labour when interacting with CYPiC. This linked to constructions around role, perceptions of support and duties.

					- Teachers perceived heightened awareness and a positive relationship with CYPiC as important in supporting CYPiC. - Peer support was seen as a factor in supporting teachers' role with CYPiC.

2.43 Quality of Reviewed Papers

A summary of the methodologies is provided for the six selected papers, and the robustness of each study will be discussed in further detail. There is no clear consensus upon the best approach in the appraisal of qualitative papers (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006). The qualitative data within the six studies is evaluated using the CASP checklist for qualitative papers (CASP, 2018). This checklist was chosen as it asks for ratings with three responses (Yes, No, Not Sure) but does not produce a quantitative score. This form of appraisal allows comparisons between the quality of papers included in the synthesis through the researcher's responses. The responses can be found in Appendix 5 to show the quality ratings of the selected papers.

2.431 Setting and Sample

The focus upon educational staffs' perceptions varied within the selected studies. No study focused solely on the view of DTs. Two studies focused upon school teachers' views (Edwards, 2016; Kelly, Watt, & Giddens, 2020). One study focused upon the views of VS staff, which included teachers and mentors within the team that worked within schools (Greenwood & Kelly, 2020). Other studies gained views from teachers alongside VSH (Driscoll, 2013), pupils and carers (Brewin & Statham, 2011), pupils, carers, social workers and VSH (Berridge et al., 2015).

All studies included educational staff who worked with CYPiC to some degree in a range of school settings; primary schools (Brewin & Statham, 2011; Edwards, 2016; Kelly et al., 2020), secondary schools (Berridge et al., 2015; Brewin & Statham, 2011; Driscoll, 2013; Greenwood & Kelly, 2020), pupil referral units and special schools (Kelly et al., 2020). This indicates the varying experiences that educational staff may have regarding supporting CYPiC within schools. Therefore, the populations included in the selected papers are not homogenous regarding their experiences and should therefore be considered alongside the possible external factors of these settings and external structures. As all educational staff had experience of working within school systems, their papers were relevant to the synthesis.

2.432 Data Collection

Five studies used qualitative methods of data collection, and one used a mixed-methods approach. Within five of the studies, semi-structured interviews were the main qualitative method of data collection. Kelly, Watt and Gidden's (2020) used a pre and post questionnaire alongside the interviews to support the evaluation of the Attachment Aware

School's (AAS) programme, and this included Likert ratings and qualitative questions. Brewin and Stratham (2011) included a social worker focus group alongside their interviews with CYPiC, foster carers and teachers. Greenwood and Kelly (2019) used separate and joint focus groups with VS staff and CYPiC to gather information within the appreciative inquiry cycle.

2.433 Topic

All studies included discussed some of the supporting factors for CYPiC in schools from an educator's perspective. For some of the included studies, the supportive factors were the main focus (Brewin & Statham, 2011; Driscoll, 2013; Greenwood & Kelly, 2020). For other studies, these findings were mentioned alongside other areas of exploration such as the progress of CYPiC, emotional labour of teachers of CYPiC and the evaluation of a whole school attachment programme (Berridge et al., 2015; Edwards, 2016; Kelly et al., 2020).

2.434 Geographical Location

Five of the studies were based within the English educational system (Berridge et al., 2015; Driscoll, 2013; Edwards, 2016; Greenwood & Kelly, 2020; Kelly et al., 2020), with one study based within Wales (Brewin & Statham, 2011). This paper was still deemed valuable to include due to the paper's relevance to the research question and similarities in educational systems. Two of the papers indicate that their locations were within more rural settings (Brewin & Statham, 2011; Kelly et al., 2020).

2.435 Critical Appraisal

The CASP checklist indicated that the studies included had displayed strengths in using a qualitative design and a clear rationale for each research question. Within all studies, descriptions were provided around the participants included. One of the studies provided additional details around ages, time in post and setting to reflect the transferability of the study (Driscoll, 2013).

When considering if the data collection addresses the research issues, some of the studies were not clear. Kelly et al (2020) did not provide information about what questions were asked within the interview and provided minimal details about which staff members were interviewed. This was further reflected in Driscoll's (2013) and Berridge et al's (2015) papers, where limited details were provided around how the interviews were undertaken, and no information provided about the interview schedule of questions. The other three included studies provide clear and coherent information around the steps taken within the data

collection process. To support the trustworthiness of the data, the context of interviews and relevant schedules are included (Brewin & Statham, 2011; Edwards, 2016; Greenwood & Kelly, 2020). Five of the studies use verbatim extracts taken from participants to support their findings which provide some indication of credibility (Berridge et al., 2015; Driscoll, 2013; Edwards, 2016; Greenwood & Kelly, 2020; Kelly et al., 2020).

Half of the studies described ethical considerations (Brewin & Statham, 2011; Driscoll, 2013; Kelly et al., 2020). Brewin and Statham (2011) and Kelly et al (2020) explicitly refer to how the approval was sought.

The possibility of researcher bias should be noted within Kelly et al (2020) study as the authors were evaluating their own programme delivery in LA schools. However, to support transparency, this relationship is made explicit within the write-up. Furthermore, one of the authors of Greenwood and Kelly (2019) study suggest that they had previously been involved in a prior research project to explore how to support CYPiC during the transition, so the author's affiliation to this should be considered. Triangulation of data is used within Kelly et al's (2020) study which may partly counter this threat to validity.

The rigour within the data analysis procedure varied across the studies. Three of the studies describe the stages of the analysis used. This varied between TA (Brewin & Statham, 2011; Edwards, 2016) and the steps within the appreciative inquiry process (Greenwood & Kelly, 2020). Kelly et al (2020) provides some description for the analysis of questionnaire data but no description around qualitative data analysis. The limited description is reflected in Driscoll's (2013) study, which does not mention the method of analysis so there is no indication of the process used in forming data and themes.

2.44 Summary of Findings

In order to answer the systematic review question *'What is known about the factors that support CYPiC in schools, through the perceptions of educational staff?*' I explored the varying perceptions of educational staff from the included papers. The key findings around what factors support CYPiC in schools were noted within each paper, and the shared key themes across several papers are described below. A concept list has been included below to show the key factors highlighted within the SLR.

What is known about the factors that support CYPiC in schools, through the perceptions of educational staff?	Pupil Voice
	Individualised Approach
	Teacher Relationships
	Teacher Support
	Peer Relationships
	Communication between Teachers and Parents/Carers
	Multi-agency Working
	Stability
	Ethos and Culture

Figure 2: A key concept list developed following the analysis of the SLR

2.441 Pupil Voice

Educational staff perceived that understanding a CYPiC was important in their support (Greenwood & Kelly, 2020; Kelly et al., 2020). By providing CYPiC with opportunities to voice their feelings and views, school could better understand the CYPiCs' interests, needs, and aspirations (Kelly et al., 2020). Within transitions, CYPiC can provide greater information about their expectations and outlook so that individualised support can be provided (Greenwood & Kelly, 2020). Having time to spend with CYPiC provides them with the opportunity to be listened to and limits the assumptions that can be made about their behaviour (Kelly et al., 2020). It was further perceived that providing staff with time and space to reflect on pupil voice was key to ensuring the child was at the centre of the school and ensured greater success for the CYPiC (Kelly et al., 2020).

2.442 Individualised Approach

There appeared a commonality among papers that an individualised approach was deemed most effective when supporting CYPiC in school. Across studies, reflection was around the individual needs of CYPiC, and thus, the importance of providing a flexible, individual and bespoke package of support within education should be given (Berridge et al., 2015; Brewin & Statham, 2011; Greenwood & Kelly, 2020). This was deemed an important part of successful key stage 4 transitions to ensure that the timetables and curriculum suited the individual's needs of the CYPiC.

2.443 Teacher Relationships

The theme of teacher relationships was prominent across five selected articles (Berridge et al., 2015; Brewin & Statham, 2011; Edwards, 2016; Greenwood & Kelly, 2020; Kelly et al., 2020). The evaluation of the Attachment Awareness School's Programme (Kelly et al., 2020) indicated that key adults within school, such as DTs and other trusted adults, helped children feel safe, valued, and supported de-escalation of their behaviours. This relationship between an adult and a CYPiC is further perceived to support the successful transition of CYPiC (Brewin & Statham, 2011; Greenwood & Kelly, 2020). Greenwood and Kelly (2019) used appreciative inquiry to explore supporting factors in a-typical transition. Trusting relationships with at least one adult was identified by educational staff and it was deemed that this linked to their overall sense of belonging to their new school.

One trusting relationship is considered to support greater systemic links around a CYPiC. Brewin and Stratham (2011) identified that one positive relationship with a key adult could help a CYPiC form a greater support network across school and home systems. The network of support is suggested to be a factor in the overall resilience of CYPiC (Brewin & Statham, 2011).

The quality of the relationship with a CYPiC is suggested to be related to an adult's individual qualities. Showing good listening skills was perceived as important in Kelly et al's (2020) study as this helped the CYPiC feel valued. Other considerations were around the emotional management of the key adult. In Edward's (2016) study, this was a facilitating factor in ensuring positive feedback was given to the CYPiC, which helped to promote their wellbeing.

2.444 Teacher Support

A pertinent theme across studies was the value in training to support teachers and school staff (Berridge et al., 2015; Greenwood & Kelly, 2020; Kelly et al., 2020). DTs in Berridge et al's (2015) study perceived training as a priority but further highlighted the importance of this being cascaded throughout school to help a CYPiC succeed. Two studies mentioned the importance of attachment training when working with CYPiC (Berridge et al., 2009; Kelly et al., 2020). Kelly et al (2020) considered the crucial factors that promote the success of the training. Opportunities to reflect on knowledge, practice and attend ongoing training was deemed as crucial in school understanding (Kelly et al., 2020). It was perceived

that this could support whole school ethos, and in turn, promote positive relationships and outcomes for children (Kelly et al., 2020).

Educational staff identified some of the challenges they may experience when working with CYPiC. Edwards (2016) describes the emotional labour that is required when supporting CYPiC. In this study, emotional labour is defined as *"induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others"* (Hochschild, 1983, p. 7 as Cited in Edwards, 2017). The study found that teachers of CYPiC were frequently engaging in emotional labour in their interactions which can be linked to burnt-out feelings. Secondly, teachers were experiencing negative feelings towards their sense of competency in knowing how to support CYPiC (Edwards, 2016). Teachers perceived peer support as necessary for their role with CYPiC, which highlights the importance of support systems in schools for staff. Other studies described the difficulties in educational staff gaining needed support in their roles. In Berridge et al's (2015) study, DTs wished to gain support through EPs but felt that this support was lacking.

2.445 Peer Relationships

The importance of peer relationships was evident as a supportive factor for CYPiC in the included studies, particularly through transitions (Brewin & Statham, 2011; Greenwood & Kelly, 2020; Kelly et al., 2020). Brewin and Stratham (2011) indicate that peer relationships were a strong theme for all participants in supporting transitions focusing on maintaining friendships and building new ones. Teachers also perceived that bullying had a significant impact on the educational attainment of CYPiC (Berridge et al., 2015) and that limited friendships could impact transitions for these individuals (Brewin & Statham, 2011).

2.446 Communication between Teachers and Parents/Carers

Another important factor in supporting CYPiC was the positive relationship between school staff and parents/carers, highlighted in most of the selected papers (Berridge et al., 2015; Brewin & Statham, 2011; Edwards, 2016; Kelly et al., 2020). The close relationships formed with parents/carers were said to provide perspectives of the child at home, which increased understanding of the CYPiC and helped to facilitate positive relationships with the CYPiC (Edwards, 2016; Kelly et al., 2020).

Berridge et al (2015) emphasised that having parents/carers who were education-focused helped to facilitate the progress of CYPiC in schools. It was further suggested that when home is perceived as an unstable environment for a child, the link to school is even

more important, and school should use approaches such as shared language and transitional objects to support this (Kelly et al., 2020).

2.447 Multi-agency working

Multi-agency working and good communication between services can be a strength in support for CYPiC (Berridge et al., 2015; Brewin & Statham, 2011; Driscoll, 2013; Edwards, 2016). Berridge et al (2015) suggested that a better package of support was provided when there was teamwork, two-way communication and integration of services around CYPiC. The good level of communication between professionals and the school system was further perceived to help teachers understand the needs of CYPiC better (Edwards, 2016). This key theme of communication was further highlighted as a beneficial factor throughout the transition from primary to secondary (Brewin & Statham, 2011) and from key stage four to further education (Driscoll, 2013). It was suggested that other services could have an important role in supporting multi-agency working. Driscoll (2013) indicated the importance of the role of VS in supporting this communication between services in order to provide the best tailored support.

2.448 Stability

Stability and routine were identified factors in supporting CYPiC in school that may have experienced frequent changes (Brewin & Statham, 2011). Concerns were raised around the impact of transitions upon the CYPiC attainment in school (Driscoll, 2013) and their ability to cope during school leaving transitions (Brewin & Statham, 2011). During key stage four, one DT perceived it as being ‘unrealistic’ to expect these young people to reach their potential during placement disruption (Driscoll, 2013). The frequent changes of social worker were further perceived to negatively impact CYPiC progress, with teachers perceiving social workers often having less involvement than needed (Driscoll, 2013). On the other hand, it has been suggested that CYPiC can cope well with these changes. The resilience of CYPiC is highlighted as supporting them in dealing with the high level of changes, in addition to the extra support they should be receiving in school (Brewin & Statham, 2011).

2.449 Ethos and Culture

The terms ethos and culture are sometimes used interchangeably in literature (Glover & Coleman, 2006). Glover and Coleman (2006) suggest ethos refers to the features of the atmosphere in schools and talks about what is occurring across people. On the other hand,

school culture is a broader, more complex term to capture the norms, values, and beliefs over time.

A selection of the papers gave a sense that a whole school ethos was an important factor in supporting CYPiC (Brewin & Statham, 2011; Edwards, 2016; Kelly et al., 2020). By ensuring all staff provided and modelled a nurturing, empathetic approach to pupils in school, there appeared to be a more caring environment for CYPiC and all pupils (Kelly et al., 2020). As previously mentioned, training was perceived as a crucial factor in supporting and shifting the overall ethos of the school. Moreover, a supportive ethos supported the positive interaction between teachers and CYPiC (Edwards, 2016).

Brewin and Stratham (2011) further emphasised the importance of having a culture within a school where pupils' differences are minimised and where CYPiC do not perceive themselves as being treated differently from their peers.

2.45 Limitations of Synthesis

In this literature review the SLR was relatively small as it was based within the context of a wider study. Therefore, the time and resources for the synthesis were limited.

It is acknowledged that biases and experiences could have influenced the systematic reviewing process. The potential subjectivity and bias within the SLR are therefore acknowledged as a limitation of the review. Only one reviewer was involved, and therefore the extent of the possible bias is not clear. A more systematic reviewing process involving multiple reviewers to ensure there was inter-rater reliability throughout the synthesis may have helped to overcome this limitation. Whilst multiple reviewers were not used, this limitation was partly addressed through following Petticrew and Roberts (2006) stages and rigorously reporting the outcomes at stages of the SLR.

Furthermore, constraints should be acknowledged in the qualitative synthesis in relation to the representation of data. The current review's inclusion and exclusion sought to reduce the amount of qualitative data that was not directly relevant to the SLR question. The synthesis in the present study grouped together the key concepts related to the review question. Through summarising and grouping key concepts together, it is possible that some of the rich qualitative data may have been sparse and that some perspectives could have been omitted from the review.

Furthermore, the review of the quality of studies was further grouped together linked to various critical appraisal indicators. It is therefore possible that some valuable methodological considerations may have been missed due to the summarising process. In future studies, a more in-depth exploration and analysis of the methodological strengths and limitations of studies may support a more detailed review.

2.5 Theoretical Underpinnings

The selected papers are embedded in several theoretical perspectives around factors that support CYPiC. The range of psychological theories includes attachment, sense of belonging and ecological systems. Other theories such as resilience and emotional labour are mentioned in the selected papers. This highlights some of the complexities in supporting CYPiC individual needs within school due to their being multiple psychological theories, which can guide provision. The key theories are provided below with a reflection on the selected paper.

2.51 Attachment Theory

Kelly et al (2020) evaluate the Attachment Aware Schools programme and provide a very detailed argument towards the value of considering this theory within schools. Attachment theory proposes that a secure attachment is formed between an infant and a caregiver when a caregiver attunes to the infant's needs (Bowlby, 1969). Differing responses from caregivers in this attachment process is deemed to produce different attachment patterns and behaviours in a child. The theory may suggest that CYPiC who have experienced difficult pre-care experiences may have some difficulties forming secure attachments with caregivers. Children's social competencies can develop through the security of attachment, which helps to provide a child with the ability to regulate their emotions and develop self-awareness in complex social environments (Dent & Cameron, 2003). Attachment theory can be used as a theory to understand children's behaviours but also ways of attuning to CYPiC and strengthening their relationships with teachers, peers and professionals within schools (Kelly et al., 2020).

Whilst attachment theory has been deemed a valuable framework in understanding the outcomes of children and supporting them; it can also be critiqued for providing a limited view of pupil behaviour. The theory does not consider the overall impact of social, economic, and cultural factors on personality development. It can be argued that the oppression of gender, race, class, and sexuality are not considered (Milner and O'Byrne, 2002). This valid

critique highlights the importance of using attachment theory, not in isolation but ensuring a holistic assessment is completed to understand each child clearly.

2.52 Sense of Belonging

The theory of belongingness is used as a framework in Greenwood and Kelly (2019) study. This sense of belonging is further mentioned within other studies as a theory underlying the needs of friendships (Brewin & Statham, 2011) and other supporting adults (Kelly et al., 2020), suggested the importance of considering this alongside CYPiC.

It is considered a basic human need to feel a sense of belonging, and the theory refers to these feelings being within an individual's environment (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Osterman (2000) completed a systematic review of the literature around belonging and highlighted students were more engaged in learning and motivated by schools when they experienced a sense of belonging.

Previous research has indicated that the sense of belonging is a valuable consideration for CYPiC, with links made between the sense of belonging and educational achievement (Sancho & Cline, 2012). However, the authors considered the issues of causally linking belonging with these outcomes due to the variation in CYPiCs' response, possibly resulting from their very individual experiences. Sugden (2013) highlighted the importance of schools providing a safe and secure environment, where a CYPiC feels acknowledged and praised. This can support CYPiC ability to form positive relationships and engage in learning opportunities. This sense of belonging within children can therefore facilitate the forming of secure attachments within the school environment (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

2.53 Ecological Systems Theory

Brewin and Stratham (2011) use the ecosystemic model as a framework to organise the findings to show the varying factors that support the transition of CYPiC. Bronfenbrenner (1979) ecological systems model conceptualises how a child develops through the interaction with multiple systems within their environment.

Ecological systems theory can provide an explanation as to why CYPiC have difficulties in achieving their educational potential (O'neill, 2019). Through the model, considerations are not only placed on the CYPiC characteristics but also the social and educational context in which the child is cared for. The ecological systems model is transactional and considers that immediate interactions and wider influences are constantly engaging with one another, which can impact the CYPiC. In order to understand a CYPiC,

we must understand the social systems around the child and the interactions between these (Heath, 2017).

Bronfenbrenner initially proposed the *'ecological systems theory'* in 1974 to consider development within a broader context (Bronfenbrenner, 1974, 1979). The theory was revised in 1994, and this was termed the 'bioecological model' (Bronfenbrenner, 1995; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). This model still considered development to be nested within the surrounding systems but acknowledged the process-person-context-time (PPCT) concepts and referred to the fifth surrounding system of the chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1988). The surrounding systems and the PPCT model will be described below. Within this study, the bioecological model will be based upon the theory in 1995 (Bronfenbrenner, 1995), which has been termed a ' mature' form of the model (Tudge et al, 2003, p. 198).

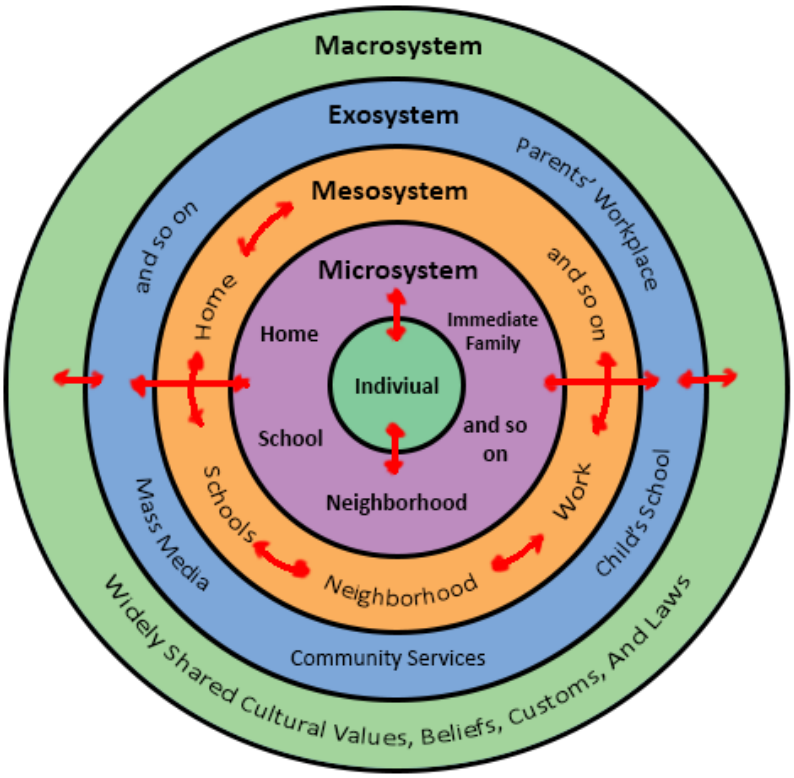


Figure 3: A diagram of the bioecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1995).

The systems can be described as the following:

- The Microsystem: *The immediate environments surrounding the individual*
- The Mesosystem: *The interactions and connections between these environments*

- The Exosystem: *The external environment that indirectly impacts individual*
- The Macrosystem: *The wider cultural, political and belief systems across the community*
- The Chronosystem: *The impact of changes and events that occur over time*

Brewin and Statham (2011) reported that the ecological systems model was a valuable way of looking at the factors that support CYPiC through transition following interviews with teachers, carers and pupils. Within a CYPiC microsystem, some of the key factors that supported transition included peer relationships and relationships with staff (Brewin & Statham, 2011). Within the mesosystem, information sharing and relationships between agencies were deemed important for transition and further within the exosystem transition success was factored by social services' consistency and active role. The ecological model highlighted how support packages for CYPiC should consider the varying direct and indirect systems within a wider context in order to be successful (Brewin & Statham, 2011).

2.54 Theoretical Underpinnings of this Study

The ecosystemic model can be applied to teachers own experiences and perceptions of the surrounding supporting systems (Dowling & Osborne, 2018). It is important to consider that adults around a CYPiC are not in isolation, and decisions and actions for CYPiC will be influenced by varying contexts around them (Birchall, 2021; Dowling & Osborne, 2018). Therefore, it was deemed that the bioecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1995) could be a helpful framework for the study to capture the complexity within the surrounding systems of the DT and provide valuable knowledge around how to strengthen these.

Bronfenbrenner (1995) does not provide clear guidance on how his theory should be applied to research, and thorough application could be long and complex (Tudge et al, 2009). Despite this, Tudge et al (2009) argue that all elements of process-person-context-time (PPCT) model should be explicit within research studies that draw upon the bioecological systems model to ensure the theory is integral. The PPCT model acknowledges that development occurs due to reciprocal interactions (proximal processes) over time, between the individual's biological characteristics with other persons, objects and symbols in the immediate environment (Tudge et al., 2009).

- Proximal processes refer to the frequent reciprocal interactions with persons, objects and symbols within an individual's immediate environment. In this study, reference would be to the DT's interactions within school, e.g., with CYPiC, carers,

professionals. As shown in previous literature, these processes are key to their role (Fletcher-Campbell et al., 2003).

- The person element of the model describes the individual characteristics and impact this has upon development. These are defined as force characteristics, e.g., motivation and beliefs, resource, e.g., skills and knowledge and demands, e.g., gender and age. Goodall (2014) found that personal commitment and resilience were important characteristics of a DT which could relate to force.

- The model refers to context as the various systems surrounding the individual, which have been described below. I have adapted the bioecological model below with DTs in mind. The wider context is critical in this study in understanding the multiple helping and hindering factors to the role identified across the systems.

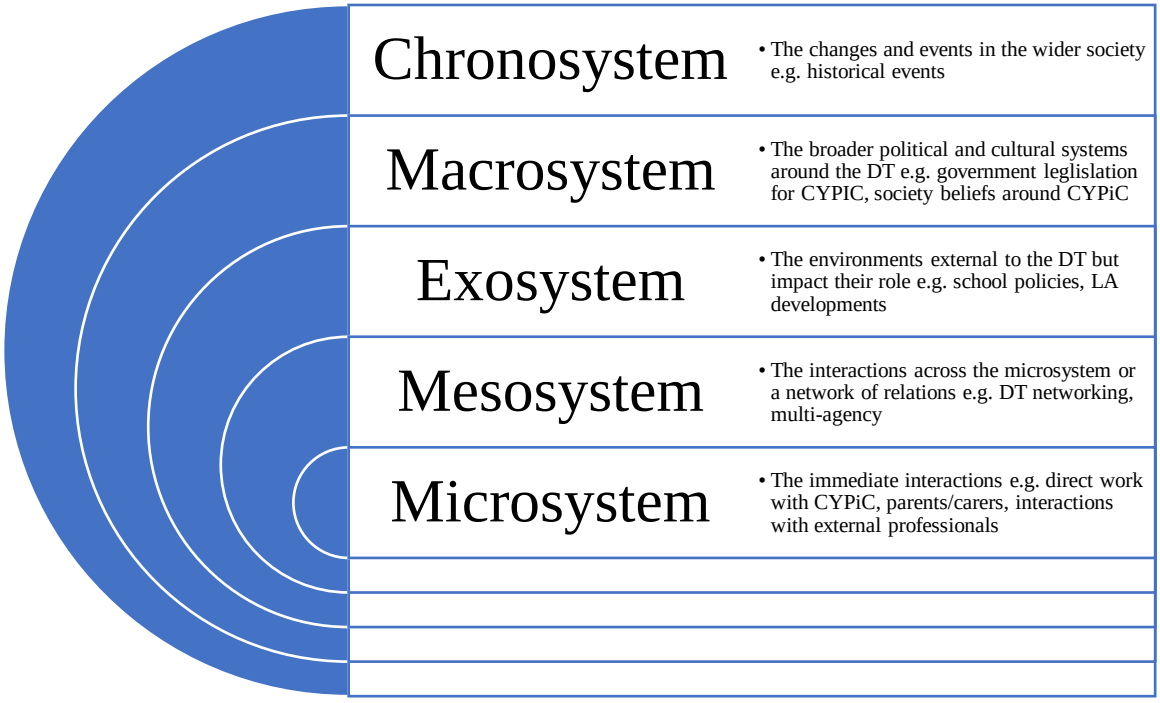


Figure 4: An adapted version of the surrounding systems within the bioecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1995).

- Finally, the time element of the model refers to three levels of time. Bronfenbrenner describes these as '*microtime'*, which is the timing in the frequent proximal processes,

'mesotime', which is the frequency across days or weeks and *'macrotime'*, which mirrors the definition of macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007).

Therefore, the bioecological model and associated PPCT model (Bronfenbrenner, 1995) is argued to be a key theory in understanding the role of the DT. Previous literature has valued the model due to the systematic structure it can provide to support the overall understanding of the findings (Birchall, 2021). Furthermore, it can provide knowledge around how school staff, professionals, and EPs can provide support by considering prioritising intervention from organisational, school, and direct levels (Allen et al, 2018).

2.6 Summary

To summarise, CYPiC continue to be a priority in government policies and legislation. Despite this, research continues to show poorer educational and mental health outcomes which can be due to a range of multi-faceted factors such as pre-care experiences, school support and lack of stability. The DT role is a key statutory role in promoting these outcomes. The SLR shows that educational staff perceive there to be a range of supportive mechanisms for CYPiC, which link to the responsibilities of DTs. Key theories such as the bioecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1995) provide a holistic theoretical framework for understanding these systemic factors. This model is deemed valuable as a framework for this study, to support the understanding of the mechanisms that support the DT role.

2.7 Research Rationale

CYPiC continue to have poorer educational and social, emotional outcomes despite there being a greater awareness of their vulnerability within government legislation, policies and initiatives in schools (DfE, 2020). It is therefore essential that research continues to explore how best to support CYPiC in school. As demonstrated in the systematic review above, school staff have valuable insights into what factors support CYPiC within schools. While the DT role is statutory and deemed an essential role in supporting positive outcomes for CYPiC, the limited research that has been undertaken focuses solely on their perceptions. Goodall (2014) focused upon DTs perceptions but indicated that there still needs to be further knowledge developed around the factors that support their role in LAs to strengthen the support DTs can provide to CYPiC, as a vulnerable group.

One of the key theoretical perspectives in the systematic review was the ecological systems theory which was used to organise the various factors of support for CYPiC during transition. It is argued that the bioecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1995) can provide a

greater understanding of how to support the DT role through a broader lens that encapsulates influencing factors across these systems. This research will aim to capture the important implications for school, professionals, and wider systems around supporting DTs.

2.71 Relevance to Educational Psychologists

EPs appear to be well placed to support CYPiC in school, and previous literature has highlighted this perceived value (Boorn, 2008; Drew & Banerjee, 2019; Sugden, 2013). Boorn (2008) developed a framework that described the levels of support EPs could provide to vulnerable pupils such as CYPiC. Some of this support included consultation and multiagency work (Boorn, 2008). Sugden (2013) further indicated that EPs are well placed to advocate and consider CYPiC within multi-agency meetings and initial planning meetings. Boorn (2008) further suggests the importance of promoting and developing the understanding within school systems. This can be seen with EPs working more frequently within VS to provide collaborative support for CYPiC (Drew & Banerjee, 2019). Other suggestions made by Boorn (2008) included developing supervisory processes for staff working with CYPiC. This continues to be suggested within research but with very little evidence of this in practice (Whitehouse, 2014).

Whitehouse (2014) reported that DTs value EPs' support within their role and perceive them to be well placed in understanding how to achieve positive educational attainment for CYPiC. Despite this suggestion, EPs were not regularly in contact with DTs and there appeared limited understanding of what EPs can provide (Whitehouse, 2014). Furthermore, previous literature has suggested that whilst EPs can provide the described multi-level support to schools for CYPiC, there are still barriers in school systems recognising this contribution (Norwich et al., 2010). This emphasises the need for EPs to expand on the support we are providing to DTs.

This research study will provide knowledge and understanding around the DT role and explore how best EPs can provide support to the DT and their surrounding systems in order to promote the outcomes of CYPiC. The research will seek to highlight good practice for other professionals who work alongside DTs both within school and out of school.

2.72 Research Aim

The research base around DTs is still growing, and it is hoped this research can provide a greater understanding of their role and highlight good practice with CYPiC. It is also hoped that DTs can provide views about how they would like their role to develop, and this can link

to future implications in supporting their position. The present study seeks to address the research questions described below:

- *How do Designated Teachers perceive their role and the systemic factors that help and hinder them in supporting Children and Young People in Care?*

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Overview of the Chapter

This chapter provides an overview and rationale for the chosen methodology. The epistemology and ontological stance will be discussed in relation to the research. A qualitative approach was used to conduct semi-structured interviews. Kidder and Fine (1987) define two meanings of qualitative research, which include 'Big Q' and 'Small Q'. 'Big Q' is open-ended inductive research to explore meaning, whereas 'Small Q' incorporates non-numerical data in more deductive research designs (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Kidder & Fine, 1987). In this study, elements of both were incorporated, with an initially inductive 'Big Q' analysis when coding the data, which was then integrated within the deductive 'Small Q' framework. A detailed description will be provided around the design, procedure and analysis, with discussion around the integration of the ecological systems framework. Ethical issues are considered, and the overall quality of the study's methodology is discussed and critiqued.

3.2 Case Study Methodology

A case study methodology provides an empirical investigation which can provide greater understanding into phenomena within individual, systemic, social and political contexts (Robson & McCartan, 2016; Yin, 2011). In this study an exploratory single case study design was used, and the case study was the small city local authority (LA) within the Midlands, where I was employed as a trainee educational psychologist (TEP).

This study explored the experiences of designated teachers (DTs) within one LA setting and aimed to contribute to knowledge at varying levels through the integration of the bioecological framework. A benefit of case study methodologies can be the rich exploration into the contexts surrounding individuals (Yin, 2013). Data was gathered in this case study design through semi-structured interviews and descriptions are provided around this process in this chapter (Section 3.61). As part of this design, the LA context details were also provided to give a greater understanding into the case study (Section 3.51).

Case study methodologies can be critiqued for the lack of rigour and offering a limited basis for generalisation. Yin (2013) argues that studies that case study methodologies should not aim to be applied to similar populations or phenomena but should instead link to previous literature and theoretical frameworks. The critique of each of the studies within the review will be addressed within this chapter (Section 3.8).

3.3 Qualitative Research

A qualitative methodology can be exploratory in nature and frequently uses methods of data collection to understand individual experiences of phenomena with consideration made to the context of this (Braun & Clarke, 2013). In order to analyse the phenomena in question, frequently textual data is explored to look at the interpretation of meaning (Thompson & Harper, 2012). In contrast to this, quantitative research emphasises the testing of hypotheses frequently through numerical data so that this can be generalised across populations (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Despite ongoing debate, qualitative methodologies continue to be recognised highly as a valid method of enquiry which is frequently used within educational research (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). In the current research study, a qualitative methodology was deemed appropriate in exploring DTs' individual experiences of supporting children and young people in care (CYPiC), focusing on their surrounding factors. As research is still limited around the role of DTs, focus needed to be placed upon hearing their perspectives and gathering rich data on the role.

3.4 Epistemology and Ontology

Qualitative methodologies are underpinned by their ontology and epistemology. Ontology refers to the nature of reality, which can vary along a continuum (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Braun and Clarke (2013) suggest that the continuum ranges from the view that reality is constructed independent from human knowledge (realism) to the perspective that reality is purely dependent upon human interpretations (relativism). Critical realism is suggested to sit between the ends of the ontology continuum, as it accepts authentic realities are existing independent of human interpretations, but interpretations can emerge from this and are a part of reality (Pilgrim, 2019).

Epistemology aims to explain how knowledge is created and is about what is possible to know (Braun & Clarke, 2019). The epistemological position can vary again on a continuum of the possibility of there being 'one truth' when establishing knowledge (realism) in contrast to an absolute truth not being possible (relativism). Critical realism considers that knowledge is formed from the world we live in but is discussed and construed through subjectivity (Pilgrim, 2019). Furthermore, epistemology positions distinguish themselves between whether knowledge is discovered within the research methods (post-positivism) or whether knowledge is created as a result of these (constructionism) (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

Within social research, several paradigms can be considered across the continuum, including post-positivism, social constructionism and critical realism (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Within this research study, each of these were considered to ensure they fitted with the research questions, chosen methodology and my own beliefs. These are briefly described below to support decision making.

3.41 Post-positivism

Post-positivism acknowledges the existence of one reality and objectivity but considers the impact of the social and political factors on how knowledge might be shaped (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Interpretations are made directly from the data observed and data collection methods should be systematic and transparent (Guest, Namey, & Mitchell, 2013). Therefore, the characteristics of this paradigm fit mainly within fixed quantitative research designs.

3.42 Social Constructionism

Social constructionism suggests the social world is interpreted and constructed through language and social processes (Robson & McCartan, 2016). In this approach, the research aims to understand participants' individual experiences and feelings, and this is achieved generally through a qualitative methodology. The phenomena the researcher is interested in can often be fluid constructions and avoid focus on more 'factual information'.

3.43 Critical Realism

Critical realism provides a scientific approach and considers the limitations of constructivist and post-positivist paradigms (Robson & McCartan, 2016). It is argued that human behaviour can be influenced by both human individuality and structural factors. Critical realism was chosen as the position for this study. It was deemed that it aligned with the researcher's epistemological position and was congruent with the research aims and questions. It could also be deemed as valuable in producing transformative knowledge to empower CYPiC within this LA. Critical realist perspectives are valuable in real-world research, and it was felt best placed in understanding the views of DTs through the emergence of knowledge from social contexts (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Critical realism originates from the work of Bhaskar in 1975 and can be applied as a methodological framework that is associated with a range of data collection methods (Fletcher, 2017). Bhaskar (2008) argues positivism only provides a reductionist view of what is empirically known in reality. Additionally, constructivism is critiqued for further seeing

reality only through human perspective or discourse. In contrast, critical realism argues that a state of reality exists *"regardless of how we do view it, choose to view it or are somehow manipulated into viewing it"* (Archer, 2007, p. 195). However, this reality is influenced by various perspectives and constructs within a cultural, political and societal context (Browne, 2015). It attempts to bridge differences between positivists and social constructivist views by suggesting that people can construct multiple, complex realities (Robson & McCartan, 2016).

Critical realism indicates that reality can be separated into three different levels (Fletcher, 2017). Fletcher (2017) suggests the 'iceberg' metaphor to illustrate critical realism ontology and epistemology.

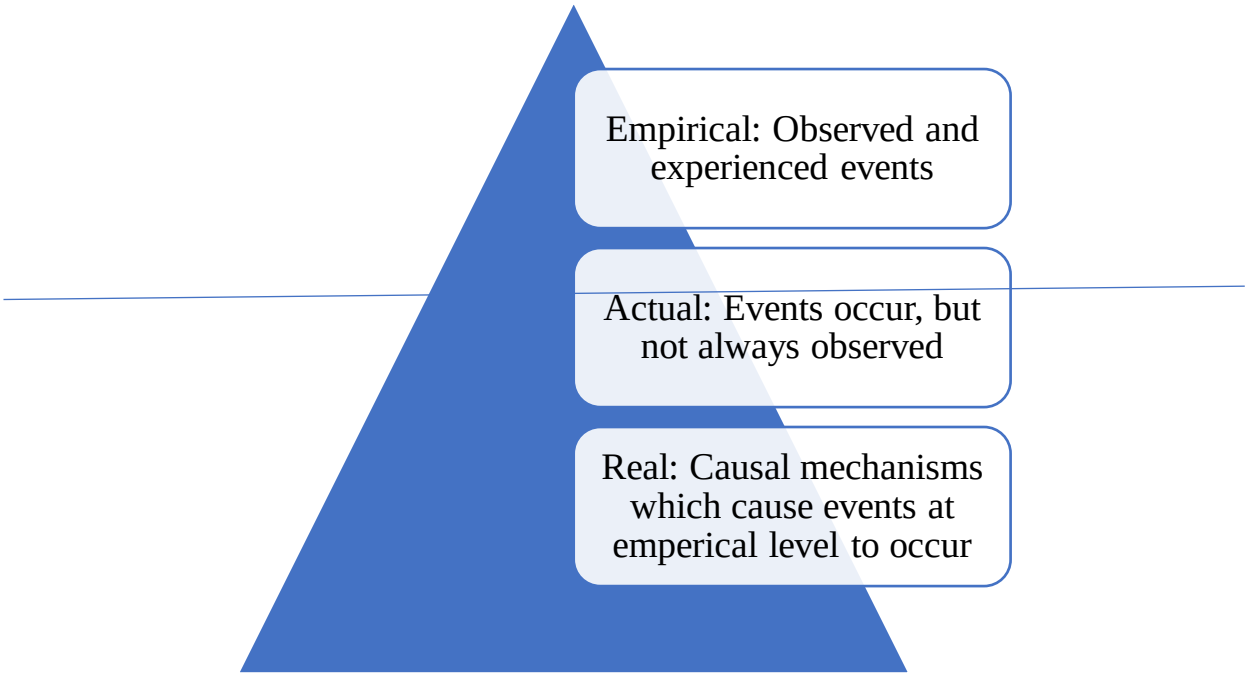


Figure 5: Iceberg metaphor for critical realism

The first level of empiricism reflects the observed part of the iceberg above the water. Empiricism refers to the 'observable world' which constitutes our constructs of events as we experience and observe them. This is the level at which ideas and actions take place in the transient level of reality. The second level of actualism refers to events occurring which may not have been observed. At the bottom of the iceberg, the third level refers to the 'real world' where causal structures may produce events and impact our view of reality (Browne, 2015). Thus, according to the critical realism perspective, these unobservable structures lead to observed events; therefore, to understand how the social world is perceived, we must consider the structures that generate the events. This research study proposes that for the DTs

taking part, a reality will exist, but their knowledge of this will depend upon the understanding of the world and the influence of structures at that time (Ekers, 2020).

3.44 Critical Realism in this Study

It is argued that the validity of knowledge is only achieved within a specific context, culture, individual or society (Bhaskar, 2008). In order to understand the individual experiences of participants, the focus should be upon the social context surrounding them (Fox, Martin, & Green, 2011). Thus, all DTs within this study were within the LA setting. In addition to this, information was gathered around individual contexts of DTs, and the study aimed to understand the multi-layered factors within varying systems that could impact their support with CYPiC. Bronfenbrenner's bioecological framework (1995) can therefore align itself with the critical realism paradigm. This model highlights the importance of the individual, their reciprocal interactions and the surrounding contexts, which fits with the importance of acknowledging the wider contexts around individuals' experiences (Fox, Martin, & Green, 2011). Furthermore, critical realism fits well with research studies conducted on behalf of an LA (Thackeray, 2014). Through recognising external realities for DTs and CYPiC, the LA has greater understanding and influence on the contextual information that can help to improve the processes and support for CYPiC.

A rich understanding was needed around DTs, and critical realism as a paradigm allowed for this. Within this research study, the view of reality recognises DTs' subjective experiences and accounts for the understanding of the interactions between their experiences and the contextual mechanisms. This was achieved through semi-structured interviews that hoped to highlight DT experiences and the contexts that may facilitate and hinder their role.

Individuals' social experiences result from their relationship between knowledge and reality (Ekers, 2020). Within this study, considerations have been made to the social constructions of knowledge both within their own interactions during the research process and through the interactions with participants. The considerations around this can be seen within the discussion.

Furthermore, the critical realist perspective fits with TA as an approach. TA allows for thorough engagement with the verbatim accounts of DTs and can support the reflection of individuals 'reality' or the surface of this (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Whilst a partly deductive approach was used to link to the bioecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1995), the importance

of clearly representing participant's views of reality was ensured through the inductive process to fit with the critical realism ontological approach (Roberts, Dowell, & Nie, 2019).

3.5 Sampling

Sampling refers to the procedures taken to select and engage possible participants within the research study. Purposive sampling allowed for DTs to be selected from a range of mainstream primary and secondary schools in one LA. These participants were initially gained through VS purposively sampling DTs that met the criteria in Table 4.

Initially, the researcher aimed for 10 participants, with five from primary and five from secondary schools in order to have the potential to make some comparisons across settings. The differences in the roles across primary and secondary settings were highlighted in an initial scoping discussion with the LA VS, with suggestions made towards the varying structures and systems. In addition to this, it was described as a possible future area of research within previous a thesis, as the comparisons could be informative for future directions (Goodall, 2014). As described below, only five primary and three secondary schools were sampled by March 2020. Thus, these comparisons could not be made. A timeline of the sampling and methodology procedure can be found in Appendix 6.

The inclusion and exclusion criteria for these participants are listed below.

Table 4: Inclusion and exclusion criteria for sampled participants

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria	**Reason**
The DT should have been within this role for at least one year	To have a good understanding of the role
The school will have a minimum of one CYPiC on roll for at least one year	To ensure the DT has recent experience of supporting CYPiC
The DT would be within a mainstream school	To increase the homogeneity in comparisons made between primary and secondary schools
The DT would be within the placement LA	To provide additional understanding towards the social context of LA
The DT would not be within one of my TEP linked schools	To reduce ethical concerns and social bias

In the first instance, meetings were held with VS staff to purposefully sample which DTs met these criteria. Purposeful sampling techniques ensures the researcher selects participants based on interest and the specific needs of the study (Robson & McCartan, 2016). DTs who met the inclusion and exclusion criteria were contacted firstly by the Education Support Officers (ESOs) who work within the VS team, and they shared the research opportunity. This was deemed the best approach to sample participants as ESOs have regular contact with various DTs in their role.

The second form of sampling was advertising the research at a VS DT forum in November 2020, where purposive criteria were shared. I had the opportunity to share this research virtually on Microsoft Teams to around 35 DTs in attendance and described the inclusion and exclusion criteria with supporting slides. Contact details were provided within this presentation for interested DTs to seek contact.

DTs that expressed an interest in the study were asked to make contact. At this stage, an information sheet (Appendix 7) was provided to participants, and they were given the opportunity to ask questions. Participants that were still interested in the study were asked to complete the consent forms with an electronic signature or scanned page (Appendix 8). It was requested that these were returned on the day prior to the interview date. Interviews were organised at a time that was suitable for the participant, and Microsoft Teams invites were sent.

Table 5: Description of the participants that took part in the study

Participant number	**Gender**	**School setting**	**Time in DT Role**	**Other Main Roles**	**CYPiC on role currently**
1	Female	Primary	18 months	Designated Safeguarding Lead, Inclusion Lead, Parent Liaison	1
2	Female	Primary	13 years	Head Teacher,	2

				Designated Safeguarding Lead	
3	Female	Primary	7 years	Designated Safeguarding Lead, Parent Liaison	4
4	Female	Primary	5 years	Deputy Head, Class Teacher, Attendance Officer	6
5	Female	Secondary	3 years	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, Class Teacher	10
6	Male	Secondary	2 years	Vice Principal, Designated Safeguarding Lead, Pastoral lead	2
7	Female	Primary	10 years	Assistant Head, SENCO, Safeguarding Lead	6
8	Female	Secondary	3 years	Manager emotional health and wellbeing.	21

				Shared DT role with two others.	

3.51 Local Context

It is important to provide information to describe the LA in which the DTs' schools were situated. This provides additional contextual information around how participants' knowledge could have been constructed and support the transferability of findings.

The research was conducted within a city LA within the Midlands. Parts of the city have a high amount of deprivation in contrast to more affluent areas. The LA is ranked within the top twenty for deprived LAs in England. The LA comprises of a diverse population with over two-thirds of the population from Black and Minority Ethnic communities and over 200 languages spoken within the schools.

As of September 2019, there was a total of over 400 CYPiC between the years of reception to year 11 under the LA VS (Corporate Parenting Board, 2020), with approximately 200 placed in the City. Over 80% of CYPiC were attending schools rated by Ofsted as good or better, which is a recommendation of statutory guidance (DfE, 2018). CYPiC between years one to 11 within the LA schools had an average attendance of approximately 95% by September 2019.

Despite CYPiC having a high level of attendance and accessing schooling, CYPiC continued to have poorer educational outcomes when compared to the general populations with a greater attainment gap at the key stage four level. Within key stage four, around 20% of CYPiC in the LA VS received a grade four or above in both maths and English in 2019. This is slightly above the national average of CYPiC in the UK, achieving those grades in that time period. An analysis was completed on pupils who did not achieve GCSEs above three in year 11, and it revealed a cohort with complex needs. These needs included:

- Between 50-60% of CYPiC had SEND and/or an EHCP.
- Around 60% of CYPiC had received therapeutic support.
- Between 40-50% of CYPiC had previously lived or were living in residential support.
- The average number of previous changes in care placement was around five.
- The average number of previous changes of social worker during CYPiC lifetime was nearly six.

- The average number of previous changes of school for the CYPiC was approximately two.

Chapter 2 described some of these complex factors that can impact educational and mental health outcomes. Other factors that could influence the educational attainment of CYPiC within the LA is the number of fixed-term exclusions given. Between September 2018- July 2019, there were somewhere between 60-70 fixed-term exclusions given to CYPiC. Most of these resulted from physical assaults on an adult and followed by physical assaults on another pupil and persistent disruptive behaviour. Despite these statistics, it is important to consider the CYPiC who do make progress despite these circumstances. For example, in 2019, around 20-30 CYPiC in year 13 were studying for further education qualifications.

It should be noted that the DTs sampled within this research study worked in the LA's schools, but some of their CYPiC could have been from a range of other LAs. This information seeks to provide some contextual information to highlight some of the responsibilities DTs may have within the LA in supporting CYPiC. More detailed contextual information linked to each school sample is described within a table in Appendix 9.

Furthermore, it should be considered that schools work closely with the virtual school team within the LA. In 2017 Ofsted rated the Children Services as 'Good' which included VS team (Ofsted, 2017). It was stated that CYPiC were benefiting from "a strong and effective virtual school" to support the delivery of positive outcomes (Ofsted, 2017, p. 2).

3.6 Data Collection

3.61 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were considered a suitable method of data collection that aligned itself with the ontological and epistemological orientation of the current study. The semi-structured interviews allowed for rich exploration into participants' experiences and provided an understanding of the supporting factors and social contexts.

Semi-structured interviews are a dominant form of qualitative methods and allow the researcher to ask a selection of prepared questions (Braun & Clarke, 2013). These often act as a guide to the interview, but there is scope for flexibility in the wording and order of questions to support the conversation flow (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Additional prompts and follow up questions can be included to explore further what the participant shares. This provides an opportunity to clarify with the interviewee their interpretations (Whitehouse,

2014) and allows for rich and detailed explanations. Whilst this provides an informal nature to the interview, it could be argued that there are difficulties in comparing interviews as a result of this flexibility.

Within this research, open-ended questions and prompts were deemed valuable in allowing rich exploration into the views of DTs. An interview schedule was developed which was based upon knowledge from previous research and developed further from the information given around CYPiC within the LA. Advice was sought in supervision on ensuring that these questions met the research aims but continued to be open-ended (Appendix 10). Piloting of this took place, and questions were reviewed. As no changes were made to the original schedule, the data was included. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) suggest that careful consideration in the structure and wording of questions can reduce levels of bias, interview effects and increase the ability to compare across interviews. The guide consisted of key headings with main questions beneath with prompts to meet the research aims and provide an understanding of the systemic factors impacting the DT role, as shown in the table below.

Table 6: A table to show examples of pre-prepared questions used within the semi-structured interviews and the link to research aim.

Example of Question from Interview Schedule	**Link to Bioecological Framework (Bronfenbrenner, 1995) and research aim**
Can you tell me about how you work with teaching staff in school as a DT? - **What support is perceived as being effective?** - **What barriers are there in this communication about the needs of CYPiC?**	Microsystem: - Relationships with teaching staff Mesosystem: - Joint work with other key adults around CYPiC
Can you tell me about what your role might be in ensuring school policies are effective for CYPiC? - **How is this effective?**	Exosystem: - School behaviour policies and procedures for CYPiC - Links to school ethos

- **What challenges are there in doing this?**	
Can you tell me if there are any key policies and legislations that are currently impacting on your role in supporting CYPiC? - **Are these national or local policies?** - **How do these policies help and hinder your role**	Exosystem - LA policies and impact on LA services Macrosystem - National policies around DT and CYPiC
How would you like to ideally see your role as a DT in the future? - **Is there anything that could support you even further?**	Varying levels - Dependent upon how they perceive their role

3.62 Pilot Interview

A pilot interview was conducted with one DT to allow the questions and interview techniques to be reviewed. Prior to the interview, the DT was made aware that their interview may not be included within the analysis. Following this interview, the audio recording was listened to, and the questions were reviewed, and it was deemed that they appeared fit for purpose. The pilot interview data was therefore included within the study.

3.63 Remote Semi-Structured Interviews

Given the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, video calls over Microsoft Teams were the chosen method of interviewing because of the restrictions in school visits. This was included as a contingency plan for ethical approval. Research has indicated that using a video call platform for interviews can be a valuable qualitative data collection method. Whilst Braun and Clark (2013) perceive it cannot be used as a substitute for face-to-face methods; this method is being increasingly used. Virtual methods of interviews can appear more attractive for participants than face-to-face interviews due to convenience and flexibility (Horrell, Stephens, & Breheny, 2015). Archibald et al (2019) found that rapport could be easily made over video platform despite some technical issues with participants. DTs were likely to have experience using Microsoft Teams calls regularly in schools across

the pandemic, which could be considered a beneficial factor in the satisfaction of the interview process (Archibald et al., 2019).

Interviews with participants were organised with at least three hours between them. This provided additional time to reflect on the interview style and to immerse further into what was heard (Braun & Clarke, 2013) before the next interview.

At the start of the interview, time was taken to ensure there were opportunities for rapport building to help participants feel relaxed and at ease in the process. This included general introductions, giving space for questions, thanking the participant and using active listening skills. This is suggested to also reduce the risk of social desirability by supporting participants to talk openly and honestly (Cohen et al., 2011). Alongside this, time was taken to explore their time in role, number of CYPiC on role and their school context in which the DT was positioned.

It was important that I could respond to non-verbal cues such as facial expressions and gestures to support the full engagement of the participant. This could be facilitated through video technology (Archibald et al., 2019). The British Psychological Society (BPS) (2017) suggest that even with video technology, extra considerations should be made around the differences in dynamics compared to face-to-face interviews. As I could not control participants' settings, it was difficult to know if pauses were linked to technical issues, distractions, or reflections (Madge & O'Connor, 2002). Time was taken to check in on participants on these occasions and offer a time to pause if needed.

In line with The BPS (2017) internet-mediated guidelines, additional verbal consent was gained for audio recording at the start of interviews. No video recordings were made of participants, and this was made clear to them before the interview. The interview was recorded using an encrypted audio recording device called 'Audacity'. The audio recordings were exported immediately after interviews, and these were stored securely onto a password protected device. The interviews lasted between 30-50 minutes per interview, depending upon the responses given.

At the end of the interview, the recordings were stopped, and participants were verbally debriefed. The research aims were reviewed, and participants were thanked for their participation. Participants had the opportunity to ask any further questions and share any views. Participants were asked if they would like to receive an executive summary at the end of the research. A debrief letter (Appendix 11) was emailed to participants immediately after

the interview, and they were encouraged to make contact if there were further questions or if they wished for signposting as a result of any uncomfortable emotions from the interview.

3.7 Data Analysis

3.71 Overview

TA was chosen as the more valuable method of analysis for this research study. Other qualitative methods were considered at the time to ensure that this was appropriate for my research question. Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) is an analytical approach that can be used alongside semi-structured interviews to describe 'lived experience' of participants (Braun & Clarke, 2013). This methodology uses an inductive nature to allow for an in-depth idiographic representation from individuals personal accounts (Larkin & Thompson, 2012). As I aimed to explore the role of the DT and supporting factors through the ecosystemic perspective, my analysis process was driven partly by existing literature. Therefore, it was deemed that TA would be a more valuable analysis to identify repeated patterns across a rich data set and could provide a greater understanding of contextual factors.

Furthermore, considerations should be made to the epistemological and ontological position when choosing an analysis method due to the underpinnings of this. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that critical realism can fit well with TA as a method of analysis. Through a critical realist position, TA can establish participants different perspectives on reality or the surface of 'reality' and their experiences across broad social contexts (Willig, 2001). This critical realist viewpoint acknowledges that generalised claims can be made to provide greater understanding into the complex social world (Haigh, Kemp, Bazeley, & Haigh, 2019).

3.72 Integration of Bioecological Framework

The research deemed the bioecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1995) a valuable theoretical and conceptual framework in understanding the DT role in supporting CYPiC and how factors within the surrounding systems impact this. For the current study, the bioecological model and the process-person-context time (PPCT) model aim to provide a valuable understanding of the DT role across systems and explore the various systemic factors that help and hinder their role. The research aims to achieve this by integrating the bioecological model within the analysis process. Explicit links will be made between the study findings and the PPCT model within Chapter 4 to highlight how the DT role is influenced by individual characteristics, reciprocal interactions, the wider context and time.

3.73 Thematic Analysis

The framework of TA (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was chosen to provide the detailed interpretation of data into key themes and patterns to provide answers to the research study question. TA is a flexible approach to analysis as it can be applied to a range of paradigms across qualitative research. Furthermore, this framework provides findings that are accessible through language and ensure replicability through the explicit, systematic method of analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Braun and Clarke (2013) suggest that TA is part of the method, and therefore considerations should be made to crucial reflexive questions during the analysis.

TA can be used inductively (bottom-up) or deductively (top-down) to identify themes and patterns across the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Inductive approaches are exploratory and link strongly to the data, thus can lack some coherence to the research question (Holloway & Todres, 2003). On the other hand, deductive approaches are driven by theoretical interest. As this study sought to explore rich views within a theoretical framework, the decision was made to complete a bottom-up approach followed by a top-down.

This inductive approach ensured that the research was exploratory in nature and provided an opportunity for a range of context-specific experiences to be explored. Whilst an inductive analysis was used in the initial stages of analysis, it should be considered that the bioecological theory has guided decision making throughout the research. For example, the knowledge of the model has been part of the research planning and the development of data collection tools in the semi-structured interview. The bioecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1995) was incorporated consciously into the final stages of the analysis to contextualise the findings from the data; however, it should be considered that this model was kept in mind. Table 7 shows the possible acknowledgements made to model throughout this process.

TA can be completed at a semantic or latent level. Semantic analysis explores the surface level meaning of the data set, whereas latent analysis attempts to understand the conceptualisations and assumptions within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this study, semantic level analysis was more appropriate to support the process of interpretation within the theoretical model.

A six-stage approach is advocated within TA, and this was used within this research. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest a 15-point checklist to assess for the quality of TA (Appendix 12). This checklist was applied to the process to increase rigour. A description is

given below around the steps taken in analysis with acknowledgement given to theoretical underpinnings to ensure transparency with this procedure.

Table 7: Description of the stages in thematic analysis in this study.

Stage of Thematic Analysis	Purpose	Description of Process
Transcription and Familiarisation of Data	To become acquainted with the data and produce some initial meaning	- Transcriptions were completed on all interviews through listening to audio recordings and typing these carefully. - Written verbatim accounts was re-read whilst listening to audio recording again to ensure accuracy in transcription. - Summary sheets were used to note down any emergent points or issues arising from each interview. - The bioecological model was not explicitly part of this process but some of the salient points recorded linked to eco-systemic factors.
Generating Initial Codes	To condense the data.	- All the transcriptions were read through and systemically analysed. Interesting and meaningful elements of each interview were highlighted and put into codes. - The transcripts were put into a table in Microsoft Word and

		codes were written in a column next to the section of transcript. Each section was numbered (Appendix 13) - The codes were reviewed to ensure that they fitted to the data set. - The codes were put into a table on Microsoft Word and codes that had similar meanings to describe similar pieces of text were collapsed to have the same name.
Searching for Themes	To put codes into potential themes to assess relevance.	- Codes were analysed to consider their relationships with other codes. All codes from each interview were written down and compared with other interviews using sticky notes (Appendix 14) - These codes were then placed into possible themes and subthemes. This process requires in-depth thought with the material to ensure the codes fitted best to themes. - The bioecological model was kept in mind when considering possible themes as to where these would sit within this model.

Reviewing Themes	To check themes created fit with the codes within data set and to form a thematic network.	- Data extracts were checked across the constructed themes (Appendix 15). The themes that did not reveal a coherent pattern with the data set were reviewed and the appropriateness of this within another theme was considered. - A thematic map was created which showed the relationships between the themes. - The thematic networks were checked to ensure they fitted within the bioecological model.
Defining and Naming Themes	To draw conclusions about analysis and define the names of themes.	- Themes within the thematic network were refined so they reflected the story/narrative of each theme. - The bioecological model was integrated with key themes so that the story/narrative was clear (Appendix 16)
Writing the Report	To provide a clear written account of data	- Vivid and informative exerts were chosen which represented codes/themes. The eco-systemic model guided the selection of exerts to support the integrated discussion of findings.

		- Thematic maps were created to show clearly themes and subthemes - Reporting of the final themes and narrative of analysis with reference to the research questions and guiding eco-systemic model.

3.8 Evaluation of Quality of Research Study

The following steps were taken to consider the quality of the present research study.

3.81 Reflexibility

The epistemological stance and methodology used within the research instruct a reflexive approach is used throughout (Archer, 2007). As noted above, a journal recorded reflections at various stages of decision making in the research study. A research diary can be an important way of gathering researcher's reflection throughout their study and to highlight the research journey and limitations (Robson, 2002). A research diary was completed throughout the study to ensure that stages were followed correctly and to aid reflections at each stage. The diary covered the following:

- Pertinent details and thoughts around research studies that had been read
- Information gathered from discussion with professionals in the LA and any initial thoughts from this related to the research
- Key information around practicalities of methodology e.g., dates of interviews and timings, emails
- Reflections throughout each stage of the research process
- Reflections following supervisions and any next steps to support research development

Greater awareness was also shown around my active role within the different stages of the research, and to acknowledge any explicit influence of previous knowledge on the interpretation of the data. This reflexivity supports can support the overall transparency of the processes used in the research study (Palaganas, Sanchez, Molintas, & Caricativo, 2017). It

is, however, recognised that my personal experiences and beliefs may have influenced the subjectivity of the data and analysis procedure.

3.82 Reliability and Validity

As a qualitative method, it may not be deemed appropriate to consider validity and reliability in methods as these fits within a post-positivist paradigm and data sources will be socially and culturally embedded (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Instead, the trustworthiness of this study will be evaluated in terms such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Steps can be taken to reduce the threats to the validity of this type of research. Shenton (2004) and Mertens (2014) developed frameworks to ensure trustworthiness in data, and these were drawn on to ensure criteria are met in this study. The trustworthiness of the study will be discussed in more detail within Chapter 5.

Table 8: Description of the steps taken to support trustworthiness in the study.

Criteria	Description	Process Taken in Study
Credibility	The data collection tools and measures used are adequate for the concepts explored.	Using well-established forms of data analysis. TA followed the 6 steps outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) and a quality check was completed (Appendix 12). Peer supervision and data checks at varying stages of analysis. Anonymised data was shared virtually and discussed. Regular discussion of research with supervisor.

		Semi-structured interview guide informed by previous literature. A pilot interview was completed to examine whether the interview was fit for purpose.
Transferability	How much findings from one study be applied to another	Detailed information provided on LA context, school context and details around each participant (See Chapter 3 and Appendix 9)
Dependability	Degree to which the procedure described provides enough detail for this to be replicated	Details provided regarding stakeholder engagement, sampling and data collection methods and implementation. Limitations discussed within thesis so future researchers could consider these challenges.
Confirmability	Degree of certainty that the findings demonstrative of the data rather than the researcher's own predispositions and biases	The justifications for decisions made in the research are clear. Regular supervisions to reflect upon decisions. A research diary used to establish evidence of decisions and capture any possible biases.

		The research study analysis and findings will be reviewed by research supervisor to determine the degree this represents the data.

3.83 Peer Supervision Research Group

To support the reliability and credibility of the analysis, a small group of four fellow third-year TEPs who were completing qualitative research met together. The analysis process was reviewed at the coding stage and the thematic mapping stage with reciprocal benefit for all. A section of the coded data set was anonymised and shared virtually across a Microsoft Teams platform. The interpretations were compared with other third-year trainee responses in the group discussions. Whilst I had my own interpretations of the codes, the peer checks raised questions around the wording of codes/themes and whether similar codes could be collapsed across the data. Limitations should be considered around the social desirability of peers when interpreting the stage of analysis. The TEPs were encouraged to be as open and honest as to support this process.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Key ethical considerations were required within this research study. Ethical approval was sought from the University of Nottingham, and approval was gained on 25th August 2020. The letter of ethical approval can be found in Appendix 17. In addition to this, supervision was regularly accessed to address any further ethical concerns. Regard was given to the Code of Human Research Ethics (BPS, 2014) and Code of Research Conduct and Research Ethics (The University of Nottingham, 2020) throughout the research process. The key considerations are described below.

3.91 Informed Consent

Informed consent refers to an individual's right to freedom and protects the right of self-determination (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). By respecting the participant's self-determination, some responsibility can be placed upon them to understand the risks and refuse to take part at any stage of the research (Cohen et al., 2011). Informed and written consent were gained from all school DTs prior to their participation in semi-structured

interviews. The information sheets (Appendix 7) with written consent forms (Appendix 8) were emailed to DTs, and these were returned either as scanned documents or with electronic signatures. When emails were sent with consent forms, participants were reminded they could ask any questions through email or phone.

The inclusion criteria for participation in the study were clearly communicated through email and the information sheet to ensure that all DTs met this and were able to consent fully.

At the start of interviews participants were briefed around the purpose of the interview, the process and reminded of the information sheet. Participants were given another opportunity for questions before providing their verbal consent to continue with the interview.

3.92 Ensuring Participant Anonymity and Confidentiality

Anonymity ensures that participants cannot be identified through the information provided in the study (Cohen et al., 2011). As the research asks for context around each DT regarding local demographics, time in role and other roles, some personal data is gathered. The participants were reassured that all data would be confidential. All personal identifiers such as name and school name were replaced with numbers. Considerations were made as to whether any exerts of raw data would need to be removed to ensure participant anonymity. With some raw data, numbers were rounded up or down, e.g., 'Around 300', to ensure this did not provide personal identifiers.

3.93 Right to Withdraw

Within research studies, participants must be given the right to withdraw without any penalty (BPS, 2014). All participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage within information sheets and consent forms. This was repeated to participants at the start of the interview and reminded of this during debriefing and on a debrief letter (Appendix 11). On all written communication to participants, my contact details were provided.

3.94 Data Storage

All interviews were recorded and stored on a password-protected computer. All files were uploaded into password-protected folders so that transcription could be completed. All recordings will be destroyed following the completion of the research project at Viva.

3.95 Debriefing

Cohen et al (2011) suggest debriefing is a two-way process where any misunderstandings can be explained through an interaction with the participant. In this study, the participants were verbally debriefed following the interview. The research aims were reviewed, participants were thanked for their participation and indication were made to the next steps would be. Participants had the opportunity to ask any further questions and highlight any concerns around analysis and publication. Participants were informed that debrief letters (Appendix 11) would be emailed to them after the video call had ended. Within this enhanced debrief, participants were provided with contact details so they could ask any further questions over email about the research or be signposted to further support if necessary.

3.10 Summary of Methodology

This chapter has provided information around the rationale for the current methodology. The critical realist position is justified this with links made to and the procedure and analysis. Further information has been provided around the integration of the bioecological framework and the implications for this in the methodology to support a greater understanding of the DT role. Limitations of approaches have been considered and will be discussed further within Chapter 5.

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the findings from the data gathered in the eight semi-structured interviews. The written presentation of the findings is coherent with the final stage of analysis within Braun and Clarke (2006) six-stage model. The most salient themes across the data set are described through the rigorous analysis process, which are pertinent to the research question. In this study, a theme was described as salient when it was shared across at least five of the eight interviews. Vivid exerts from the semi-structured interviews are included to support the credibility of the constructed themes and support the coherence of the narrative. The PPCT model is drawn upon at the end of the chapter to synthesise the main findings.

The broad research question that was aimed to be addressed within this study is as followed:

- *How do Designated Teachers perceive their role and the systemic factors that help and hinder them in supporting Children and Young People in Care?*

4.2 Integration of Bioecological Model

The described themes are conceptualised through an initially inductive approach to analysis but with the integration of the Bioecological Model (Bronfenbrenner, 1995) within the final stages. Therefore, the overarching themes and subthemes that address the research question are presented within the five broad ecosystemic levels in turn (Table 9). The individual level is included to represent the 'person' qualities within the process-person-context-time (PPCT) model, which is presented in more detail in the discussion (Figure 12). It should be noted that due to the richness of the data, some of the themes and subthemes may overlap across the systemic systems. Where this is the case, it has been made explicit and will be drawn upon in the discussion.

Table 9: The key themes and subthemes identified across the data set.

System	Themes	Subthemes
Individual (Person)	1. Commitment to the role	1.1 Passion for improving lives of CYPiC
		1.2 Empathy for the journey of CYPiC
		2.1 Other roles in school

	2. Knowledge and experience	2.2 Time in role
Microsystem	3. Keeping CYPiC at heart	3.1 Building trust
		3.2 Pupil voice
		3.3 Advocating
		3.4 Celebrating strengths
	4. Link to Parents/Carers	4.1 Open communication
		4.2 Empathy and understanding
	5. Communication with teachers	5.1 Increasing teacher understanding of CYPiC
		5.2 Point of support
	6. Virtual School support	6.1 Available support
		6.2 Supervisory role
	7. Educational Psychology support	7.1 Available support
		7.2 Barriers to support
Mesosystem	8. Joint working	8.1 Value of collaboration
		8.2 External professional support
	9. Governing bodies	9.1 Providing information
		9.2 Governing bodies' understanding
	10. Support Network	10.1 Internal school support
		10.2 DT support
Exosystem	11. Whole school ethos	11.1 Supporting school community
		11.2 High aspirations
		11.3 Adaptable curriculum
		11.4 Senior leadership support
		12.1 Training

	12. Increasing understanding in school community	12.2 Embedding knowledge across school
	13. LA Social Services	13.1 Positive communication
		13.2 Barriers to support
	14. Recognition of the DT role across LA	14.1 Limited understanding of the role
		14.2 Need for positive acknowledgement
		14.3 Demands of the role
Macrosystem	15. Statutory PEP	15.1 Unstandardised across Las
		15.2 Pupil Voice Questions
	16. National safeguarding policies	
	17. Society beliefs	17.1 Inclusion of CYPiC
		17.2 Minimising differences for CYPiC
Chronosystem	18. Covid-19 pandemic	
	19. Ongoing changes in CYPiC life	

4.3 The Individual Level

The individual level describes the individual characteristics of designated teachers (DTs) within their roles and their shared circumstances. The key themes across participants related to this level will be described.

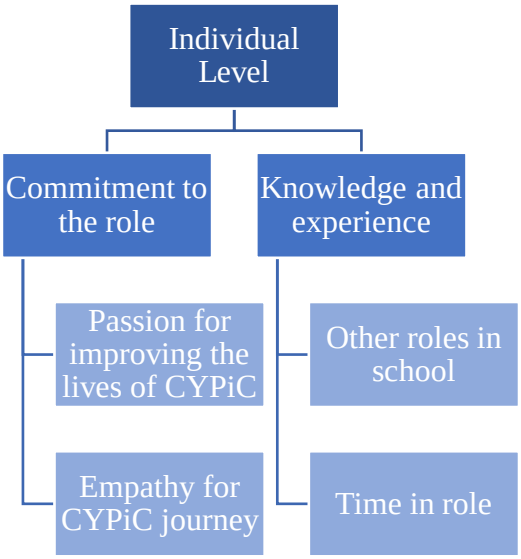


Figure 6: A thematic map describing the themes and subthemes in the individual level

4.31 Theme 1: Commitment to the DT role

DTs shared an overall commitment to their role through their passion for improving CYPiC lives and their empathy for the difficult journeys and experiences of CYPiC.

Subtheme 1.1: Passion for improving the lives of CYPiC

DTs shared their personal interests in wanting to support the lives of CYPiC. One DT felt an increased sense of passion in supporting CYPiC within her school as she was a foster carer herself. Other DTs shared their sense of fulfilment in the role in being able to support CYPiC. DT 7 and DT 5 use words such as ‘love’, ‘passionate’, ‘fascinating’ and ‘enjoyable’ to emphasise this.

> *DT 7 Row 47: “I’m very passionate about it very much SEMH type with children and I love to see that journey and changes and process and puzzling together let’s see if this works.*”

> *DT 5 Row 27: “it's quite an enjoyable part I find it really fascinating in terms of the young people and you know the experiences that have led them to where they are and I think that just by providing that security that we can as we can has been really good.”*

DT 7 suggests she became a DT out of choice due to her desires in supporting CYPiC.

> *DT 7 Row 38: "We're in this role because we want to do it, and that's what we're passionate about so my role really is about improving their (CYPiC) lives."*

DTs appeared to a commitment to their role through being passionate about making a positive difference to the lives of CYPiC and felt a sense of enjoyment in being able to do so.

Subtheme 1.2: Empathy for CYPiC journey

Nearly all DTs had a holistic understanding of the journey and story of the CYPiC they were working with. Most DTs felt a sense of empathy towards the challenging times these CYPiC had experienced in their life, and some DTs considered the long-term impact this would have on their needs.

> *DT 3 Row 5: "Any child who is in care has always got a story […], and it's never going to be something that they've experienced, that's been pleasant, it's always going to be something that's going to have affected them in some kind of way."*

Other DTs showed admiration towards the resilience of CYPiC in facing these challenges.

> *DT 8 Row 33: "You know, they do remarkably well, to get up and come to school every day, with some of the challenges they've had, even if they're in a secure placement, you know, they've got a history of some horrendous stuff."*

Reflections were also shared around the length of these journeys for some CYPiC with reference made not only to the difficult experiences in the past but also in the future. DTs acknowledged the support that may be needed across the lifespan of a CYPiC.

> *DT 7 Row 47 "recognising it's not just a short stint it's a lifetime journey for these children."*

DTs appeared to have a sense of commitment to their role by understanding the challenging life experiences CYPiC may have faced within their past and acknowledging these possible difficulties within the future.

4.32 Theme 2: Knowledge and experience

Nearly all participants referred to their knowledge and experience and how this supported or hindered their DT role.

Subtheme 2.1: Additional roles in school

For some DTs, additional roles in school and commitments out of school provided them with increased knowledge and connections to support their role as a DT. For several DTs, their roles as SENCO or deputy head gave them additional time with governing bodies or EP, which supported their knowledge and understanding. Another DT felt her designated safeguarding role provided her with additional support within a team.

> *DT 2 Row 20: "I'm also designated safeguarding lead, so I have three other deputy designated safeguarding lead, so we would talk to gather about the children's in care."*

For some DTs, there were barriers perceived in having other roles within their schools. DTs expressed difficulties in swapping roles in school and some of the additional pressures this placed upon them due to time demands.

> *DT 8 Row 17: "And we're all so busy, because we haven't just got one on roll we've got lots. It can be difficult cause you're like which hat am I wearing today."*

> *DT 2 Row 8: "The only barrier is time, isn't it because they are in class teaching and I'm in busy roles in my school."*

DTs, therefore, had real variations across schools in their roles and responsibilities in school, which appeared to be factors to them as individuals. Whilst some DTs felt these roles were beneficial for their knowledge; other DTs felt increased pressure.

Subtheme 2.2: Time in role

DTs shared their breadth of experience in supporting CYPiC through their time in the role. DTs who had been in the role for several years spoke about varying cohorts of CYPiC and what they had learnt from these experiences. DTs drew upon theoretical knowledge from training sessions they had received over time. Two DTs reflected upon the limited knowledge of DTs new to the role as a result of their minimal experience.

> *DT 7 Row 46: "but mindful new to the role then they might not be knowledgeable on what's out there or they need."*

> *DT 1 Row 38: "maybe in a role that helps new DTs at other schools. That you know having been new to the role myself understands… that they can come and just go this happen to you as well."*

DT 1 suggested a possible role for experienced DTs, where they supported new DTs with knowledge and emotional support.

Overall, DTs appeared to acknowledge that time and experience supported their understanding of CYPiC.

4.4 Microsystem

Within this section, the role of the DT and their immediate and frequent connections and interpersonal relationships will be described. This contrasts with the mesosystem, where the focus is on the network of relations around the DT and the more in-direct relationships and inter-relations across the microsystem. The helping and hindering factors within these relationships will be outlined.

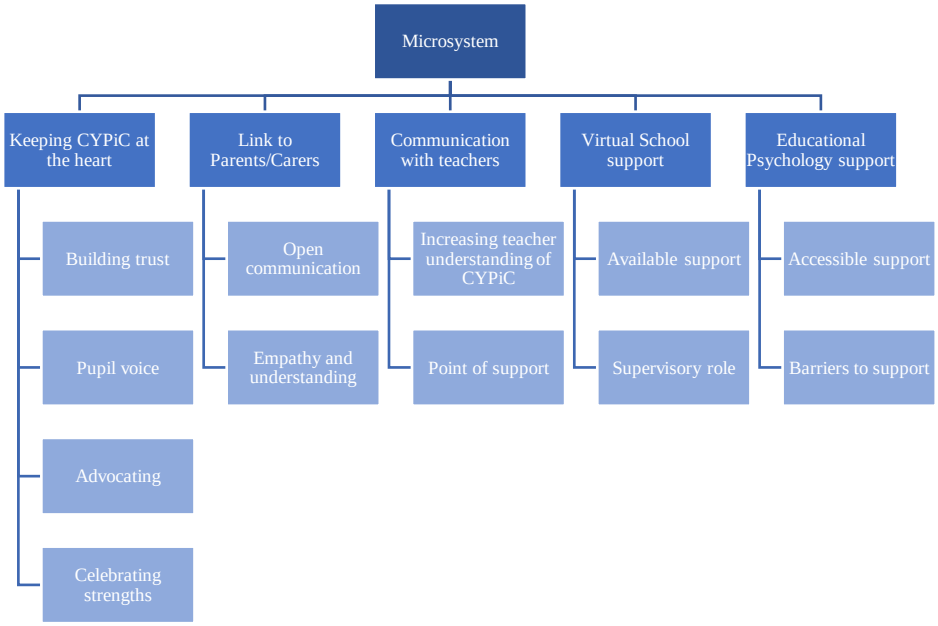


Figure 7: A thematic map describing the themes and subthemes within the microsystem

4.41 Theme 3: Keeping CYPiC at the heart

It was clear that DTs ensured that the CYPiC were kept at the heart of all interactions. This was achieved through them being able to build trusting relationships with CYPiC and gathering their voice. Through understanding the CYPiC, they could celebrate their strengths and advocate for them.

Subtheme 3.1: Building trust

Several DTs described the importance of having a good relationship with their CYPiC and felt that trust was key. Many of the DTs perceived the trust to have been built up over

time. DT 1 shared her ongoing support and commitment to the relationship which is emphasised by the word ‘always’.

> *DT 1 Row 3: “Yeah I think he needs to know that I love him. He is very much seeking that love and he needs to know I’m familiar. I will come hell or high water I've always been there.”*

A primary school DT referred to all CYPiC needing trust to build a relationship and referred to young children also being able to recognise the trust in their relationships.

> *DT 4 Row 2: “Do you feel that you can trust that person? Do you feel that if there was a problem, you can go and speak to that person? Do you trust that they're looking after me as well as they can in school, even though there might only be little, they still know whether you are trusted or not? Don't they? Yeah. So that trust is a big thing.”*

Other DTs described being available for CYPiC as a factor that supported their trust in the relationship. This trust was achieved by having an ‘open-door’ policy or providing other means of contact. A secondary school DT spoke about the regular organised meetings she had with CYPiC but also the availability for CYPiC to contact the DT when needed.

> *DT 8 Row 3: “We have quite a lot of 1:1 meetings with them […] it's more about building a relationship really with them, and then they'll just drop you in an email if they’re having a bad day. And come for a chat basically bit of an open-door policy.”*

Subtheme 3.2: Pupil voice

One of the main responsibilities described by DTs was their role in gathering pupil voice. DTs shared responsibilities in gathering this for statutory PEPs. Whilst some DTs valued pupil voice gathering tools; others felt this could be collected through more incidental experiences. DT 4 acknowledged age as a factor in this.

> *DT 4 Row 17: “So, you know, it's age appropriate and actually, what do you mean, and not obviously leading them down the garden path in any way? But, you know, if they're sort of a screaming, I don't know, ‘no, no, no, I don't want to go’, then that's telling you something, isn't it...Listen to them.”*

The emphasis on genuinely listening to pupil voice was shared by several DTs. Some DTs perceived there to be barriers in hearing the authentic pupil voice with reference made to the PEP forms, which will be discussed further within the 'Exosystemic level'.

DTs perceived themselves to be responsible for coordinating individual support for CYPiC and shared the importance of including pupil voice within this process. This ensured they had a good understanding of CYPiCs' interests and needs to guide individual support.

> *DT 7 Row 34: "It is about listening to the children…That's what he wants to do so let's listen to him and focus on that because he is capable."*

Other DTs spoke about understanding the areas of development for CYPiC and ensuring support fitted this.

> *DT 5 Row 2: "Once they realise there's someone they can talk to they are usually quite open about their needs usually."*

By listening to the pupil voice through various activities, DTs could ensure that children felt heard and advocated for within their curriculum.

Subtheme 3.3: Advocating for CYPiC

Half of DTs felt they had a role across their interactions to act as the voice of the child and advocate for their rights and needs.

> *DT 5 Row 28: I think having an advocate for those children is really important…because I think it's important for them to have that voice for them."*

Some DTs referred to the importance of challenging others when advocating for CYPiC.

> *DT 4 Row 16: "to be the voice if I need to be and to stand their ground if I need to be and I'm to make sure that they're getting the best that they can get for them, whether that be socially, academically, spiritually."*

One DT felt that courage was needed to be able to advocate and felt that the support of others was a factor in this.

> *DT 1 Row 35: "So it was having the courage to stand up against it with the backing of with the backing of my head and the social worker."*

Thus, many of the DTs felt they had a responsibility to advocate for their CYPiC, which helped them keep the CYPiC heart of all their interactions.

Subtheme 3.4: Celebrating strengths

Nearly all DTs spoke about the importance of sharing the strengths and achievements of CYPiC within their regular interactions with parents/carers, teachers and social workers. Some DTs felt that sharing the strengths of a CYPiC with the adults was a helping factor as it allowed for focus to be on what was working well in situations.

> *DT 1 Row 14: "it's nice to say that I'm not coming approaching you with bad news is good news yeah because sometimes you know consider once we get swamped in what's not working rather than seeing what is working as well."*

Other DTs perceived the sharing of positive information as a way of strengthening their relationship with parents/carers and CYPiC.

> *DT 5 Row 6: "I think with most cases we have good contacting relations with people because I think it's important to tell them when things are going well just as much as when something doesn't go well."*

Several DTs wished to celebrate CYPiCs' achievements across home and school contexts and felt this supported a vision of joint up working for the child.

> *DT 4 Row 4: "If somebody's thriving into something, I'll make sure I go back in and say well done your teacher said this to me today about that keep it up well, you know, things like that."*

DTs felt that there was a tendency for schools to focus on the difficulties of CYPiC, which meant conscious effort had to be made in having a more positive outlook.

> *DT 1 Row 14: "we're all very quick to share this in general very quick to share negative stuff."*

> *DT 5 Row 8: "I think the tendency sometimes in the school settings to tell people when things aren't going right yeah and so on the times when I've made a conscious effort to say look they've done this really well."*

DTs perceived themselves as having a role in sharing positives and celebrating achievements across home and school contexts, which could support relationships and problem-solving.

4.42 Theme 4: Link to parents/carers

All DTs spoke about their relationships with parents/carers and the varying forms of contact they had individually with them.

Subtheme 4.1: Open communication

Nearly all DTs shared they had a key responsibility in sharing up to date information with parents/carers through various methods. One DT acknowledged the responsibility he felt in this communication due to the joint parental responsibilities.

> *DT 6 Row 12: "Because I always see it as a DT that you're their parents in school, because their parents at home. And so you're taking joint parental responsibility for them? So it's kind of, you know, that to have that communication is vital, really."*

DTs spoke about the importance of considering the purposeful forms of communication for parents/carers. Through knowing parents/carers preferences, it supported communication. DTs appeared to value the regular communication of parents/carers to the DT. Open communication about the home context was seen as important in increasing the DT's understanding.

> *DT 8 Row 7: "It's really positive, it's kind of a bit again, like a bit of an open-door policy, give us a ring, or something going on, drop us an email, you know, they're really good… you know, I'll get an email first thing in the morning, oh we've had a row this morning and they've come out the house terribly. Be prepared."*

Open communication was seen as an important factor in supporting the relationship with parents/carers and increasing understanding across contexts.

Subtheme 4.2: Empathy and understanding

Some DTs acknowledged the difficulties parents/carers might face when looking after a CYPiC. Some DTs perceived that they had a role in understanding these difficulties and providing empathy and support to parents/carers. One DT who had the experience of being a foster carer felt it was important to share.

> *DT 2 Row 11: "because I think it's really important to understand that you get it, you know, the difficulties or, or where they're coming from."*

Other DTs felt it was important for parents/carers to know they were there to provide emotional support as well as professional educational support in meetings.

> *DT 4 Row 10: "To make sure we're there for a shoulder to cry on properly or for cup of tea, not in the current pandemic, but normally."*

Other DTs felt that their understanding of home life and their regular communication with parents/carers allowed them to empathise with parents/carers situation and place trust in their decisions for the CYPiC.

In general, DTs acknowledged some of the difficulties parents/carers might face and offered empathy, practical guidance, and trust, which could support this relationship.

4.43 Theme 5: Communication with teachers

All DTs shared that they had regular communication with teachers in school to support CYPiC.

Subtheme 5.1: Increasing teacher understanding of CYPiC

Most DTs perceived sharing some background information with the class teacher was important in them understanding the CYPiC and some DTs referred to one-page profiles as being valuable.

> *DT 3 Row 5: "Because I do think it's important that they do understand where this child has come from."*

Whilst the background information was important in staff understanding, nearly all DTs referred to this being given on a need-to-know basis. DTs perceived it to be important to prepare teachers for any changes in the CYPiC needs. DTs spoke about situations such as times in the school term, contact with birth family and home contexts that could impact the CYPiC when they entered the classroom.

> *DT 1 Row 8: "it just gives them a chance to be able to understand if they can see a situation coming up… can we divert the train maybe a little bit or pre-empt."*

Whilst all DTs referred to direct contact with teachers; some referred to other forms of communication sharing. Across the three secondary schools, DTs emphasis was placed upon the purposeful ways of communicating with school staff and reference was made to regular briefings with large groups of staff who would be in contact with the CYPiC. One of the secondary DTs suggested that this communication needed to be purposeful to be understood.

> *DT 6 Row 8 "So I think it's difficult to say, 'oh just email staff'. And that's fine. That is information sharing. But I think you've got to do it in lots of different ways to get through to all teachers."*

Some DTs shared the importance of reviewing targets with teachers through PEPs or other forms of regular communication and felt this was an essential process in understanding what's working and what needs to be adapted.

Subtheme 5.2: Point of support

DTs also shared the importance of teachers feeling they can approach the DT for any further advice. DTs perceived themselves to be the point of contact to teachers and acknowledged the importance of being accessible for staff who might be experiencing difficult emotions when working with CYPiC.

> *DT 1 Row 7: "it's about empowering the staff empowering them and giving them a bit of courage and just as much as the kid knowing I'm there for them…they can come and ask any questions or go ahh this is happening what do we do."*

> *DT 5 Row 5: "and I know that some staff find some of the issues that children present with frustrating […] It tends to work okay cos people know I am the main contact and so they put things through to me."*

DTs were able to support teachers by being the main point of contact in school.

4.44 Theme 6: Virtual School support

All DTs discussed the support they were received through the VS. This was around the ongoing communication with VS and any regular meetings with the ESO linked to their school on a microsystemic level.

Subtheme 6.1: Available support

All DTs described their perceptions around the accessible and available support the VS could provide. DTs referred to a range of support in the team, including the VSH, admin staff and ESOs.

> *DT 3 Row 16: "He's always said, I'm at the end of the phone. I'm at the end of an email, and he is very responsive. So I do feel that if I've got any questions about what we needed to have in place, or to ensure that he would be somebody that I would go to, and if he didn't know, he always found somebody that does and feeds back to me."*

> *DT 6 Row 21: "I have to say that is a very good and I think they are approachable and easily accessible."*

Several DTs referred to the knowledge and experience that VS could provide around supporting CYPiC and PEPs and the value in them signposting to other services.

Subtheme 6.2: Supervisory role

Over half of the DTs shared the value of having time to reflect and offload with their ESO. Most schools were receiving termly meetings with an education support officer (ESO), which provided them protected time to discuss their CYPiC. DT 4 uses the word 'vent', expressing their necessity as a DT to offload.

> *DT 4 Row 18- 19: "So yeah, XXX (ESO) was a massive personal support…I could talk to her and just go 'Do you know what like, done this or done that'. And, like get support that way. You know, sometimes you just need to vent potentially."*

DT 1 reflected on the personal skills and questioning of the ESO.

> *DT 1 Row 28: "Definitely XXX (ESO) just having her there and it again it's not just those termly meetings it's a case of XXX (ESO) …just having those little chances to reflect on things like that and she's just she's really useful because she is so kind and thoughtful and she doesn't let you get away with anything you know and make sure she questions you to make you up your game as well so I think she's invaluable."*

The importance of the interpersonal skills and individual qualities of the ESOs were further shared by a DT who felt the sessions were similar to the coaching sessions she had previously received.

> DT 7 Row 29: *"She cares about her job, knows what she's doing, she's knowledgeable. She's there to support and I can trust her. Even if it is just to sound off annoyances but also she's very proactive and the whole conversations are about the child. And they're open and honest conversations as well. And that's what you want in a coaching session."*

DTs appeared to value opportunities to reflect and offload with ESOs and valued their interpersonal skills.

4.45 Theme 7: Educational Psychology support

All DTs mentioned EP support to some degree. There was a variation in the support that EPs have provided to the DTs.

Subtheme 7.1: Accessible support

Some of the DTs described having some links to EPs for support and described the value in being able to contact EPs for advice when needed. Two DTs valued the role of EPs with meetings and coaching sessions in school.

> *DT 3 Row 26: "And I always speak to XXXX (EP). And I mean, not just about looked after children about all children. And so she's amazing. Like, I feel, I feel like we've got real good links with her at school, and myself."*

> *DT 7 Row 27: "yeah obviously xxx (School EP) does coaching for us okay which is absolutely fab then you know it's great platform but it's obviously it's not on tap is it."*

Subtheme 7.2: Barriers to support

More of the DTs described very limited support from the school EP and described barriers in the time of EPs, building relationships with EPs and EPs having an 'expert role'.

> *DT 8 Row 23: "EPs…we don't have a lot to do with either, really, just because of workload and time load."*

> *DT 1 Row 20: "we've got a new one again…the only trouble with that this is the third… I've been there 2 1/2 years, and this is the third ed psych we're on so its about building relationships really is hard."*

> *DT 4 Row 19: "not to be patronised. And like, you know, EPs are fab and EPs have a job to do. We recognise that. Please don't speak to us like we're three and don't know anything."*

It appeared that the relationship between the DT and EP varied across schools. The DTs that appeared to have closer links to the EP in school were those with other roles in school that allowed them to make further connections such as SENCO, parent liaison and one DT completing a masters course in 'Leading Mental Health in Schools', which was led by EPs.

4.5 Mesosystem

The mesosystem refers to the inter-relations between two or more of the relationships within the microsystem. Within this section, the networks of relations for the DT will be described along with the helping and hindering factors.

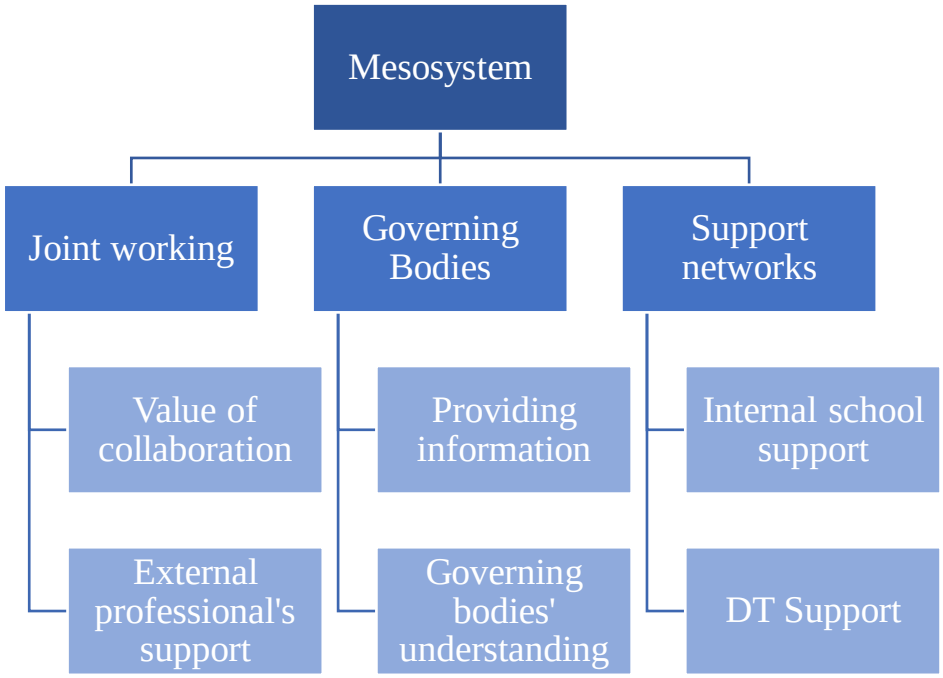


Figure 8: A thematic map describing the themes and subthemes in the mesosystem

4. 51 Theme 8: Joint working

Joint working was shared across all interviews as a key role for DTs. As described in both of the subthemes below, CYPiC were kept at the heart of multi-agency work, which was a key theme for DTs in their microsystem.

Subtheme 8.1: Value of collaboration

All DTs spoke about their role in collaborating with multiple professionals in group settings. Some DTs described some of the statutory requirements, such as PEPs and CYPiC meetings and more general multi-agency meetings. Most DTs described the value of collaboration from multiple contexts within these meetings. One DT perceived joint working as a factor that facilitated the success of plans for CYPiC.

> *DT 7 Row 19: "When we work jointly with everybody who is involved that's when we work successfully to plan."*

Some DTs perceived there to be value in the CYPiC, seeing everyone working together. It was felt that this could support the CYPiC, knowing they were at the heart of discussions across their key adults.

> *DT 5 Row 7: "What I found is when a child or young person in care sees that everybody is on the same page and we all talk to each other... I think it's important for them to realise they are at the heart of everything."*

> *DT 1 Row 6: "Hope so and you know it helps for XXX (CAYPIC) the lad as well that he knows… hang up you know XXX (Foster parent) is friends with Mr XXX (Teacher) she's friends with you know in his eyes and she's friends with miss XXX (another teacher) and so they all talk to each other."*

DTs describe their role in collaborating with others through varying meetings. They perceived it important for CYPiC to see everyone working together and felt this could lead to successful planning.

Subtheme 8.2: External professional's support

Half of DTs referred to the support or expertise of EPs or VS in joint work. One DT shared the value in an EP supporting problem-solving through group consultation approaches.

> *DT 7 Row 18: "We've done a lot of joined-up thinking. A lot of XXX (EP) strategies basically we have a chair you know she's the chairs and she question what's working well what's not, normally post-it notes put them in the middle…actually it's really fab because it ends up us all talking about the same thing so when we disagreed you realise that actually yeah we have done this can use this to move this forward."*

Some DTs shared their value in having VS staff attending meetings. One DT described the value of VS staff having knowledge around pupil premium and challenging social workers. The ESO skills allowed the DT to be able to maintain her positive relationships.

> *DT 8 Row 26: "In the PEPs, they give you support, especially when to do pupil premium. Sometimes social workers will try and push, not much, but will try and push and spend stuff not appropriate for pupil premium money. And they're straight in with 'Oh, no, it can't be spent on that'. And so it's good so they kinda do a bit of a bad guy role if they need to, in that sense. Where as its good. When you're the one with the relationship with the parent and child, you don't want to be in a negative role."*

Another DT described the role of ESOs and social workers in supporting parent/carer-school relationships and joint up work whilst keeping the child at the heart of this work.

> *DT 7 Row 16-17: "I've had some carers who have a completely different outlook […] and it's really hard but you don't necessarily think that's it's perhaps in my opinion best way forward for the child… the education officer XXXX is brilliant so you know[...]is there another way we can go about it…. cause I'm really not getting it… it is very much working collaboratively with parents with carers with the social worker, so it is about the whole child."*

Some DTs perceived the knowledge and support of external professionals as necessary in successful joint up working around the CYPiC.

4.52 Theme 9: Governing Bodies

All DTs had an awareness of their statutory responsibilities in working with the governing bodies in their role and the regularities of this. This theme was placed within the mesosystem as the interactions with the governing bodies could be direct or indirect and were in-frequent relations.

Subtheme 9.1: Providing information

The role of the DT in sharing information appeared to vary between interactions being through the headteacher or directly with the governing board. DT 3, a Designated Safeguarding Lead, describes her role with the headteacher in this.

> *DT 3 Row 19: "The interactions that I have is the headteacher has to provide a report. So adding, like, the number of children that we've got, so my contribution to the report is inputting the numbers that we have of children and young people in care and their attendance and where they are academically, what support is in place."*

DT 6, who was Vice-Principal described his more direct role with the governor.

> *DT 6 Row 26: "We do have a link governor for looked after children. So their role is to meet myself, at least yearly, ideally, half termly. And then they report back to the rest of the governing body*."

Subtheme 9.2: Governing Bodies' understanding

Half of DTs perceived the governing board to have a good understanding of their role and the priorities of CYPiC, which helped their role. Three DTs felt the governors other roles

in the community supported their understanding of CYPiC and helped to prioritise discussions around CYPiC.

> *DT 2 Row 21: "It's beneficial to have somebody to talk to you actually, she interestingly, she's a manager, running a foster homes for XXX (Another LA)... So she has a lot of experience. So it's good to know she gets it. So my governing board are very sensitive and board is really good."*

> *DT 3 Row 21: "So it's, it's something that I do feel that we're at an advantage. She already works in that environment."*

One DT was a governor and perceived this to be extremely valuable in increasing the understanding of theories related to CYPiC needs across the board. Two DTs suggested they had a role in supporting governing bodies to have greater understanding about their role in school.

> *DT 8 Row 18: "I've delivered training to them and things…I've gone in and doing the actual activities with them and what activities I've done with children so they see what kind of stuff we do, like giving them like pens and paper (laughing) you know, so I would say our governing body is really supportive."*

In contrast, one DT shared her perceptions around the limited understanding of the governing body and the priorities being placed upon data and results.

> *DT 7 Row 31: "But in terms of governing bodies they wouldn't understand it. Erm I think school priorities are probably data, covid, school results, rather than Children in care."*

4.53 Theme 10: Support networks

DTs spoke about the importance of gaining support for their role. This theme was placed in the mesosystem as it encompassed groups of teachers and senior leadership or groups of DTs within VS forums.

Subtheme 10.1: Internal school support

Several DTs shared the importance of having support internally in school. Some DTs shared the value of working within a team and talking to others who had some shared knowledge and some understanding of CYPiC, which could be linked to pastoral teams or

safeguarding teams. In addition to the value of knowledge in colleagues, DTs appeared to value time to offload and gain more emotional-based support.

> *DT 8 Row 16: "But I think for my internal support is us as a team where, you know, we have like a safeguarding meeting every Wednesday and well talk about children in care and well talk about what our safeguarding stuff, but we take a little bit of time to kind of just check in and see how each other is doing and support each other in that way."*

For some DTs, it was the support of senior leadership which they felt was most valuable for their role. DTs reflected upon the value in supervision and opportunities to 'sound out' and 'reflect'. The words 'vital' and 'important' highlight the value DT 6 perceives this to be for his role when working with difficult cases.

> *DT 1 Row 21: "I have the head and the deputy in my school and I get a supervision session with the headteacher once a term just to reflect over what I've been doing."*

> *DT 6 Row 21: "Internally the headteacher and the senior vice principal as well. They are both DSL trained. So they act as a sounding board to talk things through very often in terms of internal support…It's vital to have it isn't it really because it's really it is really important to talk those things through. It really is important, particularly when you're dealing with sort of, you know, difficult cases or issues or cases that could be potentially upsetting."*

Two schools received counselling support or supervision offered by their school by an external professional (DT 6 and DT 8). Both schools felt this was key to their role as DT and for their other roles within school.

Subtheme 10.2: DT support

Most DTs spoke about their experiences at DT forums where they can link with other DTs. Some DTs expressed their value in hearing from other DTs about their experiences in schools which help to provide some validation in their own role. Other DTs valued the opportunities to connect with similar people in what could sometimes be perceived as an isolating role.

> *DT 5 Row 18-19: "Sometimes in our roles in schools you feel like you're on your own but I think that kind of brings everybody together with common interests which is useful. Erm it's nice to hear other people's experiences as well I think"[…] "it's nice*

to touch base with likeminded or people with common interests and I think that's just something that's quite useful especially as when you think about teachers quite an isolated role really so I think I personally have found that quite useful."

For several DTs, they still wished for greater links with DTs. DT felt there were barriers in being able to share views across the networking group. In order to overcome this, she had made her own links with schools.

DT 3 Row 16: "In that situation, there are some people who just sit there quietly and just listen, and I'm probably one of them. And I wouldn't be forthcoming in sort of saying out, I don't get this, I don't get that. So sometimes it's nice to have your own little links that you can make I sort of like it, because there are some schools that I have sort of got to know and build links. And I can always ask them for advice as well."

One DTs shared her fears of losing some connections to the DT network when her one CYPiC on roll moves to a secondary school. She expressed a desire to link further with those new to the role to ensure they had greater opportunities to network and gain support.

DT 1 Row 38: "It would be a case of still going to go into all the meetings and keeping in touch that way in just you know being available or helping at all…maybe in a role that helps new DTs at other schools."

DTs perceived opportunities to network with other DTs as beneficial in having a mutual understanding. Some DTs felt further links could be made across schools and with new DTs to the role.

4.6 Exosystem

The helping and hindering factors within the external environment to the DT will be described within the exosystemic level. This refers to the structures within school, the systems of the local authority and the impact of these factors on the DT role.

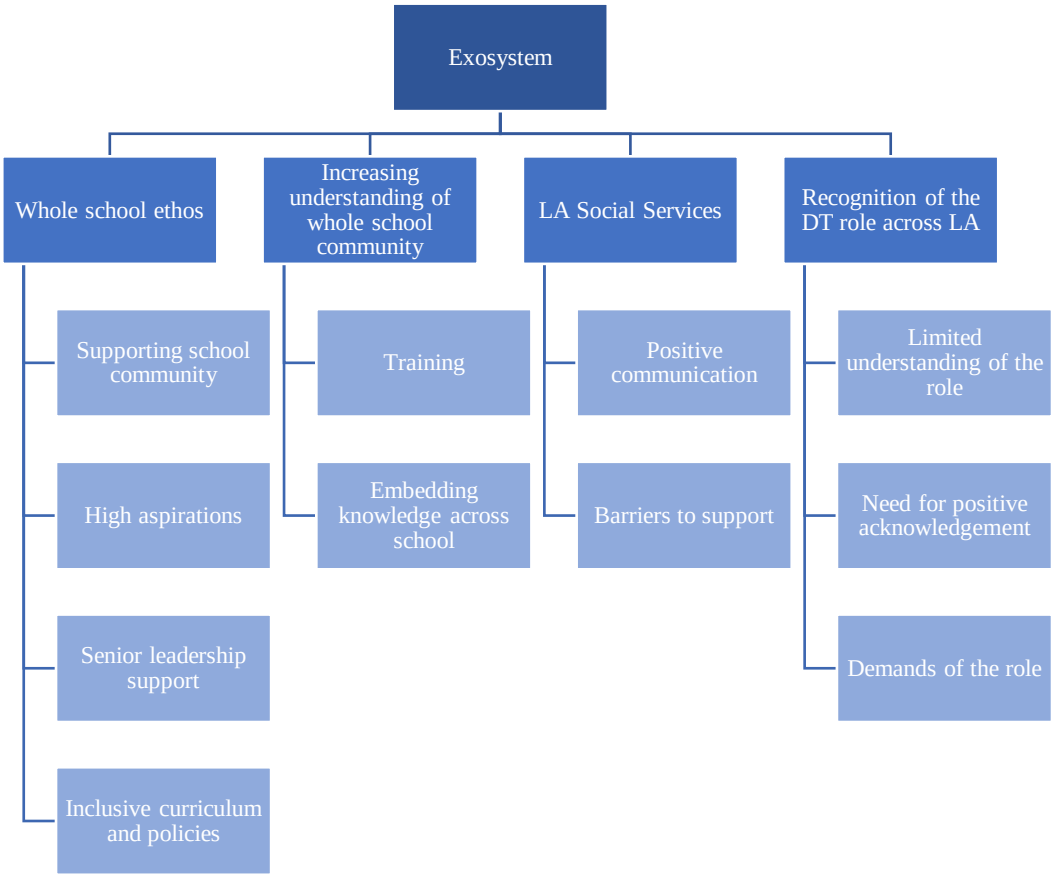


Figure 9: A thematic map describing the themes and subthemes in the exosystem

4.61 Theme 11: Whole school ethos

Subtheme 11.1: Supporting whole school community

Many of the DTs spoke about the feeling or ethos of support within their school community. This related to both the support for school staff, children and parents/carers across the school community. One DT spoke about the impact of involving the community in their school.

> *DT 3 Row 9: "think it's the ethos of the school if I'm being really, really honest […] we always get told how welcoming we are, thing we have in place, we do a lot…. But we did do a lot of community things like home school activities. So we did, like an art week. So all the children did artwork. And we had lots of visitors coming to school to*

view all the art we was talking[…] we've got the community involved… We are really open and try and make it as welcoming as possible for them."

DTs made reference to the school aiming to *"nurture all of our pupils"* (DT 3 Row 6) and placed emphasis on CYPiC *"being part of the school community"* (DT 4 Row 13) through their school ethos. Another DT referred to a foster carer group that supported families across the school community (DT 2). Another DT made reference to her making links to sports clubs in the community to support the needs of children within the school community (DT 1).

Subtheme 11.2: High aspirations

DTs referred to the high aspirations that were put in for CYPiC or all children within the school. These aspirations outcomes were placed upon children both through the whole school ethos and as part of the DT role. DT 4 shared the importance of leadership, emphasising the high aspirations for all children within their setting, not just CYPiC.

DT 4 Row 21: "So I think leadership from the top down is really important. And if you're setting the aspirational, and high expectations for all children."

DT 6 spoke about the high proportion of pupil premium students in their school and the importance of the inclusive culture, and high aspirations for these children and CYPiC.

DT 6 Row 9: "We've had students in the last two or three years, who have been pupil premium, who have been excluded from school and stayed with us in the sixth form […] just because you are looked after, that does not mean that those students can't achieve."

Some of the DTs made recognition to CYPiC being associated with lower achievements and emphasised the importance of aiming high within the school community for children regardless of their abilities.

DT 7 Row 32: "You generally associate children in care with children who are low ability, but we have a couple of quite bright ones and actually let's all aim high and aspirations."

DTs perceived it to be imperative to have high aspirations for CYPiC and felt that this could be part of the whole school ethos.

Subtheme 11.3: Senior leadership support

Nearly all DTs shared how senior leadership or headteachers were a factor in their feelings of support within their schools. DT 3 spoke about the importance of the visibility in senior staff in helping children and parents to feel comfortable in coming into school.

> *DT 3 Row 9: "it's down to probably the headteacher and the senior leaders that have created these opportunities that people feel comfortable in coming in…Something that I will say is that our headteacher and our senior leaders are always visible. So at the end or the beginning, at the end of the school day, they're outside on the playground. So I think that helps as well, because I think sometimes the headteacher can have can be a bit elusive to some in some schools. Where parents feel like oh, and children as well."*

DTs further shared how having approachable senior staff and headteachers provided a more supportive culture within the school where staff felt able to ask for help.

> *DT 4 Row 20: "That they're there, if you need it, and kind of, I think, we've got the understanding that if we ask for some help, or assistance or support…. So, a lot of what I'm saying to you is our school ethos and stuff. Anyway, not just specific to being a designated teacher."*

> *DT 8 Row 20: "He's not very much a door and knock door policy. You've got to book an appointment to speak to him in three weeks' time kind of thing. You know, if he's doors open, you can knock and have a quick word... So because we feel like it really supports and understands what we do."*

Subtheme 11.4: Inclusive curriculum and policies

Nearly all DTs spoke about the importance of policies and curriculum being inclusive for all children. This appeared to be a clear message shared with DTs emphasising how these adaptations supported children to access greater learning opportunities.

Several DTs spoke about behavioural policies in school and the importance of schools understanding the child as a whole when addressing any concerns. DT 2 shared an example of this.

> *DT 2 Row 17: "You haven't got the shirt, your tie on, therefore, you're out, or you've got your trainers on today. And it should have been shoes, you can't say that…Because actually, that child's come to school... And I think, I think you have to*

look at your policies in that way. But the thing actually is there anything I need to do to this policy to make it more accessible for this child to access their learning?"

DTs shared the value of non-punitive behaviour policies not only for CYPiC but for all children within their schools and ensuring that they looked at every child as a whole.

DT 8 Row 14: "*So there's not a blanket policy, one strike, and you're out two strikes[…]. And our policies kind of reflect that we deal with each child on an individual basis, there are certain rules, but that, you know, we're going to take in everything into account."*

Some DTs still perceived consequences to be given equally but continued to acknowledge the importance of empathising and supporting the CYPiC individually. DTs shared their role in ensuring that the curriculum also met the individual needs of CYPiC.

DT 5 Row 11: "Once a week I sit on the leadership team so we start from a strategic viewpoint I have some targets on school improvement plans so I try to make sure that that is inclusive as possible."

Most DTs referred to the autonomy of their role in supporting the adaptations to the curriculum and policies within school to ensure they supported CYPiC. DT 5 refers to the support of senior staff in school in allowing her to make these adaptations.

DT 5 Row 12: "for one student for example I just had to go and modify her timetable because that's what she needs right now so they're being quite flexible I've got enough flexibility to be able to kind of have that autonomy."

Overall, DTs perceived inclusive, non-punitive policies to be supportive of CYPiC's progress in school. DTs felt they had a key role in ensuring that policies and curriculum were adapted to CYPiC individual needs. Some DTs felt autonomy in their role supported them with this responsibility.

4.62 Theme 12: Increasing knowledge across the school community

Subtheme 12.1: Training

All DTs made reference to training they had received either in school, through the LA, EP service or VS. Most DTs placed value in the training that had been offered through the EP service for free in the LA which they had attended as well as other members of staff in

school. One DT spoke about the value of these workshops in supporting a newly qualified teacher and giving her a differing perspective away from the results-driven focus.

> *DT 1 Row 30: "Our NQT managed to go on a couple of them to get a different perspective on things rather than just all being about data and results results results. You know bringing it back to the children a little bit because you can get caught up in the data can't we…Erm they have been really good as they're not massively long they don't take you out of your day but they are really valuable in what they do."*

Other DTs referred to the importance of the VS training through discussion around the importance of refresher sessions to update their knowledge. Some DTs shared the value they felt in knowing the local context when supporting CYPiC in school.

> *DT 4 Row 21: "There was lots of things to draw on, which gave you a more local and national context rather than being in your own school thinking that you're doing the right thing. So it was it was it was good that way."*

> *Dt 1 Row 31: "Having updates of what's going on, getting a view of what's going on over the city or the you know the latest priorities are for us as a city and how that impacts on my little patch and what I can do about that I think that's really valuable."*

Nearly all DTs referred to attachment or trauma training as being valuable to them, and school staff in understanding CYPiC needs. This training increased the understanding not only of CYPiC needs but for children within the whole school community.

> *DT 2 Row 9: "Not just for children in care, but that there's a number of children where trauma has impacted on their experience, and therefore, they may have some attachment issues. As a whole school, including all our foster carers and adopters, we did whole school training."*

> *DT 1 Row 10: "They're seeing the impact of these attachment issues that our children that perhaps would have sat it box of a bit naughty yeah… and that's been lovely not just for XXX (CYPiC) being looked after kid but for the school community as a whole which is lovely."*

Overall, training was a key theme across all interviews as a way of supporting the knowledge and understanding of CYPiC for DTs and their school colleagues.

Subtheme 12.2: Embedding knowledge across school

Nearly all DTs referred to the role they had in sharing information from training with staff in schools. DTs used terms such as *"cascade that up to school"* (DT 4 Row 9) and *"distribute it to all staff"* (DT 3 Row 7). One DT shared how valuable it had been for her to share this knowledge not just with teaching staff but to consider the impact of sharing this in the wider school community.

> DT 1 Row 30: "*We did the restorative conversations one which I then went and did some work with our lunchtime supervisors just about having restorative conversations and that's worked really nicely and we've seen consequently reduction in lunch time incidents massively."*

One DT felt more responsible in embedding the training for teachers within the classroom context through conversations with staff.

> *DT 1 Row 22: "I want to take it the next stages of what's that mean for what you do in the classroom and what does it look like in practice."*

This information was shared through a range of different ways such as meetings, emails and directly. Three DTs spoke about the barriers in helping staff to understand this knowledge. Teachers may have varying perspectives around children's behaviour, and DTs perceived themselves to have a role in supporting this understanding.

> *DT 5 Row 5: "Some staff find some of the issues that children present with frustrating and think why they can't just be like everyone else and I can understand it but equally I'm involved in getting out information and CPD to people so they can have a better understanding."*

DTs perceived themselves as having a role in embedding knowledge from training across the school community to ensure everyone understood ways to support CYPiC.

4.63 Theme 13: LA Social Services

Subtheme 13.1: Positive communication

This subtheme can link to the microsystem of the DT due to their regular interactions with DTs. All DTs spoke about their interactions with social workers within their role. DTs appeared to perceive that regular two-way communication was valuable to their role and their relationship with social workers. DT 5 and DT 7 placed emphasis on the words 'extra' and 'a lot' to show the increased communication.

DT 5 Row 9: "With social workers again extra communication with social workers try to keep them in the loop as much as possible with regards to things that happen then just so that they are aware."

DT 7 Row 20 "I have had really good experience with social workers I think because we've obviously talked a lot, we discuss things."

In general, DTs described positive relationships and communication with their current social workers at that time.

Subtheme 13.2: Barriers to support

DTs expressed the workload and high turnover within social services in the LA to hinder their role. DTs felt that the large caseloads of social workers could sometimes result in them not completing or sharing work in a timely manner. DT 8 acknowledged that this was not in the individual social worker's control.

DT 8 Row 12: "The only barrier is workload. Which is over their control, to be honest. So if they've if they've got a massive caseload, and then they've got few, that are challenging on their caseload on I think it's, that's, that's really hard."

The other barrier described was the high turnover of social workers. DTs felt this it was frustrating to revisit traumatic histories as a multi-agency group and that it had a negative impact upon the CYPiC emotional needs and trust in other relationships.

DT 3 Row 11: "I do feel like social workers, they do have a big job of trying to build something up with a child for them to actually open up. And I think if you've got a turnaround, I just don't think that your child is ever going to want to open up…or how long is this one going to last?"

Some DTs felt a responsibility within their role to be the ongoing constant for the child.

DT 7 Row 6: "social workers have come and gone six of seven times and they've been changed placements we are generally there one constant in that life that they feel safe with so it's important for them to feel that but obviously you know that relationship is built."

DTs perceived social services high workload and high turnover to be a hindering factor for their role in supporting CYPiC. DTs felt this increased their own responsibilities in being a stable support for the CYPiC.

4.64 Theme 14: Recognition of the DT role across the LA

Subtheme 14.1: Limited understanding of the role

Half of DTs perceived schools to have a limited understanding of their role and responsibilities. Some DTs felt there was limited understanding of the role's statutory requirements, which impacted teacher involvement.

> *DT 8 Row 31: "So I think generally say in a school community… the teachers probably roll their eyes every term when we're asking them for information for a PEP even though we might have told them about it and stuff. Maybe just more understanding. You know, we're not doing this just for laughs and something to do. And, you know, also that we are dictated to, you know, how many times PEPs are and things like that."*

While some schools felt their headteachers and senior staff members had a good understanding of their role, others perceived this to be poor.

> *DT 7 Row 26: "I think probably from my point of view it may just maybe a little bit more understanding from headteachers and you know just knowing about what you're doing and the theory and stuff behind it maybe some more training for them just."*

This DT further went on to suggest that there should be a more national understanding of the role and the priority of CYPiC, which could be developed through teacher training. Overall, DTs wished for a greater understanding of the statutory requirements of the role and a greater understanding of their work with CYPiC.

Subtheme 14.2: Need for positive acknowledgement

Most DTs expressed desires to receive positive acknowledgement for their role or their school. They felt that the role did not get the praise it deserved, especially as their role was essential in ensuring CYPiC get the right support. One DT wished for the role to be viewed as more than *"a little added on thing"* (DT 8 Row 32).

> *DT 7 Row 32: "So I don't think it's given the prevalence that it deserves and the fact that as a DT if you make the most of it you can acetate change for that child."*

> *DT 4 Row 30: "It's like everything, isn't it? You know, occasionally if somebody said, 'great job that was amazing or super'. I don't mean to mark our work. I'm not saying that… nobody's got time for that. But you know, what, I've been hearing really good things about the care and the provision that you've been given."*

DT 1 wished for greater recognition of the positive support provided by the whole school for CYPiC and hoped this could ensure more CYPiC attended in the future.

> *DT 1 Row 36-37: "I would like to like the school to be known as that not me but the school is an institution that we are a place that is safe and welcoming for looked after children that they will be they will be cared for and looked after in a way that's reflective of their needs."*

It could be suggested that DTs felt their role was vital in creating positive change for a CYPiC and wished to receive appreciation for their work and their schools' overall support with CYPiC.

Subtheme 14.3: Demands of the role

DTs shared expressed the desire for people to recognise the demands of the role. Some DTs shared that the role was very time consuming with the work that was required and felt that senior members of staff and teachers did not always understand this.

DT 6 shared the importance in schools recognising how time-consuming the role is when it is done well, despite there being limited data gathered from these forms of support.

> *DT 6 Row 33: "I think it's schools and headteachers recognising that, although it is a very small proportion of a student cohort, a very small percentage, that to support those young people properly, is very time consuming. And for the head teachers and senior leaders to recognise that and to actually allow time for the designated teacher to be able to support because very often the support is, you know, you can't kind of get like quantitative data from it. You know, one looked after child has been in my office… because she needs that emotional support…I think, that's very time consuming…when I speak to colleagues in similar roles and network, I think that's like, that's their frustration, really, that they aren't given the time or the space to reflect and really just talk to the children."*

Some DTs expressed the need for greater empathy from staff members about the challenges of working with CYPiC with varying needs.

DT 7 Row 26-27: "I know it's my role but sometimes you just like a little bit empathy don't you. Like sounding out […] Probably like you'd have supervision or something just that…something very similar to that yeah you know within the line of the DT something."

The DTs shared the upsetting nature of some of their cases and shared the value of support through school and VS. Some DTs expressed the desire for more opportunities to have time to reflect on their work and offload.

4.7 Macrosystem

The macrosystem refers to the broader cultural and societal context and more national policies and procedures. Within this section, the DTs' perceptions around the factors that help and hinder their role at this level are described.

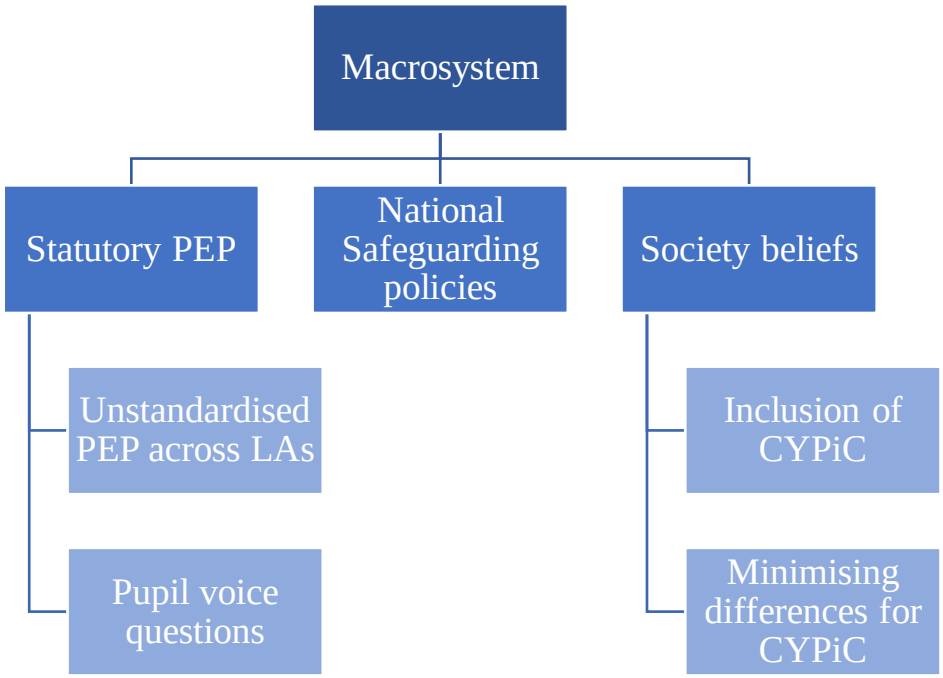


Figure 10: A thematic map describing the themes and subthemes in the macrosystem

4.71 Theme 15: Statutory PEP

All DTs referred to the requirements of the PEP meetings for CYPiC and most spoke about the pupil voice element within the form. DTs appeared to have a good knowledge of the statutory requirements of their role.

Subtheme 15.1: Unstandardised PEP across LAs

Some DTs expressed their frustrations around having different PEP forms to fill out for their CYPiC who were from different LAs. DTs shared the desire for a more national PEP for CYPiC as they felt the quality of PEPs varied across different LAs.

> *DT 6 Row 4: "I think, if I was to speak openly, and honestly, I think that that is really my frustration as a DT…So with your variance between local authorities about how PEPs are learnt, who chairs them, how the chair what information is needed for them. There is a national framework, but I think... It's not tight enough the national framework, and there's too many variances that so some are very good, and some aren't so good, depending on which local authority that your person happens to be in."*

DTs perceived that the unstandardised PEPs across LAs led to varying expectations for that CYPiC and increased mistakes across the process.

> *DT 2 Row 16: "a common approach across the country would mean that you didn't lose children when they moved, you know that there was a consistency of what was expected. And I feel like, that's really important, because I think that's where, where things go wrong for children."*

Subtheme 15.2: Pupil voice questions

Several DTs perceived there to be barriers in gathering pupil voice through the PEP questions. DTs grappled with the balance between the importance of gathering this pupil voice and its impact on making CYPiC feeling different. Some DTs felt that individual choice for CYPiC was needed.

> *DT 3 Row 2: "So it's a hard one to gauge obviously, I know, we have to, you know, ensure pupils are being listened to, and we've got their voice, but at the same time, sometimes it might they might feel they don't need to be different."*

DTs felt that the pupil voice questions on the PEP form did not capture the authentic pupil voice and could lead to frustrations for the young person in having to answer the same questions each time (DT 3 Row 3). DT 2 perceived incidental interactions to be more valuable in capturing this.

> *DT 2 Row 4: "I don't necessarily think that pupil voice is as good as it could be, because it's a bit is a bit tick boxy…In a way, to get pupil voice you need to get to*

where the child is, as opposed to asking generic questions, because then they don't really answer what the child wants to say."

There appeared to be a dilemma for DTs between their recognition of the importance of the statutory responsibilities of the PEP form but also the barriers in the inconsistencies in forms across LAs and the standardised pupil voice questions.

4.72 Theme 16: National Safeguarding Policies

DTs discussed what national policies impacted their role. DTs shared their awareness of safeguarding policies with reference to the *'Keeping Children Safe in Education'* document. DTs shared that they followed the requirements of keeping up to date with these policies.

DT 4 Row 26: "Obviously, we all are keeping children safe in education and safeguarding policies trained annually on safeguarding anyway, so for all children."

As described by DT 4, DTs mentioned the related training they had received for this policy. Other DTs mentioned the regular safeguarding briefings to discuss any concerns and highlight elements of this legislation to all staff members in school. DTs did not share any further awareness of national policies or legislation that might impact their role in schools.

4.73 Theme 17: Society beliefs

Subtheme 17.1: Inclusion of CYPiC

DTs referred to the inclusive culture and shared beliefs in their schools. Some DTs referred to challenging historical beliefs around children with additional needs. One DT perceived herself to be an agent of change in helping individuals shift their more traditional and historical views of children with additional needs.

DT 1 Row 10: "I will challenge them on their beliefs or what I feel are you know mis held beliefs… you know they don't get to just carry on and make sweeping generalisations. Not that that's everyone but you know there has been historically there's been such a shift in the school culture in the school makeup…for those staff that have been there a very very long time having to change lots about what they do and how they do it to accommodate the needs of these children that they've never had contact with before it has being quite professional challenge for then…. I'm there to help them through that."

DTs perceived the inclusive culture as a factor supporting the development of all children in school, including CYPiC. They suggested staff members would *"welcome any child"* (DT 4 Row 9) and being *"equal and inclusive"* (DT 1 Row 16), *and "understanding individual needs"* (DT 6 Row 9). The language used in the quotes is associated with those of inclusive belief systems. DT 6 felt that the inclusive culture impacted the high-quality teaching and learning of all pupils.

> *DT 6 Row 9: "We have a very inclusive culture here. Where yes, school is about teaching and learning. But all staff recognise that you can't deliver quality teaching and learning without being inclusive without building positive relationships without understanding individual needs."*

Some DTs referred to the demographics of the wider community and the possible impact this has upon the values and belief systems held within the school system.

> *DT 6 Row 9: "I think having an inclusive culture is really important because particularly when you're working in a school that has, for example, a really high proportion of pupil premium students."*

> *DT 7 Row 11: "Because of our area because of the children that we have our staff very inclusive and very you know I think we've had a look quite of children with trauma."*

Overall, DTs perceived an inclusive culture to be in line with their belief systems. DTs felt responsible for ensuring that these inclusive values were shared across the school community.

Subtheme 17.2: Minimising differences for CYPiC

A wider cultural theme shared amongst DTs was the need to minimise differences for CYPiC. All adults shared some acknowledgement of the stigma of being a CYPiC or being the carer of a CYPiC. DTs referred to this through the language of 'label', 'differences' and 'stigma'.

> *DT 4 Row 14: "We wouldn't highlight them as groups, we wouldn't highlight children who wear glasses as a group."*

Some DTs acknowledged how CYPiC might feel about this label, particularly around their peers.

DT 3 Row 4: "But it was like a little bit of a reminder that I'm different from everybody else in the class because you don't take anyone else in my class out."

DT 8 Row 1: "We've got, you know, we've got some that don't like to be acknowledged as a child in care that, you know, their friends wouldn't know."

The consideration of the impact of this label, especially amongst peers, led to DTs considering alternative ways of completing activities such as pupil voice activities or extra tuition to support this discretion. DT 4 considered the stigma for parents/carers of CYPiC and empathised with how she would want to be treated.

DT 4 Row 10: "We don't need to be broadcasting big signs outside saying I am a carer. So, you know, kind of like that with a lot of people. So it's not, don't try and treat anybody any differently? Because you don't want that I wouldn't want that if it was me. You don't want that label."

Interestingly, one DT made reference to the pride some children had around being in care. She further commented on how these CYPiC made links to other CYPiC in school which increased their sense of belonging.

DT 7 Row 41: "I had three siblings from XXX (another LA) and erm they were so proud to be with their carers"[…]"it was great to give them a sense of belonging. It's alright it's not a stigma or something to be ashamed of."

From a macrosystems level, there appeared to be a wider belief amongst DTs in their schools that it was important to minimise differences for CYPiC and their parents/carers; however, some considerations were made to the individual preferences of CYPiC.

4.8 Chronosystem

The chronosystem refers to the patterns of events across the life span of development and impacts the other four surrounding systems. In this case, descriptions will be provided for any environmental factors that may have impacted the DT role which were shared across the interviews.

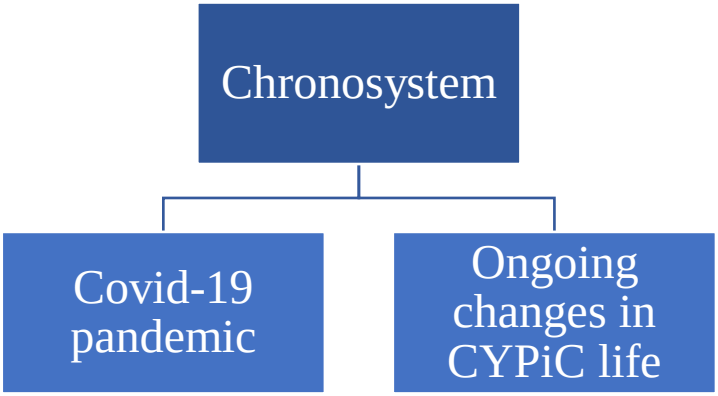


Figure 11: A thematic map describing the themes and subthemes in the chronosystem

4.81 Theme 18: Covid-19 Pandemic

Across all DTs interviews, DTs spoke about the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic had on the lives of CYPiC, their families, the professionals they work with and their role. DTs used various words to describe the current climate, including 'lock down', 'pandemic' and 'Covid'. Related phrases such as 'home learning' and 'virtual lessons' were also described.

Most DTs perceived there to be barriers created by reduced face-to-face contact with parents/carers. These DTs deemed in-person interactions with parents/carers could provide more interpersonal support and allow parents/carers opportunities to offload.

> *DT 7 Row 14: "I think probably for teachers at the moment because obviously that face to face connection they can't or not there's no personal connection when it's gonna be over teams or you know telephone which isn't always the same compare especially when they just want to release sometimes."*

DTs felt that the restrictions on them being visible at the school gate reduced their opportunities for carers/parents to communicate easily with them. They also considered their role as important in supporting class teacher's communication with parents/carers.

Some DTs considered the impact of lockdown on CYPiC who were in more unstable placements. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and social distancing, the consistency of staff and routines was not possible in schools. DTs considered the impact of this inconsistency for CYPiC and how to overcome this barrier and provide support through more virtual means.

> *DT 8 Row 9: "two of them have moved placement actually last week as well. So I'd say that's been a more challenging time. Not for us, but for them, because they've been going through a pandemic. Their placements been breaking down, and they haven't been able to have the support that would normally…So they want to see a safe face they have to wait for our day to be in. I mean, they can talk to us on the phone on teams, which a lot of them are choosing to do. But I think for some of them, it's been really difficult."*

DT 1 feared the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on the mental health of children and their parents/carers and considered the more long-term impact of this. She also referred to the frustrations that parents/carers may place upon school and school staff due to the national restrictions.

> *DT 1 Row 32: "I think we're only just starting to see some of the impact of it. We had a very much honeymoon period at the beginning of half term and our attendances has been fine but now we starting to see random anxieties come out for children and things like that […]. And before half term we were seeing parents' anxiety's coming to the fore. I think I mean this is me I'm not a psychologist at all (laughs). But I think because they can't get hold of big institutions it's very easy to get cross with school."*

DTs also spoke about the additional pressures placed upon their role, with DTs being expected to support children both in school, at home and fulfil more social roles to support the community.

> *DT 1 Row 34: "So yeah there was a lot more not more of a social care role to that during covid and it's sort of switching it back in as a DT."*

DTs shared the impact the national pandemic had upon their role in schools in supporting CYPiC.

4.82 Theme 19: Ongoing changes in CYPiC life

All DTs referred to the ongoing changes in CYPiC lives. This included placement changes, social worker changes and the inconsistency in seeing birth families. DTs referred to the need for nurture in these children's lives and the consistency of relationships and routines in school. In all of the response's DT recognised the lifetime of changes possibly ahead for these CYPiC and the difficulties that might be faced. DT 7 use the word 'constantly' to emphasise the frequency of these changes for some CYPiC.

> *DT 7 Row 22: "constantly stopping and starting in life just for the child which isn't fair."*

This DT further described herself as the "one constant in that life" and placed responsibility on the importance of her role within these ongoing changes for the CYPiC.

> *DT 7 Row 6: "we are generally there one constant in that life that they feel safe with so it's important for them to feel that but obviously you know that relationship is built."*

Several DTs spoke about the inconsistent contact of birth families and the impact this had on the CYPiC emotional needs within the classroom. DTs appeared to feel responsible for prewarning staff and supporting CYPiC throughout these times of uncertainty.

> *DT 1 Row 7: "as well because he's got a very intermittent contact with his family birth family and they just don't turn up and stuff and he gets really angry and worried about it."*

All DTs recognised the ongoing changes for CYPiC and the impact this could have upon their individual needs. They shared the importance of CYPiC having good relationships with the DT and other staff members in school.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research is to explore designated teachers' (DTs) perceptions around their role and highlight systemic factors that help and hinder their support for children and young people in care (CYPiC). The study hopes to contribute to the emerging research base around DTs, providing a greater understanding of how to strengthen their role and support with CYPiC.

This chapter discusses the salient research findings in greater depth and makes reference to previous research and key psychological theories. Previous literature from chapter two will be introduced to consider if the findings from this study contribute or differ from the current research base. The value of integrating the bioecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1995) will be argued across the findings by highlighting the complex factors supporting the DT role. The discussion will then seek to evaluate the methodological approaches within the study with consideration made to the overall trustworthiness of the research. Then, I will discuss the implications for practice broadly and then more specifically for educational psychology. Finally, a conclusion will summarise the thesis.

5.2 Addressing the Research Question

This study considers the following research question:

- *How do Designated Teachers perceive their role and the systemic factors that help and hinder them in supporting Children and Young People in Care?*

This study addressed the research question through eight semi-structured interviews. The findings from the analysis highlighted 19 themes across the DTs regarding their role and responsibilities. The DTs shared various systemic factors that were perceived to help and hinder these responsibilities and processes within the school system.

Nineteen key themes have been synthesised and framed using the bioecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1995) to show the contextual factors influencing the role. The broader level of the chronosystem will be explored first to consider how events such as the Covid-19 pandemic and the ongoing changes in CYPiC lives have shaped the surrounding systems of the DT. Next, the contextual factors within the macrosystem and exosystem will be considered before discussing the network of relations in the mesosystem. Finally, the DTs' reciprocal relationships will be discussed in the microsystem before drawing on the

individual characteristics of the DT. Throughout the discussion links will be made between findings and the process-person-context-time (PPCT) model and these key findings will be shown clearly within a table (Figure 12).

5.21 Chronosystem

The chronosystem refers to the time element of the PPCT and describes the impact of changes and events over time. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, many restrictions have been placed on schools, including social distancing and closures, for two periods of time (DfE, 2021). DTs within this study acknowledged the impact of the pandemic upon a range of systemic levels (Theme 19). At a microsystems level, DTs within this study perceived the limited face-to-face contact with parents/carers as a hindering factor. Empathy and understanding (Theme 4.2) were crucial to their relationship with parents/carers, but this felt increasingly challenging to provide with limited interpersonal connections and less visibility at school. Furthermore, DTs reflect on the difficulties between teacher and parent/carer relationships in the mesosystem, which DTs felt responsible for supporting. Participants reflected upon how challenging the pandemic had been for CYPiC in unstable placements. DTs appeared to find it challenging to provide consistent support and routine in school, which research shows are essential factors in the development of CYPiC (Brewin & Statham, 2011).

There is a breadth of research to indicate that ongoing changes in CYPiC lives can be a barrier to their overall development in school (Brewin & Statham, 2011; Driscoll, 2013). In line with previous literature, DTs perceived the ongoing and constant changes in CYPiC lives to impact their social and emotional needs (Theme 19) (Ford et al., 2007; Rock et al., 2015). Furthermore, DTs described problems with the regular changes of social workers, which reflects previous findings (Driscoll, 2013; Ofsted, 2012). For DTs, they felt greater responsibility in being the one constant for the CYPiC, which helped provide a sense of safety and security during these times of instability (Theme 3.1). This finding supports previous research by Greenwood and Kelly (2019) and Brewin and Stratham (2011), who show the value in key relationships for CYPiC during periods of change.

5.22 Macrosystem

One of the themes shared by DTs within the macrosystem was regarding ‘belief systems or ideology’ (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p.26). DTs perceived the inclusive views of the community to be a crucial factor in their role (Theme 17.1) which resides in the context

element of the PPCT model. Within the literature, arguments around the definition of inclusion continue due to its situation within the context of society, culture, history, and politics (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994). Ofsted (2020) term inclusion as the following:

> *"Educational inclusion is more than a concern about any one group of pupils such as those pupils who have been or are likely to be excluded from school. Its scope is broad. It is about equal opportunities for all pupils." (Ofsted, 2000, p. 4).*

Equality and inclusion are highlighted as a commitment of the Government within the SEND Code of Practice (DfE, 2015). Reference is made to CYPiC being a priority group due to their vulnerability. While DTs did not refer to national agendas and policies, they showed an awareness of the political agenda of inclusion within education. DTs in this study used language to show their belief systems with value placed on the inclusion for all children regardless of needs, behaviours, and backgrounds.

Leslie and Mohammed (2015) found that the attitudes and beliefs of school members and the wider community impact the inclusion of CYPiC. In this study, some DTs perceived the inclusion of CYPiC as a challenge historically for some community members. This finding reflects the historical shift there has been around inclusive beliefs across education over time (Norwich, 2019) and the changes across policies for the inclusion of CYPiC due to the social, cultural, and historical changing systems (DfE, 2009). Interestingly, DTs perceived themselves as having a role in challenging beliefs that did not fit with their belief system around inclusion. This finding aligns with their key responsibilities in ensuring that CYPiC have inclusion across home and school contexts (DfE, 2018b).

Furthermore, DTs acknowledged the stigma associated with being a CYPiC within the community and emphasised the importance of minimising these differences where possible for CYPiC and their parents/carers (Theme 17.2). Previous literature describes the value in publicly treating CYPiC similar to their peers (Berridge et al., 2015) whilst discretely addressing individual needs (Brewin & Stratham, 2011). Driscoll (2011) indicated that some CYPiC felt DTs were not sensitively communicating their status in front of peers, which was a barrier to their relationship. Within this study, all DTs appeared to consider their behaviour in minimising differences for CYPiC. Furthermore, DTs felt they had a role in understanding CYPiC individual perceptions around being 'in care', which was similar to the findings of Goodall (2014). DTs gathered pupil voice to support their understanding and decision-making for CYPiC across the school system. Thus, the macrosystem beliefs around CYPiC

status appeared to impact the ethos and policies in school and the relationships formed with CYPiC by the DT.

5.23 Exosystem

In the context element of the PPCT model, the exosystem, refers to the structures within school and the systems of the local authority which indirectly impact the DT role. Previous literature has indicated that a whole school ethos can be important when supporting CYPiC (Brewin & Statham, 2011; Edwards, 2016; Kelly et al., 2020; Leslie & Mohammed, 2015). Within this study, a key theme was the importance of the whole school ethos in facilitating the DT relationships through a climate of nurture and support (Theme 11.1). Through ensuring the school was welcoming and inclusive, it appeared that parents/carers felt better able to form positive, trusting relationships with the DT. Kelly et al (2020) suggested that a whole school approach can help to reassure parents/carers that the school system will support their CYPiC. Additionally, parents/carers may feel a greater sense of belonging to the school, allowing them to feel valued and engage more effectively with DT about their CYPiC (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

An important ecosystemic factor identified in this study was senior leadership and the central role it can play in facilitating school ethos (Theme 11.4). The openness and visibility of senior leadership was perceived to be a helping factor in the welcoming and supportive feeling of the school. Ofsted (2019) further illustrate how the accessibility of senior leadership is linked to the overall school culture. In addition to this, DTs felt more able to seek and receive support themselves. Literature indicates the critical role headteachers have in creating a shared vision and ethos, empowering staff, and facilitating collaboration across the community (Ainscow & Miles, 2009; Billingsley et al, 2018). When senior leadership emphasises the importance of the community's wellbeing, it can positively affect all members, e.g. pupil attendance, home relationships and staff retention (Banerjee, Weare, & Farr, 2014).

The Children and Young Persons Act (HM Government, 2008) highlights the importance of providing high aspirations for CYPiC. Within the more recent statutory guidance, DTs are responsible for ensuring there is an ethos of high expectations and must ensure that culture is promoted by listening to pupils' views and valuing this in their learning (DfE, 2018b). DTs recognised the associated poorer outcomes for CYPiC (DfE, 2020) and understood their responsibilities in promoting this across their school. In this study, DTs

emphasised the importance of shared aspirational values within their school ethos, facilitated through senior leadership approaches (Theme 11.2). DTs felt more able to promote aspirational outcomes within a school that shared this ethos, emphasising the importance of senior leadership promoting these values (Graham, 2012). Sugden (2013) suggests that this is important as CYPiC who are praised and acknowledged within a school environment can engage better in all learning opportunities in school.

There is a breadth of research to indicate that the flexibility of support to meet CYPiC differences promotes their achievements and aspirations (Berridge et al., 2015; Brewin & Statham, 2011; Greenwood & Kelly, 2020). In line with previous findings, DTs prioritised the personalisation of curriculum and behavioural policies to meet the individual needs of CYPiC (Theme 11.3) (Goodall, 2014; Whitehouse, 2014). Within this study, DTs placed focus on the incorporation of CYPiC strengths or interests into their curriculum. Leslie and Mohammed (2015) suggest that tailored support packages for CYPiC can link to the overall ethos of schools.

Autonomy was perceived as necessary in the DT's role when adopting policies and curriculum to meet CYPiC needs. The sense of autonomy highlighted by some DTs contrasts with the findings of Goodall (2014). Goodall (2014) found that, in general, DTs felt a reduced sense of autonomy and control and lacked knowledge in improving school systems. Research has found that autonomy is a strengthening factor for teachers' wellbeing when senior leadership value this across the school system (Ofsted, 2019). The supportive whole school community ethos led by senior leadership identified in this study could contribute to DTs sense of autonomy and confidence in fulfilling this responsibility.

Increasing knowledge in the school system is vital to facilitating the overall ethos for CYPiC (Kelly et al., 2020). While Kelly et al (2020) refers directly to attachment theory, the paper suggests that teachers' understanding was a factor in the overall ethos. Fletcher-Campbell et al (2003) large scale study indicated that over half of DTs did not receive training around supporting CYPiC. Since this study, there is a statutory requirement placed on governing bodies for DTs to have appropriate training for the role (HM Government, 2008), and in this study, DTs perceived themselves as being well trained (Theme 12.1). More recent research found that DTs had attended LA training; however, DTs raised questions around the appropriateness of this training (Goodall, 2014). Goodall's (2014) study found that DTs wished for training that met the individual needs of the school and CYPiC and not a

'one size fits all' approach. This finding is somewhat different from the views in previous research where DTs had just wished for further training (Berridge et al., 2009; Fletcher-Campbell et al., 2003). Within this study, DTs were happy about the high level of training they received through VS and the LA, which differs slightly from previous findings. DTs appeared to value repeated refresher training sessions on topics such as attachment and trauma. During the time of the research study, the EP service offered a range of free training workshops to the LA, which many of DTs had accessed and valued. In this study, DTs had a good awareness of the broad range of training packages EPs could offer to support the individual needs of their CYPiC. This finding contrasts with Whitehouse's (2014) thesis, which found DTs had a poor understanding of what training EPs could provide and had received limited EP training.

VS have a key responsibility in increasing DTs awareness of CYPiC needs through information sharing such as training (Drew & Banerjee, 2019). In this study, DTs valued the training provided by VS and placed increased importance on the information given around local and national contexts for CYPiC (Theme 12.1). From an ecosystemic perspective, DTs could be valuing the additional knowledge around what systemic factors in the community or nationally might be impacting their role and the CYPiC in their schools. Providing information around the local and national context for CYPiC may further support the DTs own social identity (Tajfel et al, 1979). DTs may be able to identify shared systemic factors and commonalities across the LA and nationally in training forums

DTs perceived whole school training to be a helping factor in their role. Whilst they placed value on their own knowledge, DTs recognised the importance of sharing information and embedding knowledge across the whole school system for CYPiC to have the best chances of success (Theme 12.2). Through an ecosystemic lens (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), DTs supported the overall understanding and development of CYPiC by sharing knowledge with members of the school community, such as non-teaching staff and parents/carers. Some DTs spoke about ways to embed this knowledge in school by having time with teachers and exploring what it looks like in practice. Similarly, Kelly et al (2020) found that reflective practice and discussion around training sessions provided opportunities for school staff to bring theory into practice. Teachers felt regular training helped to support a shift in school ethos. The reflective approach taken by the DT to training helped to increase the understanding of school staff around CYPiC. This finding could link to Kolb's Learning

Cycle theory, which emphasises the importance of an individual's experiential learning through a reviewing process (Kolb, 1984).

Previous thesis research indicates that DTs perceive their role as being misunderstood within their school and by external professionals and feel a sense of 'invisibility' (Goodall, 2014). Within this study, DTs felt there was a poor understanding of their responsibilities within their school system (Theme 14.1). The inadequate knowledge of school staff around the DT role was previously shared by Fletcher-Campbell et al (2003); however, despite the role now being statutory, the sense of being unrecognised has continued. Possible considerations around other's misunderstandings of the role could result from the multiple roles that DTs have within their school. This research study and previous studies have shared this finding (Theme 2.1) (Goodall, 2014; Whitehouse, 2014). One DT within this study stated that she wished other staff to recognise "*That it's not just a little added on little thing*" (DT 8 Row 34). Even though DTs have had a statutory role since 2008, there continues to be only a small research base that focuses solely upon their perceptions which could be a barrier to the breadth of understanding around the role (HM Government, 2008). Secondly, there could be national barriers towards recognition of the role. Within this study, one DT suggested that there was limited teaching around the role or needs of CYPiC at the more national level within teacher training.

DTs expressed that schools provided limited recognition for the positive work they offered to CYPiC and their surrounding adults (Theme 14.2). Feeling recognised and valued within roles is key to teachers' wellbeing and engagement (Ofsted, 2019). DTs' perceptions of not being recognised could facilitate their feelings of isolation in their school. This finding links to previous research that indicated DT's frequently felt they were working on the margins despite their significant role (Goodall, 2014). Within this study, some DTs wished for recognition of their school in supporting CYPiC, not just them as individuals. It appeared that DTs wanted to elevate the status of CYPiC across the community, which is a crucial responsibility outlined for a DT (DfE, 2018b) but felt they did not have the understanding or power to know how to do this.

5.24 Mesosystem

The DT has a key responsibility in ensuring they are working with a range of professionals and social workers through multi-agency working (DfE, 2018b). Within this study, DTs perceived joint working as an essential part of their role in supporting CYPiC

(Theme 8.1). This finding reflects the SLR findings, where multi-agency work was noted as a strength in the support offered to CYPiC (Berridge et al., 2015; Brewin & Statham, 2011; Driscoll, 2013; Edwards, 2016; Goodall, 2014; Whitehouse, 2014) and can support CYPiC overall inclusion in school (Leslie & Mohammed, 2015). DTs in this study spoke about the strengths of having greater shared understanding across contexts. The ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) would suggest that the CYPiC development is across multiple levels, and CYPiCs' behaviour should not be considered in isolation from the surrounding systems (Dowling & Osborne, 2018). Therefore, it is vital to have a breadth of knowledge across these systems to know how best to support accordingly. Furthermore, DTs perceived a value in the CYPiC, seeing everyone working together, which supported their trusting relationship with the CYPiC.

The findings indicated that DTs perceived professional support in joint work as valuable to their role (Theme 8.2). Previous literature has highlighted a role for VS in supporting the effectiveness of multi-agency working (Drew & Banerjee, 2019; Driscoll, 2013; Ofsted, 2012). Driscoll (2013) highlighted the essential role VS could play in supporting the social worker and DT relationship. Similarly, in this study, DTs valued the knowledge of ESOs and their role in advocating and challenging other professionals so they could continue to maintain positive relationships.

Previous literature has highlighted the essential role EPs can play in facilitating multi-agency work (Whitehouse, 2014) and the value of EP's consultation skills to support joint planning and problem solving (Boorn, 2008; Norwich et al., 2010). Within this study, only two DTs placed value on the EP role within multi-agency work as helping their role, reflecting the findings of Whitehouse (2014), where there was minimal involvement at this level. One DT spoke highly of an EP's group consultation skills in supporting solution-focused group work for a CYPiC. Whilst this highlights some of the benefits EPs can bring to consultation, most DTs did not share this experience.

Whitehouse's thesis (2014) highlighted the frustrations shared by DTs around EP support with specific reference to capacity, funding and overall understanding of services. In this study, DTs shared some of these frustrations regarding limited contact with EPs due to their high workload and turnover (Theme 7.2). Some barriers were perceived in the individual 'expert' approaches of EPs, which DTs did not perceive as helpful. Wagner (2000) defines this as *"bringing expertise from a psychological perspective"* and offering direction

within consultation (Wagner, 2000, p. 12). It could be suggested that there was limited collaboration in the EP's interactions during the consultation with the DT. Collaboration is suggested to support problem-solving, which can be a central component of effective consultation (Wagner, 2000).

The DT role can be emotionally challenging due to the demands of working with varying needs and backgrounds of CYPiC (Berridge et al., 2015; Edwards, 2016; Goodall, 2014; Whitehouse, 2014). This study showed that DTs share similar feelings around the complexity and difficulty of cases and value opportunities to offload (Theme 6.2, 14.3). Edwards (2016) applies the emotional labour theory to understand the high emotional management needed when dealing with CYPiC own emotional presentation or complex histories. Previous research suggests it would benefit DTs to have support to manage their emotional needs related to the role (Edwards, 2016; Goodall, 2014). Edwards (2016) further suggested the importance of having peer support in schools to support teacher's wellbeing. In this study, some DTs were receiving support internally in school through their colleagues or senior staff members. Having time to reflect and offload with colleagues who understood their role was perceived as a helping factor to their role. What seemed apparent were the links between the exosystemic factors such as school ethos and mesosystemic factors such as supportive relationships. From an ecosystemic perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), the overall school ethos could be a helping factor in the supportive relationships formed around the DT in school. Previous research similarly suggests that there are better outcomes for staff members when emphasis is placed on supporting the wellbeing of the whole school community which is driven by senior leadership (Banerjee et al., 2014)

The regular support from VS was valuable to the DT role (Theme 6.1). This finding mirrors the findings of Ofsted (2012), who found that DTs perceived VS support as very positive. DTs were regularly feeling able to seek help from VSH and VS through their availability and accessibility. The value DTs placed on the supervisory role of ESO was salient across all interviews. ESOs provided this support to DTs through termly meetings and other forms of contact (Theme 6.2). Whilst Goodall (2014) research indicated DTs perceived the role as demanding, none of the DTs referred to specific supervisory support or having a space to reflect on their actions and overcome emotional challenges. DTs valued the qualities of the ESOs in these interactions, which included their knowledge, openness, reflection skills and challenging questions. Likewise, DTs valued knowledge and reflection skills in their internal support within their schools. These skills are qualities needed in the best supervisors

(Hawkins & McMahon, 2020). There are multiple definitions of supervision across literature due to the complex process this can involve. Scaife (2003) defines supervision as a process in which a formal arrangement between a supervisor and supervisee/s is made. This process allows individuals to think about their work and how best to provide the best service and enhance their personal development (Scaife, 2003). Despite there being a shared feeling of support across most DTs from school and VS, there was still a sense of hope for greater recognition of their needs and more protected time and space to reflect. It could be argued that DTs in this study seemed to understand the value of supervisory processes due to their experiences and therefore seek to gain more protected time for this to support development in their professional role.

VS provide networking meetings regularly in LAs to support DTs and raise the profile of CYPiC (Drew & Banerjee, 2019; Ofsted, 2012). In this study, DTs had the experience of forums and networking events in their LA (Theme 10.2). Some DTs described DT forums as a space where they could network and share collective experiences with similarly minded individuals in a large group capacity. This finding contrasts with Goodall's (2014) thesis, where there were no opportunities to network with other DTs and a sense of reduced group identity. While DTs in this study had networking experience, it was apparent that DTs still wished for increased opportunities to form supportive links across schools. Again, DTs' sense of being unrecognised and feeling isolated could contribute to this. Belonging theory would suggest that DTs may benefit from making further connections with other DTs to increase their sense of connectedness (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Opportunities that promote social belonging allow for validation and sharing of similar experiences and increase self-value feelings (Walton et al, 2012). This sense of belonging could be facilitated through increased networking and links so that DTs feel a greater sense of validation and recognition for the work in their role.

5.25 Microsystem

DTs perceived their relationship with the CYPiC as a vital part of their role (Theme 3.1). The SLR indicated that a positive relationship with a key adult is an important factor in supporting CYPiC in school (Berridge et al., 2015; Brewin & Statham, 2011; Edwards, 2016; Greenwood & Kelly, 2020; Kelly et al., 2020). DTs perceived trust as a strengthening factor in the relationship and felt that this could be achieved over time by providing ongoing and accessible support. The key adult relationship can strengthen CYPiCs' feeling of security, value and belonging within their school (Greenwood & Kelly, 2019; Kelly et al., 2020). Kelly

et al (2020) indicated that the positive relationships and attachments were helped through the listening skills of the key adult. DTs within the study emphasised the qualities of listening through their role, and all DTs referred to their responsibilities in gathering pupil voice, which is outlined in the statutory guidance (DfE, 2018b). This document states that DTs are responsible for gathering pupil views directly and ensuring pupils' views are gathered for their PEPs.

Martindale (2020) highlights the importance of DTs gathering pupil voice through the PEP but emphasises that this process should be purposeful. In this study, DTs appeared to understand the significance of the PEP but perceived there to be barriers in gathering it purposefully through standardised questions (Theme 15.2). Some DTs felt this reinforced the feelings of being different for CYPiC. Other DTs felt these were not purposeful in gathering the authentic voice and preferred to use more incidental experiences. DTs perceived pupil voice to be important in planning for their curriculum in school with the focus upon listening to CYPiC strengths and interests (Theme 11.3). Brewin and Stratham (2011) suggested that this one trusting relationship in the microsystem could impact the networks across the mesosystem. In this study, there was a link between the trusting relationship in gathering pupil voice and DTs' role in advocating for CYPiC at a more exosystemic level to support policies and curriculum. In turn, CYPiC may feel better listened to and feeling a greater sense of belonging within their school.

In line with the DT responsibilities (DfE, 2018b), all DTs perceived themselves as having a role in creating positive links to home through parents/carers. This study found that DTs valued open communication with the home, which increased understanding around the CYPiC (Theme 4.1). It appeared that the whole school ethos around supporting the community was a helping factor in the openness of parents/carers to communicate with the DT (Theme 11.1). As shown in other research, the increased understanding of the home context helped facilitate the positive relationship between the CYPiC and DT (Edwards, 2016; Kelly et al., 2020). Information from home also helped support teaching staff in preparing for any changes in CYPiC behaviour in class. In Goodall's (2014) research, the increased understanding helped 'lighten the load' for staff. DTs within this study perceived themselves as having a role in providing empathy and understanding to parents/carers and even providing space for parents/carers to offload when needed (Theme 4.2). Ensuring that they were available to carers and provided purposeful forms of communication was a crucial factor in this relationship.

DTs kept the child at heart across all interactions with teachers, parents/carers and social workers (Theme 3). As previously noted, DTs were fulfilling their responsibilities in gathering pupil voice, which enabled them to understand the CYPiC views better and advocate for them across the surrounding systems. As a corporate parent to the CYPiC, DTs have a special responsibility in advocating for the child (DfE, 2018). DTs felt this involved challenging others' views to ensure that CYPiC were getting the proper support. For some DTs, they thought they needed the help of others to feel more confident in advocating for the child. This finding emphasises the importance of DTs feeling supported in their role to fulfil this responsibility.

DTs emphasised the importance of drawing on the strengths of CYPiC and felt it was important to share these across their multiple interactions around the child. This positive approach was deemed a helping factor in strengthening their relationship with the CYPiC and supporting the relationships between other surrounding adults and the CYPiC. From an ecosystemic perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), the DTs' microsystemic interactions could have a positive influence upon their mesosystem. It appeared that DTs used elements of positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) to support the nurturing of CYPiC with other adults. Positive psychology attempts to draw upon the individual's strengths and encourage more creative thinking rather than focus on negative tendencies (Martín, 2017). In this study, DTs perceived it valuable to look at 'what's working well' rather than focusing upon deficits in situations involving the CYPiC.

5.26 Individual

The individual characteristics were considered as part of the person element of the PPCT model. DTs as individuals were committed to their role and to supporting the lives of CYPiC. Part of this commitment seemed to relate to their empathy for the CYPiC journey and their passion for wanting the best outcomes for these children (Theme 1). Previous research found that DT's strong emotional connection to CYPiC helped their overall drive to support their development (Goodall, 2014). The individual passions of DTs could be linked to their motivations to advocate for CYPiC, be aspirational and keep them in mind across all their interactions. Fletcher-Campbell et al (2003) suggest that governing bodies should consider DT's individual qualities. The findings from this study support this notion as it appears the individual qualities of DTs could impact on their motivations in supporting CYPiC within their roles.

Within this study, DTs referred to increased autonomy in their role, a breadth of knowledge around CYPiC and some DTs referred to their connections with others. Self-determination theory would suggest that DT's motivation within their role could be driven by these elements (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Self-determination is described as autonomy, competence and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Regarding autonomy, DTs perceived themselves to have a sense of independence within their schools through senior leadership support. DTs' competencies were shown through their knowledge around training, theories and individual experiences in the role. These qualities relate to the resource characteristics described in the person element of the PPCT model. Finally, relatedness can refer to a sense of belonging to others. DTs described a sense of support in school and described some opportunities for networking. However, DTs still shared a desire for greater belonging, validation and recognition within their DT community. This theory helps to understand better how to motivate and support DTs in fulfilling their essential and vital role with CYPiC through considering how to improve each element of self-determination.

5.27 Summary of Findings in Process-Person-Context-Time Model

Tudge et al (2009) argue that all studies guided by bioecological theory should present explicit links to the PPCT model as it is a fundamental part of the developed theory. The findings have been discussed above with links made to the PPCT model and previous literature. To make the link to the PPCT more explicit the key findings have be described in the model below to support overall understanding.

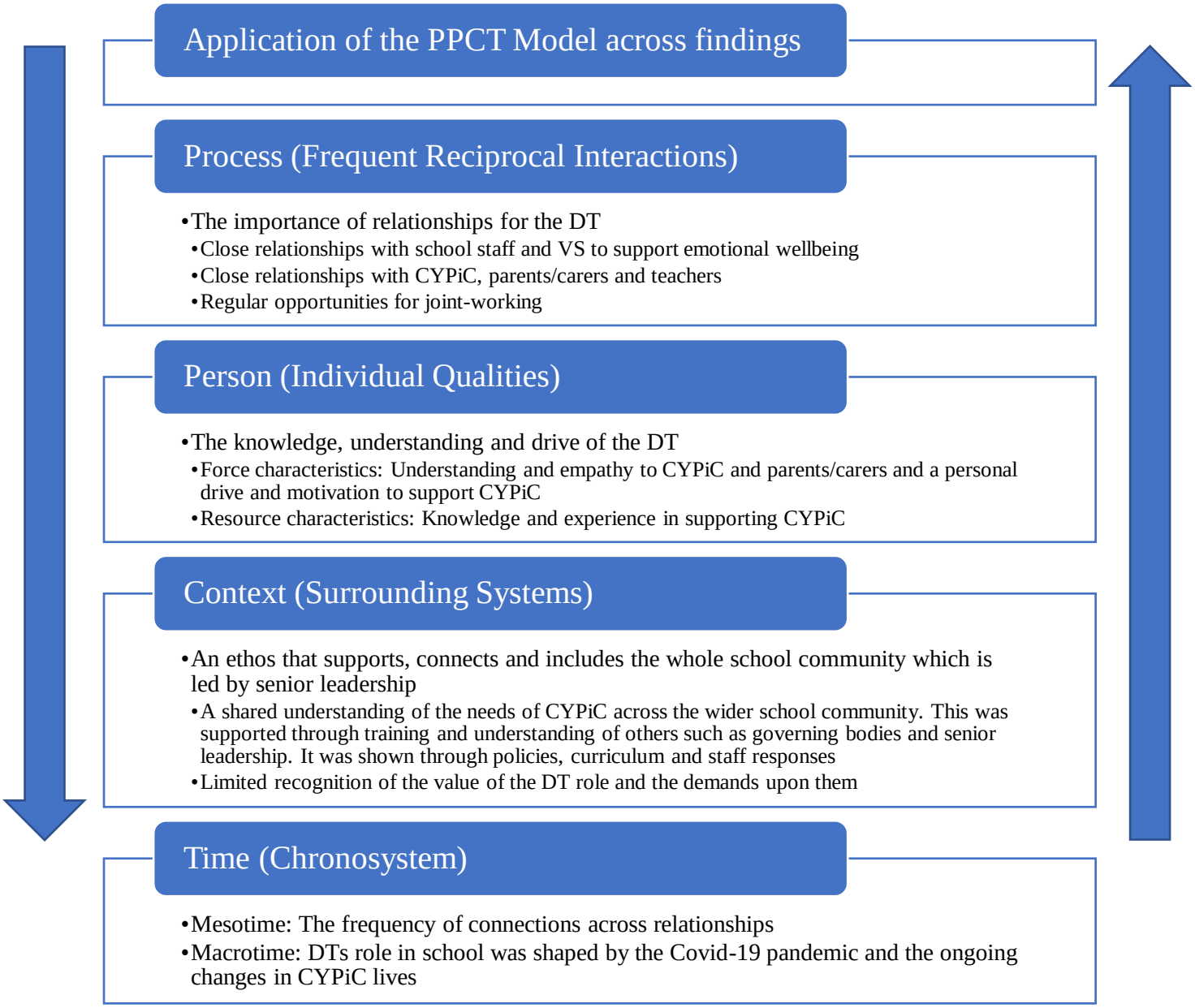


Figure 12:The key findings linked to the PPCT model (Bronfenbrenner, 1995)

5.3 Methodological Considerations

5.31 Sampling

I initially aimed to compare primary and secondary school DTs by having five participants within each group. The purpose of this was to explore the differences in the roles across settings, which was an area of future research. During the sampling stages, there were difficulties in purposively sampling secondary school DTs, and by March, it was decided not to attempt further to recruit other schools. Whilst some possible insights have been described across DTs from primary and secondary school, no clear comparisons of experiences were

apparent. Due to the small sample size, this research question was removed through the process. Limitations could be considered around the homogeneity of the sample due to mixtures of settings and role of staff; however, due to the limited response rate, I could not address these factors.

Participants were purposively sampled through ESOs making the first contact with DTs who met the criteria or through DTs responding to criteria at a VS DT forum. In some respects, DTs were self-selecting in nature as they chose to volunteer for the study, and it is considered whether this impacted the individual characteristics of DTs who took part. The DTs who responded to ESOs information may have already had positive links to the VS team. Secondly, the participants who volunteered at the DT forum would have been already keen to increase their knowledge and be a part of networking events. Therefore, it could be possible that the research study has captured the perceptions of DTs who may be more engaged with their responsibilities as DT. This suggestion should be considered within the possible transferability of findings.

5.32 Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were valuable within this study for supporting the research aims of gathering rich data through flexible approaches. I used a schedule for all interviews to support overall credibility; however, there was flexibility in the order of questions. This allowed for pertinent issues to be explored in-depth and increased the flow to the overall conversation.

Following the interview, several DTs thanked the researcher for the opportunity of being heard, and a couple of DTs reflected on the convenience of the interview being virtual. There were no technical issues for most of the virtual interviews, and I could clearly see and hear participants and respond with active listening. For DT 8, technical difficulties were experienced at the start of the interview where the camera would not work. I restarted the meeting, apologised for the slight delay, and ensured the participant was happy to continue. On a couple of occasions, the screen froze, making it difficult for the interviewer to respond to non-verbal cues. Previous research has suggested this could be a barrier to full participant engagement (Archibald et al., 2019).

A rapport was built with the participant through active listening skills such as nodding, smiling and responding “yes” to expressions. I reflected on the possible limitations of this through the transcription process and considered whether I had unintentionally

promoted responses. I acknowledged this within the pilot interview and ensured in other interviews I was more conscious in answers and used more neutral terms such as ‘okay’.

The critical realist lens considers that the social interactions with participants may have shaped their view of ‘reality’ through the influence of my beliefs, values and responses (Robson & McCartan, 2016). As I was actively involved in this process, I took steps to enhance the trustworthiness of data through reflexibility within and after the interview (See Section 3.7).

5.33 Thematic Analysis

TA was deemed a valuable approach in this research study as it allowed for in-depth analysis of DTs perceptions whilst considering the context of these. The study's credibility and trustworthiness were increased by following the six-stage model of analysis and completing a 15-Point Checklist of Criteria stage quality check (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Whilst a methodological process strengthened the examination of views, it should be considered that the themes were generated through the researchers own interpretations. Braun and Clarke (2013) emphasise the importance of acknowledging the researcher's active role throughout the analysis stages in identifying salient themes.

Braun and Clarke (2013) suggest that the skills and knowledge of the researcher completing the TA are essential. Checking stages with my university supervisor and a group of fellow qualitative research third year TEPs, supported overall understanding. The peer research group provided opportunities for analysis stages to be shared and open and honest discussions about the process. The reliability of the stages within the TA could have been improved through inter-rater reliability checks, which fits into a critical realist position. Inter-rater checks can support the consistency measure between two judgments across a data set and, therefore, increase the coding responses' trustworthiness (O’Connor & Joffe, 2020). Limitations, however, can be considered with this method as it assumes coding should be objective and minimises the value in the researcher’s interpretations (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

5.34 Integration of the Bioecological Model

The use of adeductive, top-down approach creates limitations to the data analysis when integrating the bioecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) in the final overriding themes. A deductive approach was considered from the onset of the research process and thus may have implicitly and unconsciously influenced decisions throughout the analysis that allowed the codes and themes to fit into the systemic levels. The study has aimed to be

transparent throughout all stages of the analysis shown in Table 7. Reflexive considerations are made to the model throughout the development of interview questions and data analysis to support the overall confirmability of the findings.

Despite these limitations, the integration of the model is deemed valuable in understanding the data set clearly and in line with the flexible nature of TA. I perceived that the bioecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1995) was an overall strength. It gave the researcher a lens through which to view the DT not only as an individual but within connected systems and contexts. This broader view provided a greater understanding of systemic helping and hindering factors that closely link to future implications for schools and services working with CYPiC.

5.35 Trustworthiness of Research

As discussed in the methodology, several steps were taken to ensure trustworthiness throughout the research.

The research diary helped to guide my thought processes throughout the various stages in the research project. For example, time was taken between interviews for immediate thoughts to be gathered and to consider whether any biases or power imbalances could have impacted the perceptions given. Furthermore, during the analysis stages time was taken to consider how the bio-ecological model may have impacted the initial coding stages prior to the incorporation of this model. These were then taken to supervision and peer group discussions to further query and checkout the confirmability of my findings. As discussed above, steps were also taken within the analysis to ensure transparency within research data collection and analysis. A research diary was used to guide next steps and to consider what implications could come from the initial findings and what further research could be completed to build upon any limitations identified at each stage of the process.

The research was conducted with eight DTs in one city LA. There are, however, differences in systemic practices across varying LAs regarding how CYPiC are supported, such as varying VS support and LA services. For example, the LA in which the study had taken place had been rated as ‘good’ by Ofsted previously (Ofsted, 2017) and DTs perceptions of their role may have be impacted by the VS team support and LA processes.

While this study aims to understand the role and systemic factors within this LA to support development in this context, it is hoped that the findings can contribute to the current research base and offer further insight into the DT role for those in other LAs. Details around

the LA and school context are therefore provided to support the overall transferability of these findings.

Yin (2013) argues that the generalisation of qualitative research studies should be based on the connections to the current literature base, focusing on any gaps or limitations. The findings from this study were generally consistent with previous literature with descriptions provided when any discrepancies were found. As ecosystemic theory was integrated into the research as a theoretical framework, the overall internal validity and generalisability have arguably increased due to the present study building on the existing knowledge base (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, Bronfenbrenner, 2001).

5.36 Social Desirability

It is important to consider whether the participant's perceptions may have been influenced by the 'TEP' title or knowing my VS role from the DT Forum. One participant demonstrated an awareness of this by apologising for possibly offending me with her description of another EP. For example:

DT 4 Row 29, "I'm sorry if I've offended you with your EP head on."

In this instance, I reassured the DT that she could speak openly. Additionally, a rapport was built with participants at the start of interviews to encourage them to be open and honest in their responses (Cohen et al., 2011). Only sampling DTs from schools that the researcher was not linked to or working in further reduced social desirability.

5.4 Implications for Practice

The results indicate a range of possible implications for practice across the systemic levels. Identifying possible helping and hindering systemic factors can help increase understanding of how to strengthen the DT role for CYPiC.

5.41 Implications for Schools

The individual qualities of the DT appeared to be important in their engagement within the role. Whilst it is acknowledged that it would be difficult for schools to control individual characteristics, it could be beneficial for schools to have an increased awareness of these. Considerations should be made to the interests and motivations of individuals so that they can show a commitment to this role. DTs should be committed to increasing their knowledge through CPD and training opportunities. It also seemed vital for DTs to have good interpersonal skills and listening skills to form positive, trusting relationships with CYPiC

and their parents/carers. Additionally, considerations should be made to DTs with multiple roles in school and consider how these might support or hinder their role as a DT.

DTs would benefit from being given protected time within their role to reflect upon their practise with colleagues. Schools need to recognise the ongoing challenges faced by DTs when working with CYPiC, and there should be access to emotional-based support in schools. Senior leadership should consider the benefit of supervisory processes across the school system to support the broader school context around the CYPiC. Supervision can help to provide both practical and emotional support for a range of staff in contact with CYPiC. Peer supervisory processes could be of value to DTs in schools and could increase the understanding of the role with colleagues.

DTs perceived themselves as having an essential role in supporting teachers and non-teaching staff understanding across school systems. Schools should recognise the value of DTs having time to discuss information and reflect on practice with teachers supporting CYPiC, as this can create a greater whole school understanding of CYPiC needs. The purpose of communication with teachers should also be considered. For example, taking time to understand what communication methods work best for individual staff members supporting CYPiC, e.g., briefings, 1:1 discussions and emails.

5.42 Implications for LAs and Policy Makers

DTs should continue to receive regular training opportunities to support their ongoing knowledge. DTs appeared to value the EP varied workshops offered free across the LA. LAs should consider whether similar support is offered to support not only DTs but a range of professionals that might be in contact with CYPiC. For example, joint training opportunities could help to support relationships across services and increased understanding of roles. It would continue to be valuable for the LA to provide national and local information around CYPiC in training sessions to increase DTs knowledge around contextual factors impacting their role and CYPiC.

This study has highlighted the critical role of senior leaders in driving a whole school ethos that supports DTs and their work with CYPiC. Therefore, emphasis must be placed on supporting senior leaders in the LA by increasing their understanding of inclusion, their knowledge of staff wellbeing, and the crucial need for relationships within school systems. This ethos could be fostered through practices such as whole-school approaches such as training reflections and group supervision. Time should be protected for these processes. An

LA policy or guidance developed with EPs and other LA services around supporting the inclusion of vulnerable groups and the staff around them could provide a more consistent approach in schools and help develop inclusive curriculum and behaviour policies. A well-embedded approach within the community could support the reduction of school exclusions across LAs by implementing psychologically informed approaches.

DTs recognised the increased challenges faced by individuals new to the role. DTs with experience could have a mentoring role to support the knowledge and confidence of new DTs. Peer supervision groups across DTs could be considered as a different way of providing small group support to enhance the practice of DTs. It could allow for further links to be created across the DT community and help to promote their identity. This support could be virtual as the study highlighted the convenience of this. Furthermore, this research study could support DTs new to the role by providing increased knowledge around their responsibilities and support systems.

Networking events should continue to be promoted across the DT community to increase DTs' opportunities to connect and share experiences with like-minded individuals. This group membership could help to promote their sense of belonging and feeling of value. The self-determination theory could also suggest that this 'relatedness' could support overall motivations in the role (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

It is crucial that DTs feel recognised and valued within their role. Schools should ensure that positive recognition is provided through support processes, other forms of direct contact and as part of the whole school ethos. It might be necessary for elements of the role to be discussed and highlighted in briefings across schools so that there is greater shared understanding. VS should continue to support their sense of value by recognising what's working well within their practice. At a broader level, positive recognition could be given at networking events where DTs can share elements of good practice. At a LA level, schools could have opportunities to highlight good whole school practice with CYPiC across briefings and events, and this could support changes to LA policy. On a more national level, the DT role could be given greater consideration at a teacher training level to support whole school understanding of the role.

The variability in PEP forms across LAs can be seen as a barrier to the role of the DT. A more standardised PEP could support the overall efficiency of DTs in their practice when working with CYPiC across LAs. Furthermore, the pupil voice element of the PEP

should be reviewed to ensure that the questions are purposeful. Other forms of gathering pupil voice might be more effective in understanding the needs and aspirations of CYPiC rather than standardised questions.

5.43 Implications for Educational Psychology Practice

The virtual training provided by the EP service across the LA was deemed valuable in supporting the knowledge of DTs and staff within their school system. The broad range of workshops provided in the LA ensured teachers had a good understanding of how to support the individual needs of CYPiC (Theme 12.1). This slightly differed from previous research where school staff wished for greater training opportunities to support their own knowledge (Berridge et al., 2009; Fletcher-Campbell et al., 2003). EPSs could provide similar offers of training and support in LAs to embed the knowledge, with DTs being a prioritised group. As part of this training and support, EPs should seek also to embed this knowledge across the school community and emphasise the importance of reflective practice and evaluation sessions. Reflective practice following training has been found helpful by school staff in previous research in supporting their knowledge (Kelly et al, 2020). Training led by EPs on pupil voice tools may also be valuable to DTs in understanding the needs of CYPiC from varying ages and developmental stages. This knowledge could contribute to the further development of their understanding of CYPiC and PEP processes.

EPs could also use their role to promote the understanding of the DT role across the LA. Within this research DTs perceived their role as often unrecognised and undervalued in schools (Theme 14). This finding was in line with previous research by Goodall (2014) who found DTs were feeling a sense of isolation in their role within their school systems. EPs could highlight the DT role within training sessions and consider offering training to other professionals who work closely with DTs and CYPiC. EPs could also recognise DTs within the development of policies in supporting CYPiC within their EPS and LA.

EPs should consider ways of strengthening relationships with DTs to promote positive outcomes for CYPiC. As shown in previous literature, the understanding of the EP role by DTs continues to be limited (Whitehouse, 2014). EPs should become acquainted with the school DT and ensure that they share the varying forms of support they can provide to support CYPiC needs. Within planning meetings, EPs should ensure CYPiC are on the agenda to discuss any further support needed. As consultation was highlighted as a valuable

form of support, EPs should promote these skills and processes within their schools and attend multi-agency meetings regularly to support this joint problem-solving.

A supportive school ethos was suggested to be a helping factor in the role of the DT (Theme 11). EPs are well placed to support senior leadership and headteachers in understanding the importance of inclusive practices within schools and how to build a sense of support across the school community. EPs' knowledge of ecosystemic theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), can help to support school's understanding of the importance in providing holistic and systemic support around CYPiC.

EPs are well placed to organise supervision within schools (Boorn, 2008). DTs in this study perceived supervisory processes with VS staff as valuable to their role (Subtheme 6.2) and further wished for greater opportunities and time to reflect on their practice with CYPiC (Subtheme 14.3). Strategic work with schools in the LA would help to increase understanding of staff wellbeing and embed the value of supervision or coaching in schools with the senior leadership team. EPs could use their psychological knowledge to inform staff on models of supervision and supervisory processes, such as peer supervision, which EPs could support. This knowledge should further be shared with VS and ESOs. DTs valued the skills and qualities of ESOs in their termly sessions, and additional training by EPs could help facilitate and strengthen this relationship.

5.5 Recommendations for Future Research

There is a limited research base that solely explores the perceptions of DTs; therefore, this study aimed to contribute towards this emerging research base.

In 2018, the Government increased the responsibilities of the DT role to support previously looked after children (PLAC) (DfE, 2018b) and extend the VSH role. It was chosen not to explore the DT role in supporting PLAC within this study due to the differing statutory based responsibilities involved. On reflection, the changes to their statutory duties with PLAC may have impacted DTs perceptions around their role in supporting CYPiC and therefore may have been valuable to explore. Research has suggested that DTs should be a champion of PLAC due to the difficult journeys for some of these children and the poorer associated outcomes (Martindale, 2019). Within this study, one DT referred to the importance of supporting PLAC alongside CYPiC and their foster carers.

DT 2 Row 31: "Often for that family, the adoptive families, it's loads harder because they're not giving up. And I think that we need to join those things together […] the service needs to stick together a little bit more as we're not sharing it enough."

Thus, further research could explore the DT role in supporting PLAC, focusing on the individual needs of this group, relationships with adoptive families and the strengthening factors in helping PLAC and the adults around them.

The present research was undertaken within one city LA in the Midlands. As shown in this study, the DT role is not viewed in isolation but is impacted by varying systemic factors. These factors could be influenced by the specific location and the policies, procedure and services in the LA. It should also be considered that this research was undertaken during the Covid-19 pandemic. As discussed, these time-dependent factors will have shaped the DTs' perceptions around their role and responsibilities. Therefore, further research exploring the systemic factors around DTs could be valuable within another LA at another time to show any consistencies or contrasts of these findings.

As part of a wider piece of research, it could be important to gain perspectives of a range of individuals who work closely with DTs to explore the supporting factors in these relationships. DTs valued their connections with ESOs in VS. It could be interesting to explore this working relationship further with a comparison with VS views. Research could focus on the types of skills that VS perceive themselves as giving to the relationship to support DTs to understand how to strengthen these fully.

Other methodological approaches could be valuable in understanding the shared viewpoints of DTs. For example, Q-methodology could explore the range of viewpoints held within the DT community towards a holistic topic, rather than separating these into themes. This methodology could provide a greater understanding of any convergences or divergences in how DTs or other school staff working with DTs make sense of a topic, e.g., their role and responsibilities, which could lead to implications in how services can understand DTs and support.

It could be of value to explore some of the suggestions made within the implications for practice. For example, supervision and peer supervision for DTs could be explored over time, focusing on the supportive elements in this process and how this enhances their role and practice in working with CYPiC.

Finally, as the relationship between EPs and DTs still appears to be limited across the research base (Whitehouse, 2014), it could be valuable to explore this relationship with schools where DTs work closely with EPs. Exploration could be into the type of work the EP provides in these schools, what aspects of this work are valuable for DTs and the supporting systemic factors that facilitate these processes.

5.6 Conclusion

To conclude, this study explored how DTs perceive their role and the systemic factors that help and hinder their support for CYPiC. It was hoped that through the integration of the bioecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1995), this research could strengthen the understanding of the DT role within a broader context and contribute to the emerging research base. At the heart of this research was the desire to understand how to promote the positive outcomes for a vulnerable group of children and young people.

Overall, this study showed that a wide range of individual qualities and systemic factors significantly impact the role of the DT. CYPiC have a range of individual needs in school, and DTs have a critical role in supporting them, their surrounding adults, and the school system. The important responsibilities of the DT reflect previous literature and policies (DfE, 2018b; Fletcher-Campbell et al., 2003). This vital role was supported through various systemic factors. More specifically, an ethos that promoted the inclusion and connection of the school community and increased understanding of CYPiC across the school system strengthened the DT role. Furthermore, DTs valued having space and time to reflect on their practice with colleagues, VS and across DTs. Whilst DTs continued to have a sense of personal motivation in supporting the lives of CYPiC; they continued to feel misunderstood and unrecognised for their critical role in advocating for CYPiC.

The limitations relating to the quality of the study should be considered when looking at the overall findings. This study was a small sample size within one LA. As shown by the findings, there are specific policies and procedures around CYPiC, which could vary across LAs. Furthermore, consideration should be made to completing real-world research within a national pandemic. As described in the findings, the factors from this chronosystem may have impacted the perceptions and experiences of DTs and further influenced the research process.

Despite these limitations, this study revealed complex systems surrounding the role of the DT and further highlighted helping and hindering factors perceived by DTs in this LA. Perhaps, the biggest strength of this study is the contribution towards future implications. The

integration of the bioecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1995) has provided knowledge on how school staff, professionals and EPs can strengthen the role and overcome barriers at a direct, school or organisational level. At a direct level, it is crucial to consider the support processes for DTs, which could further be of value across a broader school system. At an organisational level, professionals should consider how to continue to increase knowledge of DTs and further support the overall school ethos through senior leadership. Within the LA, the importance of networking opportunities and links for DTs has also been discussed regarding the need to feel a sense of belonging and validation.

Finally, it should be considered as to how this study has given further direction to future research. Further research can help to strengthen the limited research base around DTs and increase the overall recognition of the role. Other research could explore the DT role with PLAC, and it could be interesting to explore in greater depth the mechanisms within their key relationships around a CYPiC.

Overall, this study has provided a greater holistic understanding of the DT role through the perspectives of those in the role and has highlighted a range of systemic factors that support and hinder this. It is hoped that this will provide more significant knowledge of how to support DTs, which will in turn lead to positive changes for CYPiC.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Summary Information from Goodall's (2014) and Whitehouse's (2014) Theses

Title and Author	Type of Study	Sample	Procedure	Findings
An Interpretative Phenomenological Study Exploring Designated Teachers' Experiences of Supporting Looked After Children Danielle Goodall (2014)	IPA qualitative study	6 Designated Teachers from 4 primary schools and 2 secondary schools. Most of the populations in the schools were White British and varied between 3 schools in affluent communities and 3 schools in more socially deprived areas. The LA was a relatively large, rural and affluent authority.	Semi structured interviews completed with participants	Five superordinate themes emerged: - personal commitment and the need for resilience - recognising the child at the centre - the importance of a holistic approach - working on the margins - variability in role and support needs DTs perceived there to be challenges placed on their role such as the time-consuming nature and balancing of other roles. DTS experiences contrasting emotions around supporting CYPiC. DTs had an understanding about the vulnerabilities of CYPiC. DTs had a role in supporting pupil voice and battling with the stigma associated. DTs wished to support their participation but minimise differences. DTs formed positive relationships with key adults around CYPiC. DTS felt parents/carers were key in supporting the needs of CYPiC in school. Information sharing was perceived as

				important and concerns were raised around not seeing professionals who were out of LA. The majority of DTs were not in contact with other DTs and had poor understanding of what was going on in other schools. DTs felt unnoticed in their role in school and not recognised for their work. DTs felt frustrations in their role fully being understood with external professionals who sometimes saw blurred role boundaries. All DTs shared the progression they had made in knowledge and experience in their role. DTs were receiving some training and some DTs gained some internal support but none had external or specific supervision.
An Exploration of Designated Teachers' Perceptions of the Role of Educational Psychologists in Supporting Looked After Children Coleen Whitehouse (2014)	Sequential mixed methods design- quantitative followed by qualitative	Phase 1: 22 DTs from lower, middle, upper, academy and free schools in urban and rural areas Phase 2: 9 DTs- 3 upper, 3 middle and 3 lower schools. Location not specified. Borough LA.	Self-administered questionnaire and semi structured interviews	Phase 1: The responses from the questionnaire showed a variation in contact with EPs across borough and suggested that most DTs had not had contact with EPs in the last year. Qualitative comments raised barriers such as the capacity of EPs. Phase 2: A core theme was around the knowledge and experience of DTs. DTs spoke about their own experience and regularly drew on knowledge from training. DTs shared their experiences of other roles/activities that supported their knowledge in DT role. All DTs perceived

				themselves in having a role in co-ordinating support in school for CYPiC. Information sharing was a key part of the role and working collaboratively with others in multiagency meetings. Some DTs had a direct role in intervention with CYPiC. DTs had a good understanding of CYPiC needs with reference to the individual needs, vulnerabilities and the stories and background. DTs had basic knowledge of what support EPs could provide and placed emphasis upon assessment skills. DTS perceived EPs to work with mainly children with learning needs. They also perceived there to be an inconsistent service with variation in relationships with the link EP. Lack of EP time was also suggested to be an issue with reference also made to funding. DTs demonstrated limited awareness of EPs supporting through a more organisational or multiagency level. DTs wished for a more accessible link EP, greater EP capacity and involvement and greater clarity around training that EPS could provide. There was an overarching theme of frustration with EP support as a DT

Appendix 2: Data Base Search Terms and Results

Data base	SCOPUS
Date of search	14.09.20
Saved search query	(TITLE-ABS (support* OR help*)) AND (ABS ("looked after child*" OR "child* in care" OR "child* looked after" OR "foster child*" OR "child* and young people in care" OR "young people in care")) AND (TITLE-ABS (school* OR education* OR classroom* OR teacher* OR "school staff"))
All Papers	286
Inclusion/Exclusion criteria	2010-2020, English, UK, full text
Papers following inclusion/exclusion criteria	53
Papers included after title screening	18

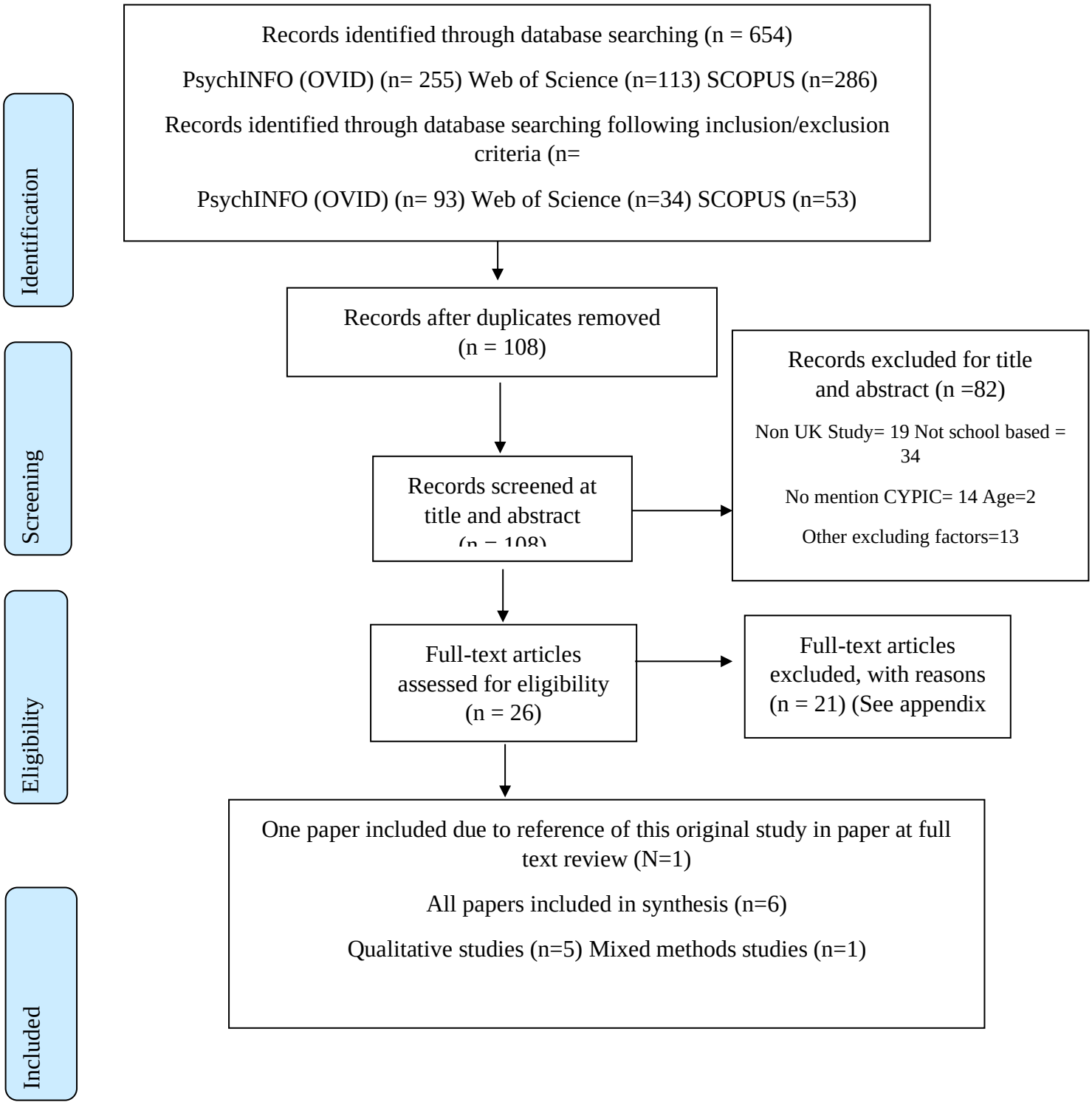
Data base	Web of Science
Date of search	14/09/20
Saved search query	“AB= ("looked after child*" OR "child* in care" OR "foster child*" OR "child* looked after" OR "child* and young people in care" OR "young people in care") AND AB= (school* OR education* OR teacher* OR "school staff" OR "Classroom*") AND AB= (support* or help*)
Papers	113
Inclusion/Exclusion criteria	2010-2020, country UK, English, (all should be peer reviewed status)
Papers	34
Duplicate screening	29
Title screening	1

Data base	PSYCINFO
Date of search	14/09/20
Saved search query	("looked after child*" or "child* in care" or "child* looked after" or "foster child*" or "child* and young people in care" or "young people in care").ab. AND (school* or Teacher* or education* or "school staff" or Classroom*).ab. AND (support* or help*).ab.
Papers	255
Inclusion/Exclusion criteria	2010-2020, English, peer reviewed (unable to exclude through country)

Papers	93
Duplicate screening	26
Title Screening	7

Appendix 3: PRISMA Flow Diagram

A PRISMA Flow Diagram of systematic search on databases (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, Altman, & Group, 2009)



Appendix 4: Papers Excluded at Full Text

Title of Paper	Excluded Reason
The Virtual School for Children in Out-of-Home Care: A Strategic Approach to Improving Their Educational Attainment *Jackson (2015)*	Focus on reviewing VS model and not on what support CYPiC in schools
Leading protective factors for children living out of home: A literature review. *Zabern & Bouteyre (2018)*	Systematic Literature Review
"Every child that is a foster child is marked from the beginning": The home-school communication experiences of foster parents of children with disabilities *Mires, Lee, & McNaughton (2018)*	Perceptions of foster carers and not school staff
Educational Opportunities and Obstacles for Teenagers Living in Domestic Violence Refuges *Bracewell, Larkins, Radford, and Stanley (2020)*	Not focused on CYPiC but teenagers in domestic violence refuge
Examining the Circles of Adults process for Children Looked After: the role of self-efficacy and empathy in staff behaviour change *Turner & Gulliford (2020)*	Focus upon CoA process less on CYPiC and supporting factors in school
Special educational needs, social care and health *Jay & Gilbert (2020)*	Focus upon SEN levels in CYPiC population not supporting factors. Main focus on SEN population.
Exploring the use of the ARROW literacy intervention for looked after children in a UK local authority *Raspin, Smallwood, Hatfield, & Boesley (2019)*	Focus on literacy intervention impact not school factors
Conceptualising educational provision for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in England *Ott & Higgins (2019)*	Not clear as to the perceptions of education staff as all findings from multiple stakeholders grouped.
Is the Care System to Blame for the Poor Educational Outcomes of Children Looked After? Evidence from a Systematic Review and National Database Analysis	Systematic Literature Review

Luke & O'Higgins (2018)	
What are the factors associated with educational achievement for children in kinship or foster care: A systematic review *O'Higgins, Sebba, Gardner (2017)*	Systematic Literature Review
The consequences of being labelled 'looked-after': Exploring the educational experiences of looked-after children and young people in Wales *Mannay et al (2017)*	Pupil views and not perceptions of school staff
An actor-network theory reading of change for children in public care *Parker (2017)*	Doesn't gather teacher views, analysis of a PEP meeting
The education of looked after children: The social implications of further education *Herd & Legge (2017)*	No perceptions gathered from school staff
Understanding the concept of resilience in relation to looked after children: A Delphi survey of perceptions from education, social care and foster care *South, Jones, Creith & Simonds (2016).*	Less focus upon supportive factors for CYPiC
Looked-after Children: What supports them to learn? *Sugden (2013)*	Pupil views on what supports them and no views from school staff
A systematic review of interventions to support looked-after children in school *Liabo, Gray & Mulcahy (2013)*	Systematic literature review
The mental health, emotional literacy, cognitive ability, literacy attainment and 'resilience' of 'looked after children': A multidimensional, multiple-rater population based study *Rees (2013)*	Assessment of CYPiC and attainment data. Less focus upon supportive factors in school
The needs of looked after children: A rapid response when school placement may be in jeopardy *Peake (2011)*	No perceptions of school staff
Making up Lost Ground: Challenges in Supporting the Educational Attainment of Looked after Children beyond Key Stage 4	Pupil views and no perception of school staff

Driscoll (2013)	
Paired Reading as a Literacy Intervention for Foster Children *Osborne (2010)*	Focus on literacy intervention and less on school factors that support CYPiC
The education of children in care: Agency and resilience. *Berridge (2017)*	Focus upon the perceptions of CYPiC. This paper referred to interviews with teachers. The original paper (Berridge et al, 2015) with information from the interviews was referred to and this was included in the synthesis.

Appendix 5: Critical Appraisal of Selected Papers (CASP)

Selected Papers	Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Is there a clear statement of findings?	How valuable is the research?
Kelly, Watt and Giddens (2020)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not Sure	Not Sure	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Greenwood & Kelly (2019)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not Sure	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Berridge, Bell, Sebba & Luke (2015)	Yes	Yes	Not Sure	Not Sure	Not Sure	No	No	Not Sure	Not Sure	Yes
Driscoll (2013)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not Sure	Not Sure	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Brewin and Statham (2011)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not Sure	Yes	Not Sure	Yes	Yes
Edwards (2015)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not Sure	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

The papers were rated Yes (if papers could confidently answer the question), not sure (if papers could less confidently answer the question) or no (if there was none or very limited evidence in the paper).

Appendix 6: Timeline of Research Procedure

Month and Year	Procedure
June 2020	Discussion with Virtual School about research scope
25th August 2020	Ethics Approval
September 2020- November 2020	Systematic Literature Review completed
October 2020	Discussion with Education Support Officers in Virtual School about criteria for sampling and emails sent to DTs who met this
October 2020	Pilot Interview Completed
November 2020	2 DT interviews completed
November 2020	DT forum held where research study was shared attending DTs
December 2020- January 2021	4 Interviews completed and all 7 interviews transcribed
March 2021	8th DT interview completed and transcribed
March- April 2021	Coding of transcripts and thematic maps created
March-May 2021	Thesis write up
21st May 2021	Final thesis submission
July 2021	Viva

Appendix 7: Participant Information Sheet

School of Psychology

Information Sheet: Designated Teacher

The University of Nottingham
UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

Title: The Designated Teachers role in supporting Children and Young People in Care: An ecosystemic perspective

Researcher: Robyn Bullingham robyn.bullingham@nottingham.ac.uk

Supervisor: Dr. Victoria Lewis lpavl2@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk

Dear Designated Teacher,

My name is Robyn Bullingham and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist, on placement at XXXXXX (LA) Educational Psychology Service. I am doing a Doctorate programme in Applied Educational Psychology and have decided to carry out research in the area of Designated Teachers and their role in supporting children and young people in care.

I would like to invite you to participate in this research project. Before agreeing to do so please read the information below which outlines the nature of the study and what the purpose of your role in this is.

Why have I been asked to take part?

The purpose of the study is to explore your role as a Designated Teacher and how you perceive you support children and young people in care. I am aiming to speak to multiple designated teachers from schools in the local authority and some comparisons may be made between the role in primary and secondary schools.

What is the purpose of the study?

The aim of this research is to gain a greater understanding into your role as a designated teacher in school and explore what factors facilitate and hinder this role. Children and young people in care continue to be a vulnerable group who are statistically more likely to experience social, emotional, and learning needs in comparison to their peers. It is hoped that by gaining your views as a designated teacher it will support the research base into this role and highlight good practice with working with children and young people in care.

Participation in this study is voluntary and you be under no obligation to take part. It is important that you are aware if you do take part you can withdraw at any stage before, during or after without any reason.

What would the research entail if I consent to participate?

If you choose to take part in the research, I will contact you to discuss a suitable time for a virtual interview to take place over a video platform (e.g. MS Teams). This interview should last no longer than 60 minutes. I would like to ask you some questions about your role and factors that may support and hinder. You will have opportunities to discuss these in depth.

The emphasis will be placed on you only discussing things your feel comfortable with. With your permission, all interviews will be audio recorded (not video recorded) and responses will be transcribed and analysed.

Will the research be confidential?

All data collected will be kept confidential and will be in line with the ethical guidelines of the British Psychological Society. Within the write up, numbers will be used to replace your name and school and any further identifiers may also be omitted from the write up, in order to remove the risk of identification.

The data gathered will only be used for the purpose of this research project. All data and recordings will be stored safely on password protected devices, in line with the Data Protection Act (2018) and will be destroyed at completion of the research.

What will happen to the results?

Following the analysis of the findings, an executive summary will be provided to you at end of the research. This executive summary may also be discussed with relevant local authority staff as a means of providing feedback around the designated teacher role. The findings will also be written up as part of the thesis in the Doctorate of Applied Educational Psychology.

Findings from this could possibly be published within future journals. All personal identifiers will remain confidential.

It is hoped that this research will be of value to you and your school and highlight ways of promoting the educational outcomes and wellbeing of children and young people in care.

If there are any concerns about this research or further questions do not hesitate to contact me on the contact details listed above.

Many thanks,

Robyn Bullingham

Trainee Educational Psychologist

If you have any questions about the study, please contact:

Researcher: Robyn Bullingham robyn.bullingham@nottingham.ac.uk

Supervisor: Dr. Victoria Lewis lpavl2@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk

Appendix 8: Participant Consent From

School of Psychology

Designated Teacher Consent Form

The University of Nottingham
UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

Title: The Designated Teacher's role in supporting children and young people in Care: An eco-systemic perspective

The participant should answer these questions independently:

- Have you read and understood the Information Sheet? YES/NO
- Have you had the opportunity to ask questions about the study? YES/NO
- Have all your questions been answered satisfactorily (if applicable)? YES/NO
- Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from the study? (at any time and without giving a reason) YES/NO
- I give permission for my data from this study to be shared with other researchers provided that my anonymity is completely protected. YES/NO
- Do you agree to take part in the study? YES/NO

Signature of the Designated Teacher: Date:

Name of Designated Teacher : (block capitals)

I have explained the study to the above participant and he/she has agreed to take part.

Signature of researcher: Date

Appendix 9: Information on DT's Schools Demographics

A table to show information regarding the school demographics of the sampled 8 schools.

Designated Teacher Participant Number	**School Demographics**
1	- Primary School - ¼ pupils free school meals - Diverse population - 24 languages spoken in school community
2	- Christian Primary School - Over 200 children in school - 1 form entry - Diverse population - Over 1/3 children on pupil premium
3	- Primary School - Over 400 pupils in school - 2 form entry - Mainly white British nationality
4	- Primary School - 2 Form Entry - Top 5% deprivation nationally - Diverse population
5	- Inner city secondary school - Over 1300 pupils - Deprived areas - Diverse population
6	- Secondary school - Around 54% pupils on pupil premium - 43 spoken languages in school community - Diverse population
7	- Primary school - Nearly 500 pupils

	- Around 30% pupils with special education needs
8	- Secondary school and Sixth Form - Over 1600 pupils - Diverse population - Over 20% pupils on pupil premium

Appendix 10: Semi-structured Interview Schedule

The interview will be semi-structured so there will be set questions to guide the conversation but also additional prompts to ensure there is clarification and detail. This draft interview schedule will be piloted with a designated teacher that met the criteria. This piloting stage may result in some of the questions being adapted slightly to ensure that they meet the research questions and needs of the interviewee. Further ethical approval will be gained following supervision, if any changes are considered to hold any ethical risk.

The interview process will not take more than 60 minutes and will take the following format:

An introduction would be given. Within the introduction there will be time to:

- Revisit the information sheet and withdrawal procedure
- Check background information (E.g. school demographics, current roles in school, time in DT role, how many LAC on role, pupils in school)
- Time for questions
- Thank the participant for their involvement

The purpose would be described to the participants as followed:

- The purpose of the interview is to gain greater understanding about your role in supporting children and young people in care in school and to gain your views on the factors and relationships that support and hinder this role. Please take your time when responding to the questions and be as open and honest as you can. There are no wrong, right or silly answers.
- So just before we start, are you still happy to continue with the interview? And do you have any other questions?

<u>Proposed Questions</u>

<u>DT Role</u>

2. *Can you tell me a little bit about what things or activities you might do directly with CYPiC in school to support them?*
    - *How does this promote positive outcomes for the CYPiC?*
    - *Do your other roles within school have an impact on this?*
    - *Voice of the child?*
    - *Do you work with CYPiC directly in schools?*
3. *Can you tell me about how you work with teaching staff in school as a DT?*
    - *What support is perceived as being effective?*
    - *What barriers are there in this communication about the needs of CYPiC?*
4. *Can you tell me how you work with carers and parents in your role as a DT?*
    - *What elements are perceived to be effective?*
    - *Are there any barriers in this work?*
5. *Can you tell me about how you work with social workers in your role as a DT?*
    - *What aspects of this are perceived as being effective in supporting CYPiC?*

- *What barriers are there in this?*

6. *Can you tell me about what your role might be in ensuring school policies are effective for CYPiC?*
    - *How is this effective?*
    - *What challenges are there is doing this?*

Factors impacting role of DTs

7. *Can you tell about what support you receive as a DT?*
    - *What support do you receive internally in school?*
        i. *Prompt: Governing bodies, Head Teacher, Supervision*
        ii. *How this help and hinder the role?*
        iii. *Is there anything further you would like to receive? Anything that would be helpful to receive further in school*
    - *What support do you receive externally to school?*
        i. *Prompt: Virtual School, Social Workers, EPs*
        ii. *How does this help and hinder the role?*
        iii. *Out of the support described what would be the most and least effective?*
        iv. *Is there any further support you would like to receive?*
8. *Can you tell me if there are any key policies and legislations that are currently impacting on your role in supporting CYPiC?*
    - *Are these national or local policies?*
    - *How do these policies help and hinder your role?*

Further Support

9. *How would you like to ideally see your role as a DT in the future?*
    - *Is there anything that could support you even further?*

10. *Is there anything else that you would like to say?*

Probes: why, how, can you tell me a bit more about that, can you give an example of…

Debriefing

At the end of the interview participants would receive full debriefing and be thanked for their involvement. Please see Debrief sheet.

Appendix 11: Participant Debrief Letter

School of Psychology

Designated Teacher Debrief Letter

The University of Nottingham
UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

Dear Designated Teacher,

Thank you for taking part in this research. The information you provided in the interview will help to gain further understanding into your role and ways of supporting children and young people in care.

The information from this interview will be combined with information from other designated teachers in primary and secondary schools. Following the analysis of the findings, an executive summary will be provided to your school. This summary account may also be discussed with colleagues in the local authority, to support understanding around the designated teacher role. The findings will also be written up as part of the thesis in the Doctorate of Applied Educational Psychology. Findings from this could possibly be published within future journals. All personal identifiers will remain confidential.

If at any stage you do not want to be included within the study then please contact me on the email address below. All information will be stored securely following the Data Protection Act (2018) and will be destroyed at the end of the research.

If any part of the interview process has impacted your emotional wellbeing, then please do seek further support and contact the researcher. I will be able to sign post you to external support agencies if this is required.

If you have any further questions about anything to do with the research, then please do contact me or my supervisor on the email address below.

Many thanks again for your involvement.

Robyn Bullingham

Trainee Educational Psychologist

Researcher: Robyn Bullingham robyn.bullingham@nottingham.ac.uk

Supervisor: Dr. Victoria Lewis lpavl2@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk

Appendix 12: 15 Point Checklist for Thematic Analysis

Table 6: *A 15-Point Checklist of Criteria for Good Thematic Analysis Process (Braun & Clarke, 2006)*

Process	Criteria	Reported in Analysis
Transcription	1. Transcription has been completed with high level of detailed and checked against audio for accuracy.	Yes
Coding	2. Each data item has been given equal attention in the coding process.	Yes
	3. Themes are generated from vivid examples and have been thorough, inclusive and comprehensive.	Yes
	4. All relevant extracts for all each theme have been collated.	Yes
	5. Themes have been checked against each other and back to the original data set.	Yes
	6. Themes are internally coherent, consistent, and distinctive.	Yes
Analysis	7. Data has been analysed and	Yes

	interpreted, made sense of and not just described.	
	8. Analysis and data match each other and extracts illustrate analytical claims.	Yes
	9. Analysis tells a convincing organised story about the data and topic.	Yes
	10. A good balance between analytical narrative and illustrative extracts provided.	Yes
Overall	11. Time is allocated to complete all phases of the analyses adequately without giving it a once-over-lightly.	To best degree
Written Report	12. The assumptions and specific approach to thematic analysis are clearly explicated.	Yes
	13. There is a good fit between what you claim you do and what you show is done.	Yes
	14. The language and concepts used are	Yes

	consistent with the epistemological position of the analysis.	
	15. The researcher is positioned as active in the research process and themes don't just 'emerge'.	Yes

Appendix 13: Example of Coded Section of Semi-Structured Interview

Number Row	Transcription of Interview 7	Codes
1a	*Researcher:* *So can you tell me a little bit about some of the things or activities you might do with children and young people in care and within your role as a DT?*	
1b	*DT:* *Well obviously we base what we what we do with our children depending on the needs and their starting points it completely different answers on where they are within the care system within the foster care system you know along with that process. We have had children that have been very much at the beginning at the process the children have been very well established so it does differ depending on…Some of the things that we have had would be we've had play therapy we've had just simple check ins, we've had homework clubs, talk and draw sessions, so obviously emotional stuff that we do.*	• Needs led work • Acknowledging differences in CYPiC journeys • Activities with CYPiC
2a	*Researcher:* *yeah*	
2b	*DT:* *You know it's quite handy because obviously I've build that relationship with them through the school so when they come to us from age 3 but also likewise we've has a family where the oldest is… the youngest is Year 3. Yeah so we build relationships up also we do ICT extra learning it just depends on where they are here we go very much on the needs*	• Building relationship with CYPiC over time • Activities/resources for CYPiC • Needs led work
3a	*Researcher:* *Yeah*	
3b	*DT:* *That comes through a lot of discussion with them a lot of discussion through the PEPS through the foster carers and obviously through through… I think one my first point cause it's just finding out the history really of*	• Role of PEP in knowing needs of child • Importance of history of the child • Importance of pupil voice

	this child and just using that and hearing their views.	
4a	*Researcher:* *And how are you gathering their views?*	
4b	*DT:* *basic conversations, talk and draw sessions it could be for conversations with parents and just watching them and doing observations on things on the playgrounds in the classrooms*	• Gathering pupil voice tools
5a	*Researcher:* *yeah. Do you think it's valuable to do a range of different things really?*	
5b	*DT:* *definitely cause you know some of these children you know are quite… they've been through trauma so you know what they say and what they do it can be completely different… their perspective is completely different from from reality and vice versa yeah so it is about getting the whole package yeah erm yeah definitely valuable*	• Understanding child needs through their history/trauma • Holistic understanding of child
6a	*Researcher:* *yeah yeah and and you mentioned About having that relationship with you is quite important why would you say that is important to have?*	
6b	*DT:* *Some of our children have been through a lot, as I said some of them have started right from the beginning and obviously they have a massive journey you know ahead of them when they are the beginning of foster care or whether… they need we are we're almost there constant you know we have a lot change of social workers as you know had social workers have come and gone six of seven times and they've been changed placements we are generally there one constant in that life that they feel safe with so it's important for them to feel that but obviously you know that relationship is built what was the question again sorry*	• Difficult life experience of CYPiC • Difficult life events ahead for CYPiC • Changes in social workers • Changes in placement for CYPiC • Constant role of DT
7a	Researcher:	

	No think you've kind of answered it just in terms of why is it important to have those kind of relationships with those children?	
7b	DT: So we you know we know that you know when something happens within their life it might be they might present as fitting in and things like that but we also where two- three years down the line they might obviously regress and it might come up so it's important to know that actually you know and build that trust… that there is a safe place that you can go to or we know them a little bit better works with the yeah strategies work so yeah.	• Impact of life events on CYPiC development • Trust in relationship • Good understanding CYPiC needs
8a	Researcher: Yeah and can you tell me a little bit about how you work with the teaching staff in school to support children young people in care?	
8b	DT: yeah teacher staff are given information they need to support child we obviously have regular contact with carers as they are involved with PEPs and are obviously their views and are vital within support withi PEP system. Oh there was going to be something else ive forgotten it.	• Sharing information with school staff • Importance of carer views in PEP • Importance of staff views in PEP
9a	Researcher: That's alright that's alright. I was just going to ask what kind of support is useful in terms of you say you give teachers some information… what kind of information do you give in and what's useful about giving that to class teachers or other supporting staff ?	
9b	DT: we give some background yeah because it's useful for the teachers to understand where they come from and understand the difficulties that they might have we also give them so we have 1 page profiles that we do for children just give me a little bit more insight and then that's reviewed with teachers as we go along.	• Staff knowing some background of child to support understanding of CYPiC • DT providing resources to support understanding of child • Reviewing of child's needs

Appendix 14: Thematic Analysis Process: Putting Codes into Themes

A photo example of the grouping of possible codes under themes and possible subthemes. This relates to ‘Virtual School Support’.

Under each code was the DT number and exert line so this could be checked against the codes.

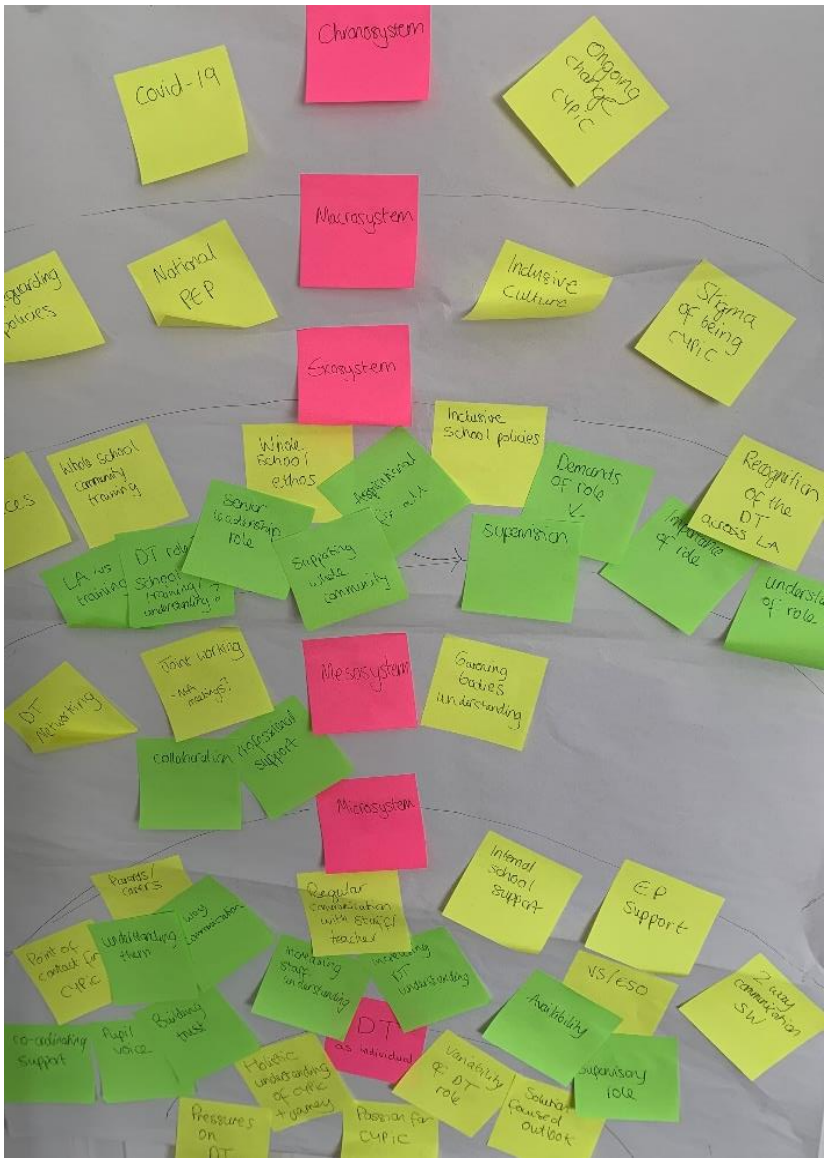
Below shows the numbered exerts that related to the code ‘available support of VS/ESO’.

Appendix 15: Example of Data Extracts Checked against Themes and Codes

Systemic Level	Theme	Subtheme	Example of Pertinent Data Extracts	Codes
Microsystem	Virtual School support	Availability of virtual school support	*DT 4 Row 19:* *"So yeah, XXX (ESO) was a massive personal support, then. And then I know if there's anything you can email, XXX (Admin), and he passes it on to XXX (VS Lead) and or XXX (VSH), depending on what what's needed that way"* *DT 3 row 16:* *"And also, XXX (ESO), he's a very good link as well, I know he's allocated to our school. But he's always said, I'm at the end of the phone. I'm at the end of an email, and he is very responsive. So I do feel that if I've got any questions about what we needed to have in place, or to ensure that he would be somebody that I would go to, and if he didn't know, he always found somebody that does and feeds back to me"* *DT 6 Row 21:* *"get support from the virtual school and training.* *I have to say that is that is a very good and I think they are approachable and easily accessible"*	- Accessible support through VS staff - Positive link to ESO - Availability and accessibility of ESO support - Approachable and accessible VS/ESO support
		Supervisory role of ESO	*DT 1 Row 28:* *"Definitely XXX (ESO) just having her there and it again it's not just those termly meetings it's a case of XXX (ESO) I don't*	- Termly ESO meetings - VS support for PEPs

			know what this is you know… or can you help me with that what do you think about this and have a look over my PEP before I close it you know… just having those little chance to reflect on things like that and she's just she's really useful because she is so kind and thoughtful and she doesn't let you get away with anything you know and make sure she questions you to make you up your game as well so I think she's invaluable." *DT 4 Row 18- 19: "So yeah, XXX (ESO) was a massive personal support…I could talk to her and just go 'Do you know what like, done this or done that'. And, like get support that way. You know, sometimes you just need to vent potentially."* *DT 7 Row 29: "She cares about her job, knows what she's doing, she's knowledgeable. She's there to support and I can trust her. Even if it is just to sound off annoyances but also she's very proactive and the whole conversations are about the child. And they're open and honest conversations as well. And that's what you want in a coaching session".*	- Value of reflection with ESO - Individual qualities of ESO - Personal support of ESO - Need to offload/vent - Individual qualities of ESO - Need to offload/vent - Honest/open communication with ESO

Appendix 16: Photo of An Example of Integrating Ecosystemic Model into Themes



The post it notes with key themes were organised into the bioecological model. These continued to be altered to ensure that subthemes and themes fitted with the over-riding systemic level. Subthemes and themes continued to be checked against codes and extracts to ensure they fitter under the overall ecosystemic levels.

Appendix 17: Letter of Ethical Approval

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Ref: **S1276**

Tuesday 25th August 2020

Dear Victoria Lewis and Robyn Bullingham,

Ethics Committee Review

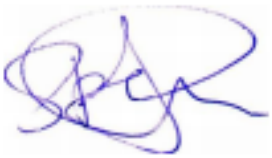
Thank you for submitting an account of your proposed research **'The Designated Teacher's role in supporting Children in Care: An ecosystemic perspective'**

That proposal has now been reviewed by the Ethics Committee and I am pleased to tell you that your submission has met with the committee's approval.

Final responsibility for ethical conduct of your research rests with you or your supervisor. The Codes of Practice setting out these responsibilities have been published by the British Psychological Society and the University Research Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns whatever during the conduct of your research then you should consult those Codes of Practice. The Committee should be informed immediately should any participant complaints or adverse events arise during the study.

Independently of the Ethics Committee procedures, supervisors also have responsibilities for the risk assessment of projects as detailed in the safety pages of the University web site. Ethics Committee approval does not alter, replace, or remove those responsibilities, nor does it certify that they have been met.

Yours sincerely



Professor Stephen Jackson
Chair, Ethics Committee